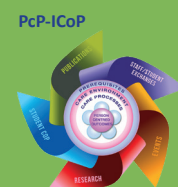


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## CRITICAL REFLECTION ON PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

### Supporting transformational learning processes for person-centred healthcare research in doctoral education: a critical creative reflection

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#### Abstract

*Background:* When becoming person-centred researchers, doctoral students are expected to learn to negotiate new identities and reconceptualise themselves both as people and professionals so they can engage in values-driven research. Therefore, doctoral studies require students to engage in transformational learning for the purpose of contributing to knowledge about healthcare practice and healthcare culture. During this time, there is potential for the learning process to be lonely and overly challenging, which can hinder the development of self required for transformational learning. It is proposed that doctoral supervisors and universities should have an understanding of conditions that facilitate transformational learning, such that students can be supported to develop self and become person-centred researchers.

*Aim:* The aim of this article is to share the continuing story of the doctoral journey of two early career researchers and explore the learning processes through which transformation of understanding and of self has occurred.

*Conclusions and implications for practice:* Recognition of the uniqueness of each doctoral learning process is required for the development of self that enables person-centred research and practice. The principles identified in this article can be drawn on to inform ways of working and learning with doctoral supervisors and within the learning environment that allow human flourishing to occur during the doctoral process. These principles include:

- Facilitation of self-exploration
- Engagement in multiple ways of learning and diverse learning experiences
- Facilitative, person-centred supervisory processes
- Freedom to learn and engage curiosity
- Experience of challenge in supportive, social learning environments
- Sense of belonging in the research environment and process

**Keywords:** Doctoral learning, transformation, developing self, person-centred, supervision

## Introduction

Transformational learning is predicated on the belief that education should facilitate learners to question their worldview, and change their value system through identification of ideas, beliefs, values and/or feelings that are problematic (Mezirow, 1995; Quinnan, 1997). It has been suggested that this can be realised through communicative learning, through which learners critically assess their assumptions, engage in rational discourse and make decisions through consensus building (Mezirow, 1995; Mezirow and Taylor, 2009). The purpose of this kind of learning is to enable learners to engage in reasoning processes and make moral decisions about action, based on increasingly inclusive, discriminatory, reflective, open and emotionally competent frames of reference, rather than on learned and/or unquestioned assumptions, values and beliefs systems (Quinnan, 1997). The aim of this article is to share the story of the doctoral journeys of two early career researchers and explore the learning processes through which transformation of understanding and consequent development of self has occurred.

In late 2018, we – the authors – attended a conference at which our institution launched a new strategy for learning, practice and research. The conference aimed to turn a vision into reality through the process of developing self, other persons and clinical practice. We were approached by the conference organisers to speak about the influence that our doctoral research processes have had on the development of self. The second author (NK) is an occupational therapist who, at the time of the conference, had completed her viva voce for her doctorate. The first author (KR) is a nurse who was two months into the second year of her full-time PhD. Despite being at different points in our journeys, we felt we had a valuable story to tell about development of self – a story that many others doing a doctorate could connect with, whether they are at the beginning of an uncertain journey, at the end or somewhere in between. We also believed that our story would be useful for supervisors who are supporting those on their doctoral adventure to identify the ways in which understanding and development of self can be facilitated.

## Background

There is growing recognition, across the UK and internationally, of the need for person-centred health and social care practitioners and development of person-centred services (World Health Organization, 2015; Department of Health, 2019). National and international healthcare organisations have noted the potential of such practice to enhance the quality of care people receive and ensure responsiveness to service users' needs by shifting the focus of practice from systems efficiency and managerialism to person-orientated decision making (The Health Foundation, 2016; McCormack and Dewing, 2019).

Dewing and McCormack (2016) suggest that many definitions of, and approaches to, person-centredness favoured in healthcare are oversimplified and not adequately underpinned by research and theory. While there has been international recognition that definitions and concepts related to person-centred practice require further exploration and development (Miles and Asbridge, 2013; Dewing and McCormack, 2016), there appears to be consensus that person-centred practice acknowledges the complexity of the context and the need for cultural change (World Health Organization, 2015; The Health Foundation, 2016). This change appears to involve the need for emphasis on the values, beliefs and needs of persons being cared for, the personhood and potential of the practitioner, and relationships between staff and service users (Buetow, 2016; McCormack and McCance, 2017; Miles and Asbridge, 2019). McCormack and McCance (2017) have established the following working definition of person-centredness, which reflects the aforementioned concerns:

*'Person-centredness is an approach to [healthcare] practice established through the formation and fostering of healthful relationships between all care providers, service users and others significant to them in their lives. It is underpinned by values of respect for persons (personhood), individual right to self-determination, mutual respect and understanding. It is enabled by cultures of empowerment that enable continuous approaches to practice development'* (McCormack and McCance, 2017, p 3).

