Performance and the power of midwives' voices

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Performance and the Power of Midwives’ Voices: Exploring Professional Identity

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Professionalism in the curriculum
This is a time of change: frameworks for maternity care are being refreshed in Scotland and across the UK and UWS is refreshing its midwifery curriculum. In this project, student voices have emphasised tacit learning and peer pressure to conform to established norms, as strong influencers in the acquisition of professional values and identity. They also call for closer communication between university and practice teachers in midwifery education.

Performance
Conversations were transcribed ‘in the moment’ by one of the researchers and performed immediately after as poetry. This interpretation was then discussed and further dialogue around the topic encouraged. Hearing their own poetry. This interpretation was then discussed and further 'reinterpretation' and, thereby, deeper discussions and Goffman conversation. Drawing on theories from Schechner (1988) and Goffman (1959), performance was used to facilitate 'reinterpretation' and, thereby, deeper discussions around professionalism. In this poster we present outcomes from the first group of three students.

Being unprofessional....
Unprofessional behaviour is recognised but not always challenged by students in practice settings:

"I've learned more about bad professionalism. All I can do is take it on board and say it's never going to be me!"

Research topic
Professionalism is multidimensional and socially constructed (Martimianakis et al. 2009). Within healthcare it is often described as an “art” complementing science (Van de Camp et al. 2006). Despite its complexity, educational programmes often frame professionalism as a list of individual attributes and behaviours: are there more effective approaches for teaching professionalism?

"I think I get a negative image of what professionalism is. This one's quite an Aggressive and angry person. And I think To be professional You need to be Calm and collected"

"In practice
Students stand at the door
In University you’re told you’re important
But in practice you’re not
Senior midwives sit
Junior midwives stand
Students stand at the door"

Food
The fast midwife
Ticking those boxes
Getting it all sorted
Mark the spot where you will be
That's not what's best for the women"

"Being in control
And not controlling
Some people don’t feel in control unless they are controlling
Being controlling to make life easier
Is unprofessional"

"I was drawn to this drawing
Because I think being professional is
Being able to work in a team
Being able to work with and to have respect for your colleagues
And treating everybody that you work with
Including every woman that you care for
With respect
That’s a big part of professionalism"

References: