



## NET2017 Conference

Tuesday 5 – Thursday 7 September 2017  
Churchill College, Cambridge

### Core and theme paper submission form

**Deadline for submission: Monday 23 January 2017**

Please read the **abstract information** before completing this form. This is available from the conference web page at: <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/training-events/net2017-conference>

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Please note, only abstract submitted on the correct templates will be accepted.

**Abstract title:**

How a transnational network and social capital can enhance scholarly development for Nurse Educators.

**Abstract authors (include names, job titles and institutions):**

Nita Muir

Principal Lecturer: Nursing

University of Brighton

**Background, including underpinning literature and, wherever possible, the international relevance of the research**

This presentation offers some findings from an iterative case study that explored the practice of nurse educators within a European Nurse Education Network and the impact this had for participants. This network is one of a plethora of networks in the field of nurse education with nine active networks identified across Europe all pertaining to inform nurse education. Yet, networks are an area of practice that is generally poorly explored with minimal literature analysing the processes, value and impact of educational networks (Mujis, 2010).

Nurse educators across Europe work in a complex and demanding profession which is diminishing in size and becoming isolated (Wells and Norman 2009). Whilst this is a global phenomenon (McDermid et al., 2012), this is compounded in Europe by a lack of consistency of standards of education across countries impacting on career pathways of both novice and experienced nurse educators.

This study explores the potential for professional development of nurse educators through a work related practice of engaging in a transnational network. More particularly, how learning can occur through the conduit of social capital that is established within such a network (Putnam, 2000). Within this study, learning is defined as occurring within the definitions of scholarly activity as originally identified by Boyer (1990).

**Research question related to this presentation:**

**How does the connectedness within a European Nurse Education Network affect the scholarship practice of the participants?**

**Research methodology/research design, any ethical issues, and methods of data collection and analysis**

The research is interpretatively positioned and a qualitative case study methodology enabled the researcher to gather a holistic portrait of the network activity using three different methods of data collection, beginning with a focus group with the participants of the network to collaboratively frame the study. This was followed by documentary analysis of the artefacts/documents produced by the network, this reviewed a significant sample of reports that reflected key points since the inception of the European Nurse Education network in 1994. Findings from the documentary analysis was then triangulated with data garnered from eight interviews with participants of the network using a cross-case analytical framework.

Rigour was maintained throughout this study through reflexivity, respondent validation of themes and the use of computer assisted qualitative data analysis tool which greatly enhanced the audit trail.

### **Key findings and recommendations**

Findings suggest that network activity that is undertaken by the participant`s is mediated through a form of social capital (Putnam, 2000). Relationships matter in social capital and this is identified as being significant and frames a conduit for learning that occurs as a consequence of engaging with this network, as illustrated by this quote taken from the interview data:

*‘ It`s through being connected, that we learn, that we feel we are not on our own`*

In this instance there was significant learning and development across three of the four domains of scholarly practice:

- a) Scholarship of integration – new insights gained in developing cultural competence, awareness and understanding in a nursing context.
- b) Scholarship of teaching – through sharing of pedagogic practices, knowledge and improving confidence
- c) Scholarship of application – through exploring applied knowledge with colleagues in the context of nursing and education.

Recommendations are for educationalists and managers to consider alternative forms of professional development for nurse educators to ameliorate the isolated nature of their work, and positively encourage work related learning. That in proactively creating social capital across organisations then strong alliances can be formed which are trusted and can encourage knowledge transfer, sharing of ideas and learning.

Further recommendations include the use of Boyers (1990) categories of scholarship in framing professional activity and development for nurse educators across European institutions. This would recognise the breadth of activity expected of *all* nurse educators and would consolidate the current practice in the UK. Currently, the UK professional standards framework is being implemented across UK Universities which begins to recognise the complexity of academic working that Boyer (1990) describes.

### **References (Harvard)**

Boyer, E. 1990. *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, New Jersey. The Carnegie Foundation for the advancement of Teaching

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Muijs, D., West M. & Ainscow, M. 2010. Why network? Theoretical perspectives on networking. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 21, 5-2

Wakefield, K. & Dismore, H. 2015. The Role of Transnational Networking for Higher Education Academics. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 34, 1281-1296.

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**Keywords** (up to five)

- Networks
- Social Capital
- Case Study methodology
- Work related learning
- Professional scholarly activity

**Three key points to indicate how your work contributes to knowledge development within the selected theme**

- Insight into practice of network activity
- Social capital as a learning factor in work related learning
- Use of case study within an interpretative paradigm