They suggest that continuous and sustained engagement in transformational learning is understood to support the development of practice culture and effective, person-centred healthcare. While recognising the complexities of developing person-centred practice, McCormack and Dewing (2019) argue that meaningful cultural change towards person-centredness may not occur without consistent focus on and commitment to its principles in healthcare education curricula, at all levels of education. Thus, the philosophy of education, and the approach taken (pedagogy) to growth of person-centred practitioners requires significant consideration.

Literature related to the development of person-centredness, including doctoral research, outlines researchers' responsibility towards practices and practice cultures that are responsive to the associated challenges (Manley et al., 2013). This literature puts the onus on person-centred researchers to develop skills in understanding transformation of learning and practice culture. However, the approach to doctoral-level education for person-centred practice does not appear to have been explored in detail. In general, the use of education as a means of transforming culture is an idea that is synonymous with the principles of adult education (Freire, 1970; Mezirow, 1995; Mezirow and Taylor, 2009). Strochschen (2015) encourages consideration of the purpose of doctoral education, proposing that engagement in doctoral research should seek to replace prevailing individual and societal assumptions and practices by freedom, collaboration and criticality in adult learning. These authors acknowledge the potential to nurture interdependence and enhance relationships between educators and doctoral students such that the personhood of the student is influenced or changed. Nonetheless, the means through which such potential can be realised requires further exploration.

Cleland and Dolmans (2017) argue that the context of doctoral education is a vital element in developing transformational learning, recognising that there are particular characteristics of an educational environment that may support development of high-quality doctoral studies. These characteristics include formal doctoral research programmes, the ability to retain staff who can facilitate doctoral learning, and cultures that support academic and clinical environments. According to Armstrong (2004), a doctoral learning experience in which the researcher can be effective and autonomous, and feel motivated and connected, is heavily dependent on the support and facilitation received from a supervisor or supervisory team. The quality of research supervision itself could also be dependent on interactions and communication skills, characterised as mutual trust, respect, and obligation (Armstrong, 2004). Severinsson (2015) suggests that a relationship in which the doctoral researcher can trust and communicate effectively with their supervisor is facilitative of transformational learning – for both learner and supervisor.

Descriptors of doctoral-level learning refer to the learner's ability to contribute new knowledge to a profession or a discipline by developing research practice that is self-critical, reflective and based on evidence (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, 2012). Titchen et al. (2017) propose that the first step for researchers developing healthcare culture is 'coming to know self'; this is believed to facilitate research oriented towards transformative, effective and person-centred healthcare practice. Learning from personal and professional experience is a central activity in transformational learning and practice and can be realised through active learning that 'draws on, creatively synthesises and integrates numerous learning methods' (Dewing, 2010, p 22). Indeed, the International Community of Practice for person-centred practice (PCP-ICOP) recently identified 'empowerment of health and social care professionals through active learning, maximising opportunities for autonomy and shared meaning making' as a core dimension of person-centredness that could underpin educational curricula (McCormack and Dewing, 2019, p 5). Therefore, facilitated critical personal dialogue and dialogue with others, using multiple methods of learning, is a necessary primary process in coming to know self as a researcher, and in facilitating this exploration for other persons involved in research.

Given the arguments that transformational learning is a key process in developing person-centred practice and research and that the educational context influences students' ability to engage in such

learning, it follows that the experience of the doctoral researcher, and the contextual factors and cultural practices that influence their learning experience of coming to know self should be explored and understood. This exploration has the potential to inform future contextual development and doctoral education experiences. Thus, we present an inquiry into the nature of transformational doctoral education for person-centred healthcare research and practice. We explore the conditions of learning that are required to enable development of self for doctoral-level researchers within a person-centred perspective.

