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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS THROUGH ACTION LEARNING SETS

Alison James,

Lecturer Adult Nursing, School of Healthcare Sciences,

Cardiff University, UK

Twitter @alisonjofAber @CUHealthSci



WHY IS LEADERSHIP A CHALLENGE FOR
UNDERGRADUATE NURSES?

HOW CAN EDUCATORS SUPPORT THE
DEVELOPMENT OF EMERGENT LEADERS?

A SUGGESTED APPROACH- ACTION
LEARNING

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LEADERSHIP- THE EXPECTATIONS AND CHALLENGES

- Leadership theory can be taught
- Leadership skills require experience and well-developed opportunities of reflection and application to practice
- Healthcare systems globally are complex systems
- Standards for pre-registration nurse education established by the Nursing Midwifery Council (UK)
- Emotional intelligence can support key decision making, resilience and confidence within the nursing workforce

EDUCATIONAL AND WORKFORCE DRIVERS

- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education specifies the need for inclusion of leadership in all health professional courses leading to registration (2014)
- Driven by policy and key drivers supporting the development of skills in the future workforce (Kings Fund 2017, Welsh Government 2016, NHS 2015)

NURSING CURRICULUM AND STUDENT COHORT POPULATION

- Large cohorts of students
- Across the age range
- Diverse backgrounds and educational backgrounds
- Lack of opportunity for small group work opportunity for reflective discussion
- A divide between academia and practice
- Students often see leadership as a senior role
- Complex education and health organisations colliding



IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP FOR UNDERGRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION

- Failure in leadership has been evident, resulting in poor care, raised mortality rates, poor infection control and a bullying environment (Francis Report 2013, Mazars 2015,)
- Developing resilience and ‘speaking out’
- Negotiating the complex environment
- Challenge and improve care delivery
- Innovators and influencers

IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP FOR UNDERGRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION

- Patient advocates
- Facilitating team working
- Ensuring safe patient care
- Influencing positive working cultures
- Providing a professional example
- Ability to adapt and develop within complex systems



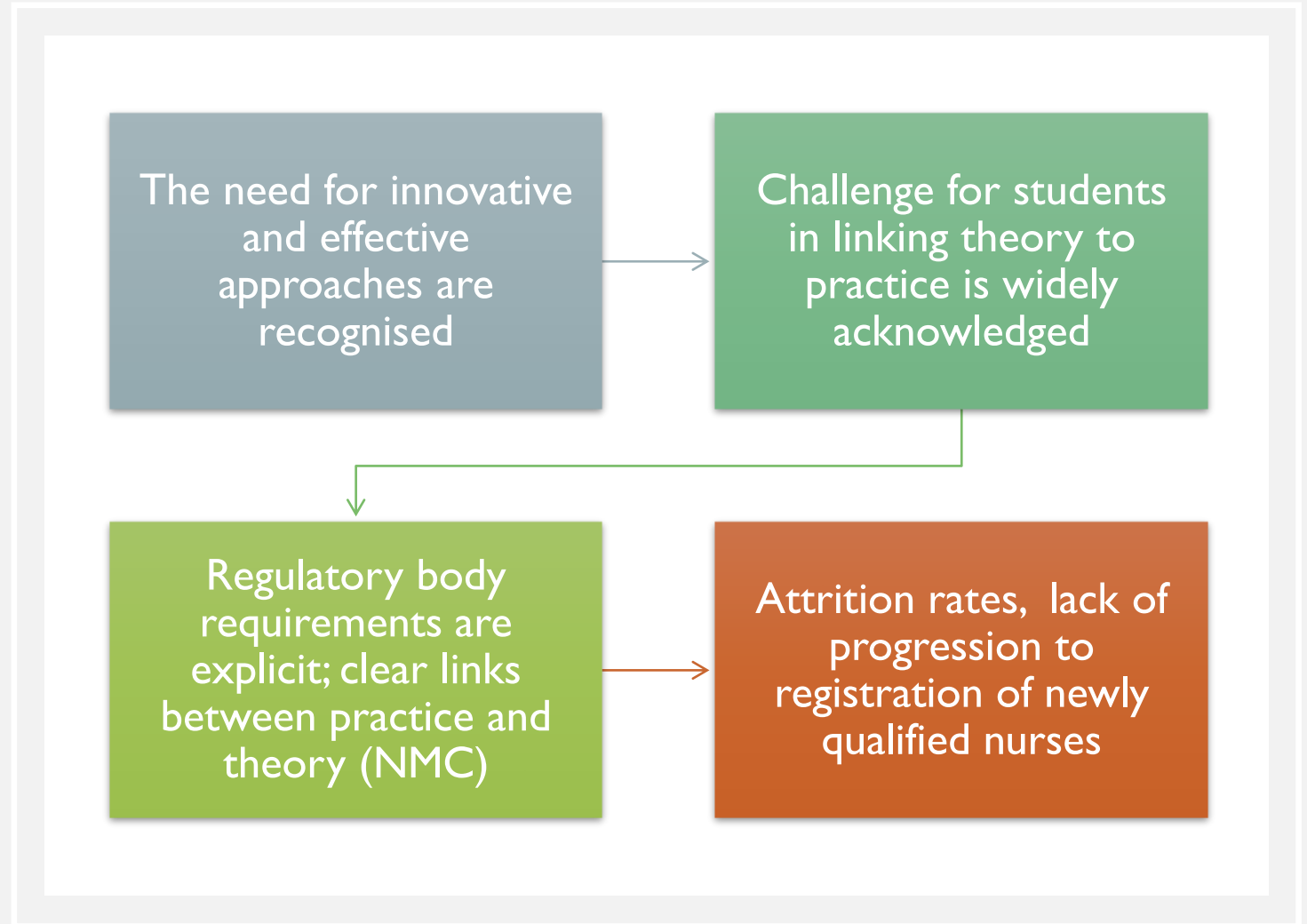
CHALLENGES FOR UNDERGRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION

The need for innovative and effective approaches are recognised

Challenge for students in linking theory to practice is widely acknowledged

Regulatory body requirements are explicit; clear links between practice and theory (NMC)

Attrition rates, lack of progression to registration of newly qualified nurses



CHALLENGES FOR UNDERGRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION

- What is the most effective approach?
- What is effective leadership in nursing ?
- How is it best developed in nursing students?
- How can it be embedded to improve and impact patient safety following registration ?

STUDENTS THOUGHTS

- Large cohorts with theory delivery - how can this be applied to practice?
- Lack of seeing self as leader- ‘just’ a student nurse-not a ‘leader’
- Lack of confidence – Others have much more experience, why would they listen ?



CREATING LEADERSHIP AS A VISION

- Identify inspirational leaders- knowing what good practice and innovation looks like
- Understand the challenge of speaking up
- Knowing where to access support
- Equip students with support for leadership development- Action Learning?



ACTION LEARNING TO SUPPORT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Action Learning is an approach to learning and change developed by Revens (1980)
- Developed as a work based, problem solving approach to initiating change through a questioning formula
- Further evolving approaches to Action Learning include reflection with a facilitative guide to focus and provide direction

ACTION LEARNING TO SUPPORT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT


- Experiential learning style and reflective practice approach,
- Familiar for nursing education; learning from observation and practical experience (Kolb 1984, Schon 1983)
- Focus is on taking active progress towards set goals and objectives.

ACTION LEARNING FORMULA

Alpha- the external environment resources and values



Beta- the cycle of decision making and negotiation-
“survey, trial, action, audit and consolidate”

