4Es of good degrees: what makes pre-registration nurses successful in achieving good degrees

Conference or Workshop Item

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'4Es of good degrees'
Understanding the [modifiable] factors which facilitate 'good' academic performance

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Background & rationale

- Changing landscape and impact:
  - Move to graduate profession
  - Impact of degree classification on league tables
- We know that there are a wide range of factors which impact on academic attainment and the ability to obtain 'good' honours degrees:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Disability
  - Ethnicity
  - Stress

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Our students

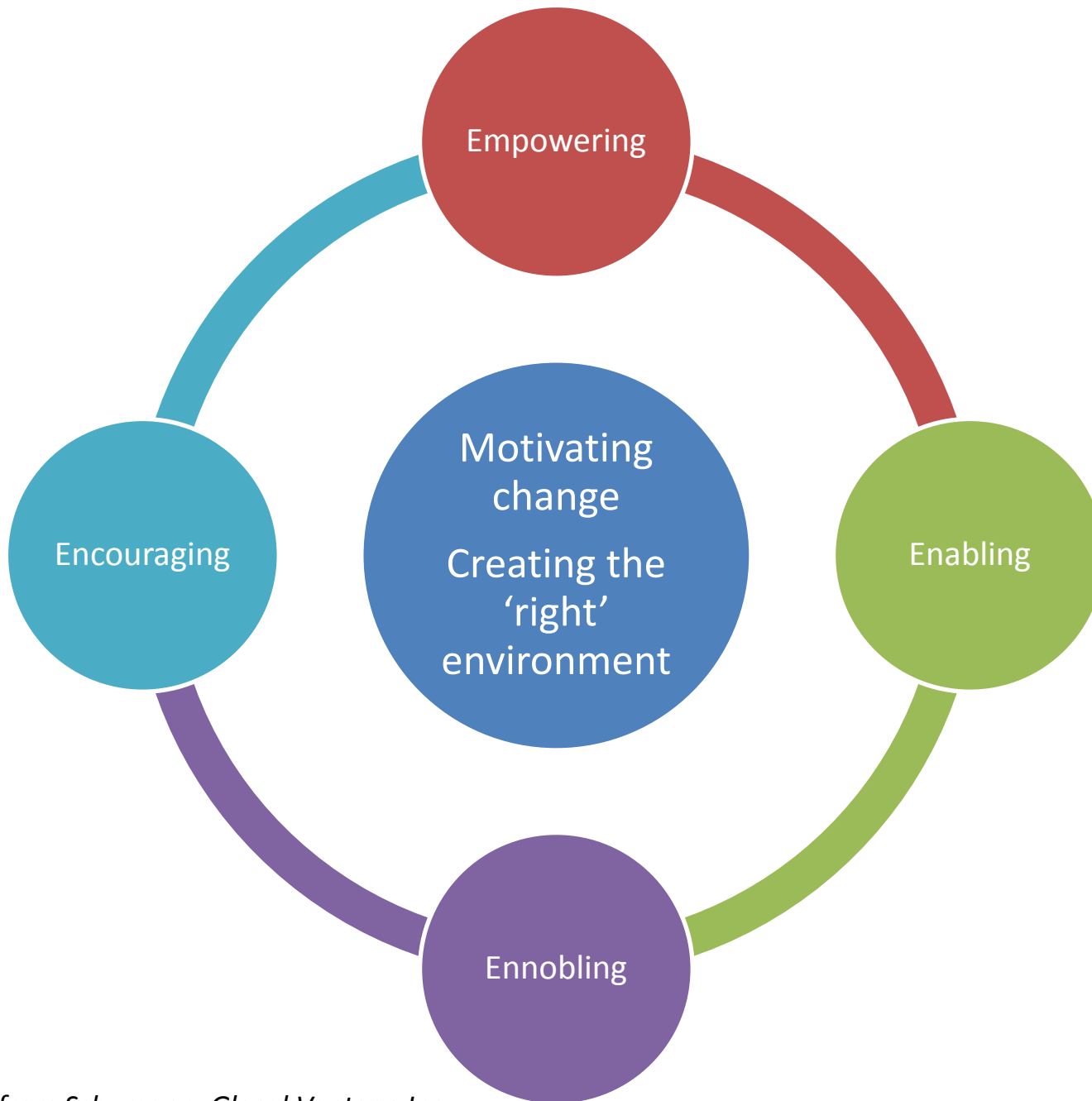45% from Access HE

32% A levels

21% Diploma or degree

83% female

18-48 years
Mean age 28

49% first in family into HE

86% had caring experience

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Background & rationale

- Our students are not 'typical' of the student population
  - Placement-theory balance
  - Not 'typical' academic timetables
  - Varying and diverse demographics
- We know that some students still obtain 'good' grades despite varying and pressured circumstances
- What works? What behaviours and actions have positive impact?
- The role of modifiable and non-modifiable factors

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Empowering

Encouraging

Motivating change

Creating the 'right' environment

Enabling

Ennobling

Aims & objectives

AIM:

Explore the facilitating factors which enable students to achieve 2:1 and 1st Class Honours Degrees. To identify and make recommendations by which curriculum teams may promote the 4E's; **Encourage, Enable, Empower & Ennoble.**

OBJECTIVES:

1) **Employ** oral narrative to enable recent graduates achieving a 'good' degree classification to share their personal experience of their programme and associated influences, linking with academic performance

2) **Identify** modifiable factors and positive action from emergent themes using a modified framework analysis

3) **Recommend** modifiable interventions and actions which curriculum teams/students may take to promote the 4Es and thus, students to achieve their full potential

4) **Produce** a brief advisory and informative publication for students/staff which details management and coping mechanisms which have been successful for others in improving/sustaining academic performance using the 4Es as a theme

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Methods

- Four phased project
- Narrative to explore the 'real life' journey of students using their grades as prompts for discussion
- Framework analysis was used to identify case-by-case modifiable and non-modifiable factors, behaviours and actions associated with the 4Es
- This was done for:
  - Students
  - University/tutors

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Methods

- APPROACH
  - Four phase qualitative project with a 'realist' perspective
  - Narrative to explore the 'real life' journey of students using their grades as prompts for discussion
- ANALYSIS
  - The 4Es were entered into a table to enable a case-by-case framework analysis for each participant to identify common behaviours/actions which could be used by the curriculum team
  - adapted intervention mapping compiled environmental and 'person' modifiable and non-modifiable factors, behaviours and actions which could be employed by the 'student' or the university
- Although we recognised and recorded 'non-modifiable' factors the focus was on those which could be changed or acted upon to improve academic performance/outcomes

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Results - demographics

N=6

Mean age = 29.8

2 male; 4 female

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Encourages
- Positive feedback

Enables
- Feedback on how to make 'good' work 'excellent
- Constructive alignment (explicit)

Empowers
- Variety of assessment methods
- choi

Ennobles

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Results – modifiable student themes

1. Effective time management

2. Understanding the learning outcomes and teaching

3. Focusing on the topic and the role of the programme

4. Use the academic team appropriately

5. Use peer support mechanisms

6. Use feedback effectively

7. Outside of the classroom (time)

8. Managing stress

Results – examples of modifiable student factors

- Planning and effective time management. Start work early.
- Look at learning outcomes and marking criteria
- Stick to guidance and plans provided by module staff
- Focus on learning about the topic rather than grades or academic levels
- Drafting work and re-drafting
- Interaction with personal tutors and module tutors
- Extensive reading around topics related to assignments from the beginning and throughout modules
- Use the recommended reading list
- Utilise peer support
- Review previous feedback and feedback across programme
- Make best use of 'down time' e.g. using the library between classes and days where you are not required in the university
- Short sessions with regular breaks when working on writing assessments or reading

Limitations

Ethnicity

Sample frame: locality, field

Sample size

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Conclusion

- A framework has been developed which is informing the development of an advisory document for students and academic staff

Questions?

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