

'So, What Are We Looking at Here?' -

Research, its Position and Pedagogy in the UK Radiography Profession

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Abstract

Context

As a diagnostic radiographer, educator, and researcher, the focus of my study is research pedagogy in radiography and the importance of research for our profession. I explored how current practice in one educational setting endeavours to realise the aims of The Society and College of Radiographers *Research Strategy 2016-2021* around embedding research in the curriculum, from the perspective of educators and radiography students.

Method

Searching for a research method in harmony with my position within the interpretivist paradigm, while acknowledging my entanglement within the research as a co-constructor with my participants and also mindful of the voices of individuals, I developed Co-Constructed Depiction as an innovative use of imagery in both data collection, analysis and presentation of results. This new method is symbolic of, and congruent with, the practices of the radiography profession since it maintains the importance of images, their interpretation, and use in my research. Participants, who were radiography staff, post-graduate radiography and ultrasound students and 3rd year radiography undergraduate students, took part in individual semi-structured interviews that included participant image making. Information gathered was reported as a pictorial and written depiction and analysis, in an echo of our professional work of image making and reporting. Using a Bourdieusian lens, I looked at the

concept of habitus for radiographers and explored replacing the concept of 'profession' with that of 'field', looking through the data for patterns and noted the *puncta* that which struck me as important.

Results

I developed Bourdieu's work on symbolic capital to propose a new concept of 'symbolic research capital' to explain the importance of a spectrum of research activity for a profession. The results show that radiography students and educators do see the importance of research for individuals and the profession, but they identify many constraints to teaching and learning. There are however many suggestions for improvements, some of which have already had an impact on my teaching. While students were able to identify places where research was embedded in the curriculum, staff did not feel embedding was done well, if at all.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings will inform future research pedagogy and curriculum development in radiography around embedding research in the curriculum in a way that educators and students recognise. A greater awareness of the importance of research and 'symbolic research capital' for radiographers will lead to them being better prepared to take on advanced practice roles for the benefit of patients. My ongoing aim is to make clear to students how important research is for them, their profession and most importantly, for our patients rather than, as one participant described it, 'a hoop to jump through' on the way to qualification.