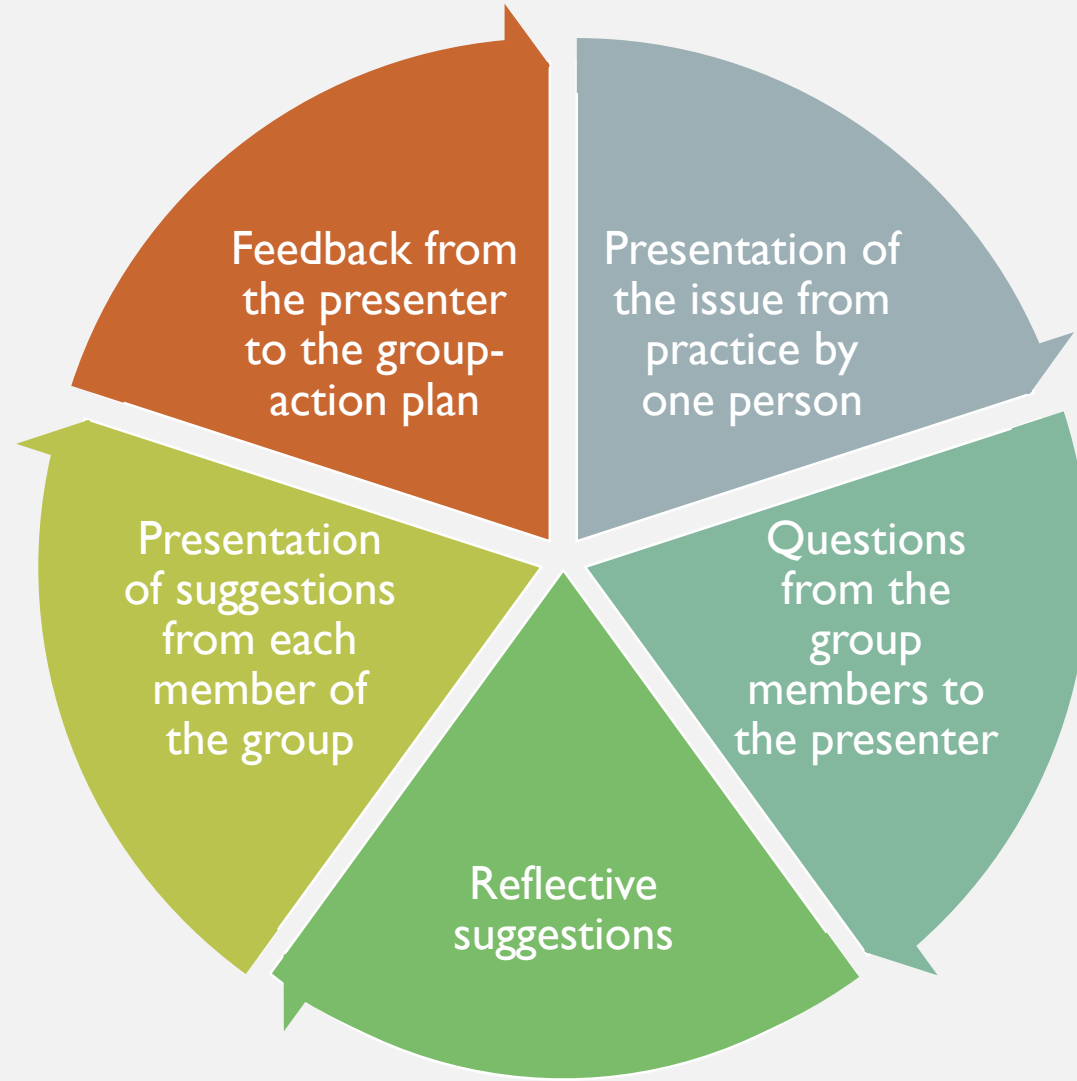


Gamma- the unique process of learning through self-inquisition, self-awareness and seeking knowledge.

THE ACTION LEARNING PROCESS

- Small group working of 6 to 8 people, in 'Sets'
- A straightforward process
- Requires excellent facilitation skills to enable and mediate the progression of discussion and presentation of ideas
- Learn from the process
- Students can acquire confidence in reflecting on the issue,
- Relating evidence to real practice scenarios

