Creating a research culture in nursing education – the REF, the TEF and the KEF

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Institutions are measured against the REF (Research England n.d.), the TEF (OfS 2018) and the emerging KEF (UK Research and Innovation n.d.). In other words, nursing lecturers are facing the task to developing a research-informed teaching, and their link with local communities in terms of quantities and outcomes (Rolfe 2016). Whilst a clear link exists between research, teaching and knowledge exchange (Johnson 2017; Jackson 2018), it is rather obscure how to achieve such balances in nursing. Various contradictions appear to exist including the prestige of research vs teaching staff, pedagogic vs high impact research, informing practice vs research publishing, workload and priorities (Tierney 2016). Nursing is a practice-based discipline with one of the lowest number of PhD or doctorate level qualification and as such the impact of their teaching and research is far less obvious (Grove 2012, Academics Anonymous 2017). Yet, with the introduction of REF there is considerable reputation at stake as this metric remains the primary means of distributing the billions of pounds budget of quality-related funding in the United Kingdom (Grainger 2010; Kelly et al. 2016). Therefore, this research has explored the issues, challenges and opportunities in creating a research culture in nursing education.

SEARCH STRATEGY

- University of Wolverhampton Summon library catalogue
- Google and Google scholar search engines
- Subject specific and online databases - CINAHL Plus, Education Research Complete, Higher Education Academy, UK Government sites
- Papers published from 2010 onwards in English language
- Search terms: REF, TEF, KEF, Higher Education, Nursing Education their full term version and alternatives combined by the use of Boolean operators

"Lies, damn lies, and statistics" - how the processes of research and education is converted to outcomes in order to compare

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How can we encourage a teaching and research excellence at the same time?

How can we create a research culture in a practice and teaching focus profession?

How can we achieve research-informed teaching in nursing education?

DISCUSSION

Recruitment: practice experience or academic return

Workload: professional development or research output

Metrics: universal or profession-based metrics

Culture: teaching or research teams

Infrastructure: teaching or research resources

Philosophy: care or cure and the status of nurses

Barriers: a lack of research awareness; insufficient organisational support; lack of power to alter practice

Opportunities: need of evidence-based practice; clinical specialties; cross-faculty initiatives

RATIONALE

DEFINITIONS

REF: The Research Excellence Framework is the UK's system for assessing the excellence of research in higher education institutions to secure the continuation of a world-class, dynamic and responsive research base.

TEF: The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework is the UK's system for assessing excellence in teaching at universities and colleges to ensure excellent outcomes for students in terms of graduate-level employment or further study.

KEF: The Knowledge Exchange Framework is the UK's system under development to increase efficiency and effectiveness in use of public funding for knowledge exchange to further a culture of continuous improvement in universities.

Actor-Network Theory: It is more of a metaphysics then a method that focuses on associations where everything plays a part; phenomena is performed and enacted rather then caused or discovered.

Nursing research does not exist in isolation. Promoting a research culture is essential to maximise nursing knowledge development, to incorporate research into teaching, and to translate research findings into practice.

CENTRAL ARGUMENT

We can only address today's increasingly complex health and social problems if we create an effective and efficient research culture by embedding nurse researchers and research programs into the complex networks of nursing education and the wider scientific community composed by multiple Interacting actors.

METHODOLOGY

Desk-based research and analysis
academic literature
policies and reports
further relevant materials
Application of Actor-Network Theory
Professional and academic experience

DESIGN

The hidden impact of nursing research in REF – nurses and nursing being part of other disciplines and research teams

IMPACT

CONCLUSIONS

- Research-based teaching if students are taught by nurses who are carrying out research
- Mentorship and research role modelling for staff
- Research and research staff embedded in teaching
- Recruitment of academically resourceful staff
- Greater recognition of excellence in nursing research

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