### **Reflective process**

We decided to facilitate a workshop on ‘developing self’ to support the development of the person-centred practice and research agenda that underpins the nursing divisional strategy. The session drew on the principle of ‘developing self’ as a prerequisite of being person-centred in healthcare practice and research (McCormack and McCance, 2017). When we met to plan our workshop, we agreed the aim of the presentation was to demonstrate the potential of doctoral education to transform our perspectives, and ways of being, knowing and doing, not only as healthcare professionals and researchers, but also as persons. We believed this could be achieved by taking a critical creative approach (McCormack and Titchen, 2006; Titchen and McCormack, 2010), using poetry and painting to explore our own experiences of learning and to articulate our embodied knowledge about the processes and outcomes underpinning our own self-development.

The first phase in our exploration was individual reflection. We engaged in a creative reflection using Evoke Cards ([evokecards.com](http://evokecards.com)) to express our embodied knowledge about our experiences of doctoral-level learning and to ‘evoke’ a range of memories, emotions and thoughts. We believe using pictures can help translate experience and emotions into words, helping to understand them. Second, we shared our individual creative reflections and engaged in a critical dialogue about our experiences. This dialogue enabled identification of the shared conditions and/or principles behind our learning processes to become person-centred researchers. This is a popular method that we have both used a number of times to reflect on our experiences and to develop as reflexive researchers. Reflexivity is important, as it is a fluid process based on the idea of ‘transforming personal experience into public and accountable knowledge’ (Finlay, 2002, p 533). It enables researchers to use their reflections, on self in this case, to change their approach to research and plan for the future based on understanding of the context in which the research is taking place (Fay, 1987). Finally, we analysed these shared experiences and identified themes that underpinned our development of self.

### **Outcomes**

Overall, it appeared that our processes of developing self were – and still are – facilitated by person-centred doctoral supervision and varied learning opportunities. Even though we were at different stages of our research and learning processes, we noticed many commonalities as well as differences. The paradox of particularity was evident in our reflections; we recognised the particulars, and sometimes uniqueness, of experience through sharing and connectedness in dialogue. However, there were clear similarities in what we valued in our learning processes, and in what we believed underpinned the development of self in our doctoral learning. It was apparent that we needed similar principles but applied in different ways. The learning experiences and outcomes, from which the principles for learning emerged, are explored in more detail in the following sections. The principles are also drawn out and connected with relevant current literature.

#### ***‘Captain of your own ship’***

The importance of having the opportunity to create and undertake a research project that we were passionate about, as well as the importance of bringing ‘me’ into the research journey, were identified as giving meaning, energy, challenge and sense of achievement to the process. NK suggested that authenticity and awareness of self were important in connecting with the research and making decisions consistent with her values and beliefs. Her use of the word authenticity reflected her belief

that having space in learning to explore who you are as a person and researcher enabled decisions about research to be made and owned (Kinsella, 2017). Similarly, in addition to speaking about authenticity, KR used the phrase, 'to be the captain of my own ship' when describing the principle of authentic research. A crucial part of her PhD journey has been the freedom to steer the research in ways that have enabled connections and a sense of belonging with the research, whether by working through her philosophical underpinnings, figuring out her methodology or relating to other persons.

Two principles and associated processes emerged as useful in facilitating the authors to be 'captains' in this dialogue. First, in order to own the research and related decisions (van Lieshout and Cardiff, 2015), learners must explore their personal and professional ontology and understand the values and beliefs behind their decisions (Dewing et al., 2017). This has been called authentic consciousness (McCormack and McCance, 2017). Having this knowledge enables the development of more rigorous and coherent research methodologies and ultimately, authentic, thoughtful and values-driven research in and about healthcare practice. Second, in learning spaces where it is difficult to be captain or to make autonomous decisions because of incongruent or unclear values and beliefs – often the case at the beginning of doctoral learning – 'co-piloting' is necessary (Barker, 1991). A person, usually a member of the supervision team or community of practice, needs to step forward to hold the learners' values and enable moral decisions to be made based on these. This enables decisions and actions reflecting who we are and/or want to be as researchers. Thus, support from supervisors, peers or facilitators with an appreciation of the learner's ontology and the complexity of their research situations, and knowledge of the level of decision making required, is vital in understanding and developing authenticity and autonomy in research.