ACTION LEARNING PROCESS



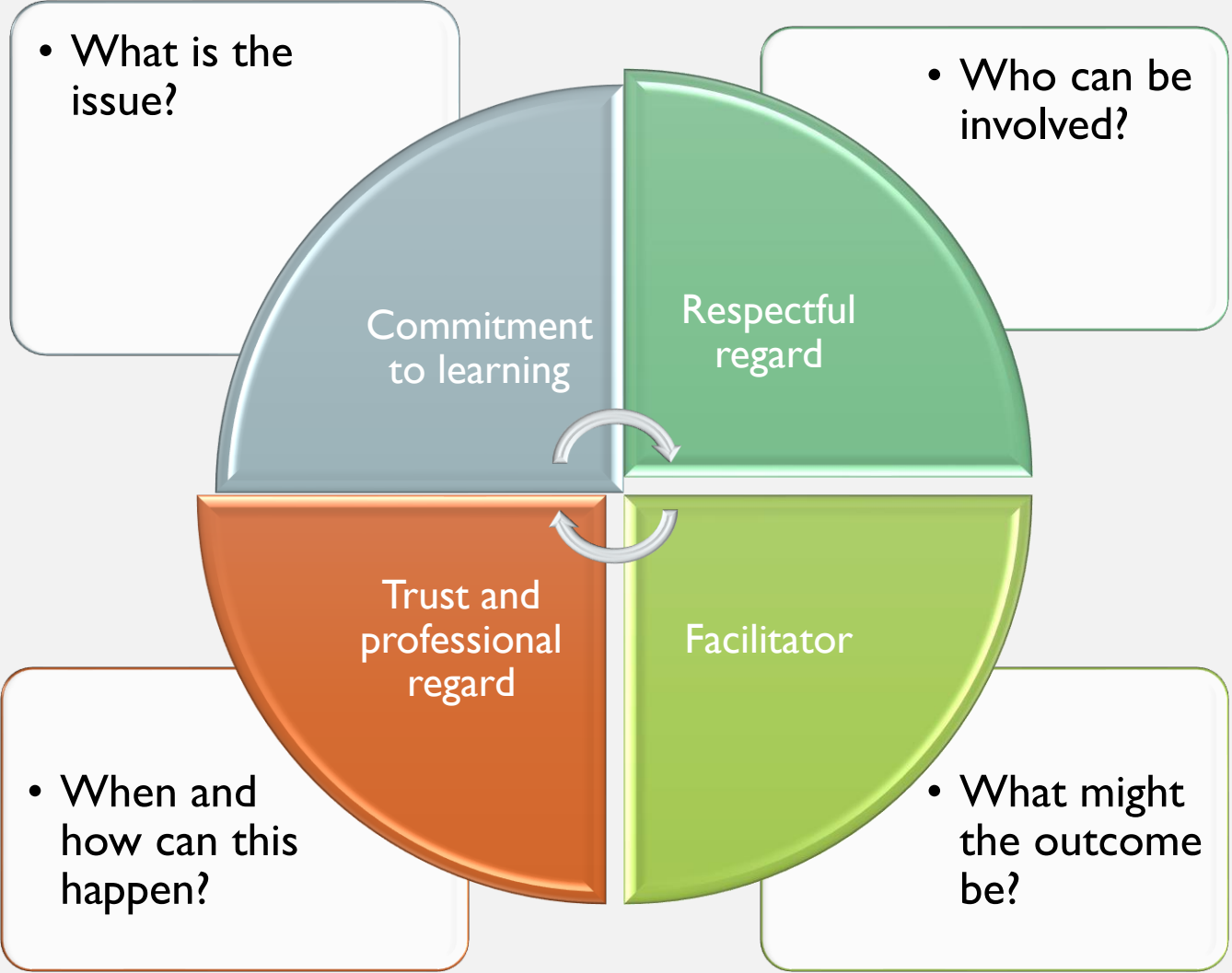
BENEFITS OF ACTION LEARNING

- Opportunity for shared learning from practice
- Listening and questioning skills
- Reflection and analysis
- Problem solving
- Decision making

