


TRIALLING THE CAMBRIDGE PERSONAL STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE: MEASURING AND PROFILING VALUES OF BSC NURSING STUDENTS

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

- Collaborative project between Bucks New University and Cambridge Assessment (University of Cambridge Examinations). We are one of the institutions (including City University) trialling the CPSQ (Cambridge Personal Styles Questionnaire).
 - From 2009 onwards, their Admissions Testing Service developed the CPSQ as an on-line personality assessment tool for healthcare careers. Developed by Helen Barron (Assessment Psychologist)
 - Cambridge Assessment undertook extensive trialling between Sept-Dec. 2012 with 2065 'A'-level and university students, including 314 nursing and midwifery students. Final version completed 2013.
 - Bucks New University commenced trialling in February 2014, funded by the Research Challenge. To date 57 students (predominantly Year 1 BSc Nursing) have undertaken the test.
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WIDER CONTEXT

- Health Education England have now specified that universities must 'assess students for their values' using the HEE framework (Health Education England, 2014, p.10). Requirement from April 1st 2015.
- This has highlighted the importance of reliable 'tools' to measure those values.
- Bucks New University's involvement arose from meetings of the Recruitment and Selection committee and the need to consider, post the Francis Report, ways of recruiting the best possible candidates for the nursing degree.

BACKGROUND THEORY TO THE CPSQ

- The development of the test was informed by the work of American psychologist Robert T. Sternberg in the 1990s.
- Sternberg argues for a ‘theory of successful intelligence’:

*‘a concept of successful intelligence according to which intelligence is the ability to achieve success in life, **given one’s personal standards**, within one’s socio-cultural context’* (Sternberg, 1999, p.293).

'SITUATIONAL INTELLIGENCE'

- Sternberg's work highlights the problems of trying to measure intelligence and general aptitude in isolation from other factors, including environment.
- Early work cites research in Kenya. Undertook a test measuring children's '**tacit knowledge**' of herbal medicines believed to fight infection.
- Also tested the children with conventional intelligence tests (to test '**crystallised abilities**', e.g. 'formal-knowledge-based abilities')
- Found that high scores on 'tacit knowledge' were not matched by high scores on formal knowledge. Generally, the higher they scored on knowledge of the herbal medicines, the lower they scored on the conventional tests.

(Sternberg, 1999, p.294).

This indicates the importance of 'situation based' assessment which is a recognised method of nurse recruitment.

ASSESSING DIFFERENT COMPETENCIES

- The CPSQ is multi-faceted with different competencies.
- These are:
 - *CARING AND COMPASSION*
 - *PERSON-CENTRED COMMUNICATION*
 - *WORKING WELL WITH OTHERS*
 - *SELF-MANAGEMENT*
 - *SAFE PRACTICE*
 - *COPING WITH DEMANDS*
 - *ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING*

CPSQ PROFILES

- The CPSQ produces a profile for each student, ranking responses 1-5.
- Responses 1-3 are the most favourable in recruitment terms, indicating that the candidate may be likely to demonstrate a particular competency.
- Example: a score of 4 for 'Caring and Compassion':

The applicant's CPSQ responses suggest that he / she:

- Tends to be willing to help others
- Generally picks up on the needs of others but occasionally misses opportunities to help
- Usually realises how others are feeling and can act with consideration
- Is normally patient and tolerant but may occasionally show impatience with difficult people


In addition each of the above traits is colour coded on the profile to indicate the strength or weakness of the match.

SAMPLE SCORES ACROSS COMPETENCIES

- From an initial small sample (16) of new BSc Nursing students in Feb. 2014, the table below indicates the 'competency potential' across the different categories (numbers are out of 16).

	1	2	3	4	5
Caring and compassion			3	11	2
Person-centred communication			8	4	4
Working well with others		1	7	6	2
Self-management		4	5	6	1
Safe practice		1	5	9	1
Coping with demands		4	4	8	
Engagement with learning	1	5	8	2	

ARE THE RESULTS RELIABLE PREDICTORS?

- 'Success' in this context is defined by the candidate going on to do well in their university assessments and practice assessments
 - This, in turn, can be measured by assessment grades at university. Out in practice the newly implemented 'Practice Assessment Document' provides mentor assessments on hospital placements.
 - Cambridge Assessment need a total of 300 students to validate the reliability of the CPSQ from a longitudinal study making comparisons over time. A positive correlation between success on the course and in practice and the CPSQ 'scores' might indicate it is a reliable tool to adopt for recruitment and selection in the future.
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SAMPLE: COMPARING RESULTS

- The results of the first assignment (a 750-word reflection on a clinical skill) for the initial sample of 16 who took the CPSQ were as follows:

One fail (36%)

One distinction (74%)

Remainder:

44%, 48%, 49%, 50%, 53% (x 2), 55% (x2), 59% (x2), 60% (x2), 63%, 66%.

- A typical spread of results which can then be compared against a relevant section of the CPSQ, in this case 'Engagement with learning'.
- In this case, the participant who failed scored mid-way on 'Engagement with Learning' (3).
- The participant with the Distinction scored 2 (a low score), suggesting, perhaps, that the profile might have had some use in personal development.

PROBLEMS OF ASSESSING VALIDITY OF MEASUREMENT TOOLS

'The terminal value of the test in terms of the social ends to be served goes beyond the test maker in order to include as well the decision-maker, policy maker and test user, **who are responsible for specific evidence of instrumental value in their particular setting and for the specific interpretations made of test scores**' (Messick, 1980, p.1012).


Another theorist who the Cambridge Assessment psychologists drew on was the late Samuel Messick, an American expert in educational testing whose work alerted 'assessors' to some of the problems of validating psychological assessments.




WIDER ISSUES: CORRELATION BETWEEN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, PERSONAL QUALITIES AND PREVIOUS CARING EXPERIENCE

- Some research suggests that personal qualities may influence wider academic performance on pre-registration nursing programmes.
- In Australia, the 'PQA' (Personal Qualities Assessment) was originally designed for medical students but research has shown its applicability for nurses (see Pitt *et al.*, 2013).
- Through a study of 138 nursing students, it was found that 'Significant correlations ... between academic performance and PQA scores for self-control, resilience and traits of aloofness, confidence and involvement. Final clinical competence was predicted by confidence and self-control scores' (Pitt *et al.*, 2013, p.866).
- Other studies have considered the relationship with other variables like previous caring experience (see Snowden *et al.* 2015).

PROGRESS TO DATE

- 57 students have participated in the CPSQ since Feb. 2014 to date (June 2015). BSc Nursing: 53 First Years, 4 Third Years.
 - Participation was voluntary and solicited through Blackboard announcements and speaking to groups in seminars. From February – Sept 2014, there was the incentive of meal vouchers / travel paid; nothing subsequently. One group (of 20) undertook the test as a seminar activity. Targeted at First Years BSc Nursing then broadened to Third Years.
 - Sample too small for longitudinal study but will be continuing with content validation.
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ISSUES RAISED BY THE RESEARCH

- There are many alternative measurement tools aiming to assess values and personality styles. The adoption of any of these implies acceptance of the content and its suitability for a diverse range of students.
 - The process of the voluntary trialling of such measurement tools offers other avenues of research: what motivates students to participate?
 - When comparing the 'scores' from different assessments, the reliability of each type needs to be scrutinised.
 - The over-arching aim of such tools is to recruit the best possible students for nursing but also to help reduce attrition on the course.
 - Tools like the CPSQ, as the originators acknowledge, can only ever be guides to potential.
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