### ***Supervisory relationships***

The importance of facilitative supervisory relationships was emphasised in our dialogue. The term 'facilitative' was used to reflect supervisory teams that were supportive but also engaged in critical questioning and provided an appropriate level of challenge. The balance between support and challenge had the potential to enable consciousness raising about our research and self, and subsequently promote development of our thinking and doctoral ability, without causing us to feel threatened or unsafe (Titchen et al., 2013). In addition to challenge in facilitative relationships, we realised that 'knowing self', which is proposed as the first stage of developing self (McCormack and McCance, 2017), requires support and understanding from, and connection with, supervisory teams. We each had a different supervisory team but both noted the value of encouragement to allow our individuality to be reflected in our work and ways of being. Within this discussion, NK identified that developing trust between supervisory team members and the learner was a prerequisite for facilitation of self-development and challenge. She stated that without this trust, she would not have had the confidence or support to be authentic in her ways of being and her work. KR noted that providing and receiving feedback was crucial in her learning process, enabling her doctoral team to work collaboratively to optimise her potential to achieve objectives and flourish as a person. We agreed that without these foundations in our relationships we would not have shared ourselves or been open to exploration of our values and beliefs.

### ***Challenges***

A long section of our discussion was about the times we 'hit a brick wall' and faced challenges with decision making during our learning process. We identified that sitting with challenges, breaking through the brick wall and conquering them made us flourish as researchers and persons. For instance, NK reflected that, in the past, when she reached a block in her work or was challenged by an experience, she would spend a lot of time distancing herself from it. She acknowledged this was unhelpful and that she was avoiding the challenge. During the doctoral learning process, she learned to engage in ways that allowed her to experience and understand the challenge safely. Spending time in nature, painting and talking about her challenges with trusted peers, supervisors and colleagues enabled her to understand and move past challenges more efficiently and effectively. This was particularly well



facilitated within supervision and a community of practice, where there were agreed ways of working, shared values and beliefs, and safe spaces for reflective dialogue about challenges. At the end of her doctoral learning, NK realised that formal learning processes, such as an assessed seminar or probationary viva, were also valuable in pushing the work to the next level and translating dialogue about challenges into appropriate language that allowed them to be used for learning and reflected in her writing.

KR realised the importance of 'stepping away' from the brick wall after a few challenging times where she felt stuck. The majority of these came at the end of the working day when she would need to leave her desk to go home. She was left frustrated and sometimes feeling guilty as she thought she was leaving a problem unsolved. However, in the time spent away from her desk, whether simply during the commute home or until she returned to her desk the following morning, KR discussed how she felt refreshed and suddenly 'got it'. Thus, we agreed that challenges during the research process should be expected, understood and accepted in order to get that 'aha' moment. The processes through which we experienced challenge and connected with it were primarily related to changing ways of being and working in order to create space, in mind and body – for instance, being in nature, being with other persons, being reflective or reading poetry and talking about work.

According to Mantai (2015), challenges during the doctoral learning experience can result in feelings of intellectual inferiority and concerns about capability and success. Our reflections on challenges to development of self and learning identified positive peer and supervisory relationships, formal institutional processes, and use of nature and distraction as means by which they could be understood and addressed. Communities of practice, or 'groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better' (Wenger, 1991, p 1), appeared valuable due to their explicit focus on social relationships between members as a means whereby challenges could be understood and feedback offered and received. Jairam and Kahl (2012) suggest the social relationships developed during a doctorate, such as those within a community of practice, promote success and improve the doctoral experience. Certainly, the experiences of challenge described here suggest such relationships encourage engagement with challenge through shared understanding of the experience of a doctorate in person-centred practice. In addition to formal practices with CoP members, informal processes and social relationships appear to provide social, emotional and instrumental support during periods of challenge, which Curtin et al. (2013) suggest can give students a sense of belonging to a group, such that they feel enabled to share challenging experiences. Finally, the experiences indicate that attending to challenges may benefit from engagement in processes that could be considered non-traditional, such as the use of nature or distraction. This is recognised in research by Barnacle and Mewburn (2010), who propose that development can happen in both traditional and non-traditional sites of learning, and through multiple processes; informal social processes and non-traditional reflective processes lent themselves to addressing our challenges.

### ***Ways of learning***

We discussed the most useful sources of knowledge and ways of learning for our work, and their effectiveness during different stages of the process of self-development. For instance, NK reflected that she needed to explore ideas, concepts, situations and challenges in detail through dialogue and creative reflection before 'academic' reading and writing could be helpful or effective for her. The use of creative expression to develop this understanding helped her to move beyond existing theoretical knowledge and to make connections between concepts. She noted that if she tried to make sense of data, an experience or an idea by reading (propositional knowledge) first, she often felt overwhelmed and the purpose of the process would get lost, resulting in a need for excessive supervisory support. However, she identified that the nature of the research she engaged in strongly influenced the kinds of learning that were valuable to her. In comparison, KR expressed her belief that social learning was vital to her development process, but she used it in a different way. She needed quiet time and space when exploring and working with new ideas. Only when she felt she had something a little more

concrete and grounded did she wish to engage with social learning and critical dialogue. This was a clear example of two people using the principle of ‘multiple ways of learning and knowing’ to develop self, but in different ways. We agreed that no matter how we engage with different types of knowledge, knowing and learning, the experience of the outcome is similar. Thus, we agreed on the importance of access to peer learning spaces and formal institutional processes (beyond the supervision process) that valued and facilitated multiple ways of learning.