BENEFITS OF ACTION LEARNING

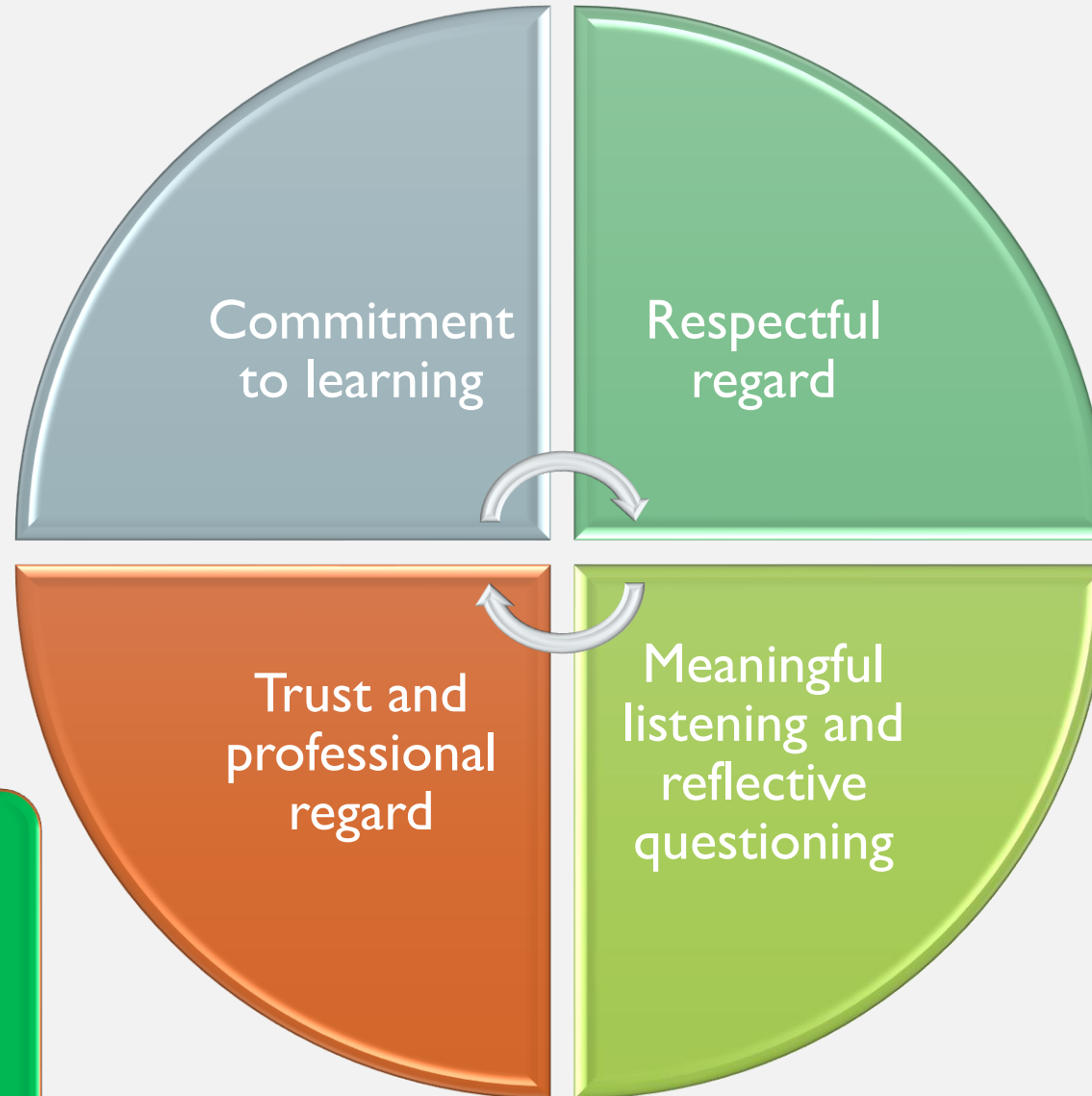
- Results in a focused action
- Can be interdisciplinary and promotes cross profession working
- Provides opportunity for improvements in practice
- Can be utilized throughout the career
- For leadership, allows self reflection and opportunity for personal EI growth

Core Components of Action Learning



COMPONENTS OF ACTION LEARNING

- The challenge or experience



- 6 to 8 people who have a common interest

- Formulate an action

- Experienced Facilitator

EXAMPLES

- Personal tutor groups using AL over 3 years
- Applying in clinical practice for leading quality improvement projects
- In between clinical placements for students in theory blocks
- Leadership development for integrating health and social care agencies
- Clinical managers improving team work
- Supporting academic assessments and academic skills

THE CHALLENGES OF ACTION LEARNING

- Lack of empirical data to support its robustness as an effective methodology for higher education (Leonard and Marquardt, 2010)
- Small group working, and cohorts of students are large in number- resource intensive
- Students lack confidence and feel discomfort at discussing challenging situation from practice.



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WHAT'S NEXT?

- Further research into the effectiveness of AL
- Innovative thinking in developing our future leaders
- Evaluation of the impact of AL for leadership skills

CONCLUSION

- Leadership expectation challenges undergraduate nurse education
- The future of nurse education will certainly change!
- Interdisciplinary and intergenerational collaborative approaches to leadership are needed
- Academics and clinical staff have considerable opportunities to influence leadership skills in the future workforce
- Is Action Learning one way of to support ?



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