Engaging in multiple ways of learning and knowing has been a valuable principle for our development thus far. Mantia (2015) proposes that connecting with others beyond the supervisory team and learning socially and dialogically is fundamental to a researcher’s personal and professional growth. While Mantia notes that researcher development is underpinned by practices that range from social to individual – which was the case for both of us – social learning or learning with other people, particularly communicative learning, is understood by Habermas (1984) and Mezirow (1995) to be the process through which a person’s assumptions are changed. Communicative learning (Habermas, 1984) is based on the belief that a person can only become aware of assumptions they make, and thus be in a position to change them, when they seek to understand through communication. Sweitzer (2009) argues that there is value of including all kinds of people with a range of experience and education in these learning processes, with each person having a different role in facilitating the doctoral student’s self-development. Furthering this perspective, Janta et al. (2014) argue that peer relationships are typically emphasised as valuable in the doctoral process due to shared experience. Overall, the need for educational contexts that are prepared to facilitate communicative learning is clear in these experiences and literature. Such learning should occur at times that accommodate the student’s learning process and needs, and include people beyond the supervisory team.

The dialogue that we shared about ways of learning suggests that embedding creativity in communicative learning processes is a valuable way of enabling identification of assumptions and making sense of experience, literature and data. Indeed, according to McCormack and Titchen (2006), using creative processes in learning has the potential to enable a person to translate embodied knowledge and assumptions they hold about a particular situation into language, such that the assumptions can be explored, understood and, if necessary, changed.

### ***Wonder***

We discussed the importance of trust above in the ‘Supervisory relationships’ section. However, we also spoke about the significance of trust within the exploration of wonder. While trusting relationships with our supervisors enabled mutually beneficial decisions to be made, and outcomes to emerge, they also created space and freedom for both of us to take the time to understand the intricacies of our research, to understand the emotions attached to it and to explore our own wisdom about the knowledge that emerged during the research. This was when wonder was experienced; when there was space to let the work speak to us, rather than asking of it what a supervisor or learner expected to see. Essentially, this was an enabling process of being with our work, facilitated through trust and freedom. We agreed that our relationships needed to enable a playfulness and space to experience ‘the unknown’ in such a way that our understandings of ourselves were displaced, reconsidered and reconstructed. We both discussed the importance of having the opportunity to be curious and playful with new thoughts and ideas. By being curious and wondering, we were engaging in different ways of knowing and various schools of thought, and testing new ways of learning.

The process of experiencing wonder in our learning can be connected with a hermeneutic phenomenology. This is an approach to understanding that is described as: ‘thought that compels us into a basic disposition of wonder and amazement’ so that our taken-for-granted understandings or assumptions about the world are displaced and reconsidered (van Manen, 2018, p 676). It is an approach that is ‘driven by internal purposes of scholarship that serve the inherent pleasure of gaining meaningful insight into our human existence’ (van Manen, 2018, p 676). By being empowered to

experience wonder we came to discover new knowledge, as well as change our understanding of existing knowledge and assumptions, thereby realising hermeneutic praxis, which has been described as a core process in realising human flourishing in healthcare practice and research (Titchen and McCormack, 2010). The process of being in wonder could also indicate the presence and necessity of professional curiosity for development of self. Proctor and Wilson (2018, p 186) define professional curiosity as a process through which we 'look beyond the current state and behaviours of those in our care so that a more complete picture of the issues and circumstances are fully understood'. While this concept was discussed in relation to healthcare practice, in the context of research the notion of looking beyond what we already know and the immediate context of research could be applied to the kind of learning described in our experiences. Eason (2010) suggests that engaging professional curiosity has the potential to support self-development and learning, which may result in a sense of satisfaction. Thus, facilitating engagement with the experience of wonder and enabling professional curiosity could enhance not only the development of learning for the doctoral student, but also their experience of doctoral study.

### **Conclusion and implications**

Doctoral learning is commonly recognised as an intense process that offers an opportunity for a profound learning experience and has the potential to transform the learner (Barnacle and Mewburn, 2010). In becoming a person-centred researcher, doctoral students are expected to learn to negotiate new identities and reconceptualise themselves as people and professionals (Jacobs et al., 2017). However, although this article identifies a number of individual processes as being facilitative of self-development (for example, reflection on values and beliefs), the reflections here indicate that the process of self-development and identity negotiation is an interconnected one that is dependent on support and facilitation from a number of people, as well as a conducive context. Similarly to Williams and McCormack (2017), who argue that the process of developing as a person-centred practitioner can be destabilising and thus requires strong support, we believe that shifting values, beliefs and assumptions as a doctoral researcher has the potential to be destabilising and that sufficient support and facilitation is vital.

Overall, our research and studies have taken place within a facilitative educational context, which has included opportunities for engagement with communities of practice, formal and informal learning processes, person-centred supervision, and time and space for individual reflection. Our experiences, alongside literature related to person-centred practice and learning (McCormack and Titchen, 2006; Dewing, 2010; McCormack and McCance, 2017), suggest that it is the combination of such opportunities that facilitate self-development, not the engagement in one alone or each separately. Recent reflections and exploration of person-centred supervision by Heyns et al. (2019) suggests the supervisory team plays a key role in influencing institutional culture such that each of the components of experience can be facilitated. For instance, they note that a supervisor/supervisory team should create a nurturing environment for doctoral students, encourage inclusion of other professionals and people, and balance formal institutional processes, needs and deadlines with informal ones. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that supervisors' environments need to be facilitative of development for such processes and outcomes to be realised. Thus, future attention should be paid to the cultures of learning and of supervision to enhance opportunities for self-development in learning.

While writing this article and blending our reflections with existing research and literature, we noticed a scarcity of research on this topic. Indeed, Mantai (2015) recognises that knowledge is limited about the types and nature of experiences conducive to researcher identity and development in the doctoral process. Existing research recognises that scholarly development takes place in multiple processes that are diverse in nature (Barnacle and Mewburn, 2010), but there also appears to be limited research into the nature and outcome of such processes. Although we present some exploration into both the nature of the experience and of the processes involved in development of self, diversity of experience and inclusivity could also be strengthened by future research and co-written articles such as this one.



We felt it was important to be transparent and acknowledge the limitations of our own perspectives in this article, the primary limitation being the nature of our experiences. We can both be identified as 'younger academics' or 'early career researchers' under the age of 35 (Archer, 2008), and engaged in doctoral studies almost immediately after qualifying as healthcare professionals. Archer questions the extent to which challenges with researcher identity, authenticity and success are related to age and experience, emphasising that a number of the considerations and challenges with self-development discussed in this article may not be applicable to all doctoral students. Nonetheless, we felt that by presenting our reflections on self-development, we were addressing these for any academic who identified with issues around confidence and legitimacy, which Mantai (2015) suggests may be the case for any doctoral researcher, regardless of age or experience.

Thus, despite the particular nature of our experience and doctoral learning context, we present below five implications that our exploration may have for the practice and facilitation of self-development for person-centred doctoral researchers.

***Implication 1***

Transformational learning requires exploration and understanding of self. A facilitated process of self-exploration is required for philosophical congruence in research to be realised and for moral decision making in research practice.

***Implication 2***

Doctoral learning contexts should involve multiple opportunities for learning and facilitate various styles or modes of learning, including formal assessment processes, social learning opportunities and informal learning opportunities.

***Implication 3***

Development of self requires supportive and facilitative supervisory relationships, in which the doctoral learner feels safe to share challenges and to give and receive feedback. These relationships should also balance support with challenge such that the supervisor(s) can have opportunities to facilitate change in the learner's ways of being, knowing and doing in academic and clinical settings.

***Implication 4***

Freedom to be curious in the doctoral learning process is essential for 'the unknown' or new knowledge to be experienced, and for the learner's understanding of self, knowledge and the world to be displaced and reconstructed. This can be facilitated by supervisory relationships in which there is trust that mutually beneficial outcomes can emerge.

***Implication 5***

Experience of challenge is an essential part of the development of a doctoral learner. It can be engaged with and used effectively if a learner's context is supportive of movement into new ways of knowing, being and doing. The components of context that are of particular importance for dealing with this are: learning and social relationships; communities of practice; and space for new knowledge to emerge. This can facilitate wellbeing for the learner, as well as development of self.

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