



# Identifying the “Practical Wisdom” of Practice Educators in the Allied Health Professions to Enhance Learning and Patient Care

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## Background

The project is a collaboration between practice-based educators and academics in the Pedagogic in Health and Social Care theme in the School of Health Sciences. The aim of this study was to Identify practical wisdoms of practice educators in the Allied Health Professions to enhance learning and patient care. Allied Health Professionals form Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Podiatry. The pilot study assess the feasibility of collecting, collating and interpreting a broad range of practice educators’ experiences across the allied health disciplines.

- 1.To Develop the research skills of practitioners involved
- 2.Describe the range of practice learning-related experience from the practice educator’s pint of view
- 3.Gain an inter-professional perspective on issues that matter to practice educators with regard to supporting learning in practice
- 4.Examine how practice educators integrate their experimental knowledge when they make decisions about students competence and capability as future practitioners§

## Method

Academics from the School of Health Sciences and Practice Educators from Three Allied Health Disciplines used narrative interviews to explore how individual practitioners integrate their experiences to formulate decisions and judgements that guide their actions as educators.

6 interviews were carried with practice educators. This included 2 Occupational Therapy, 2 Physiotherapist and 2 Podiatrist participants. There were no specific exclusion criteria. The only inclusion criteria is their current active involvement in practice education.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim Data analysis and interpretation involved an iterative process within the research team, validate through ongoing discussion within the Practice Educators Hub and the PHSC group.

**Narrative Analysis:** Jordan’s and Little’s (2006) ‘policy genre’ was applied to distinguish between conventional story telling and the “unfolding of practical wisdoms”. This focused on behaviour and the ways reoccurring practical solutions (policy) are applied in order to carry out their roles. The analysis took into account Arthur Franks (2010) notion of what work the stories do in peoples lives. Stories give people a sense of subjectivity and assembles groups around a shared understanding of a particular story or situation.

## STORY CAPACITIES

...make the story more than just a structure by adding content

### STORIES:

#### DEAL WITH HUMAN TROUBLES -

Troublesome stories embed themselves in other stories.

#### DISPLAY AND EXPRESS CHARACTER -

They form character by evaluating differing expressions of it as possibilities for action and as possible identities.

#### OPEN UP MORAL COMPLEXITY -

Stories teach what is ‘good’ and ‘bad’ by linking actions to consequences depending on how they are told.

#### HAVE RESONANCE AS PORTALS -

Stories echo other stories, and can summon up whole cultures.

#### ARE SYMBIOTIC -

..with people and places. We are born (enter) into stories that we depend on for our identities. We live by telling stories; stories live by being told. Stories establish the moral significance of locations.

Frank AW (2010) *Letting Stories Breathe*. Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press.

## Results:

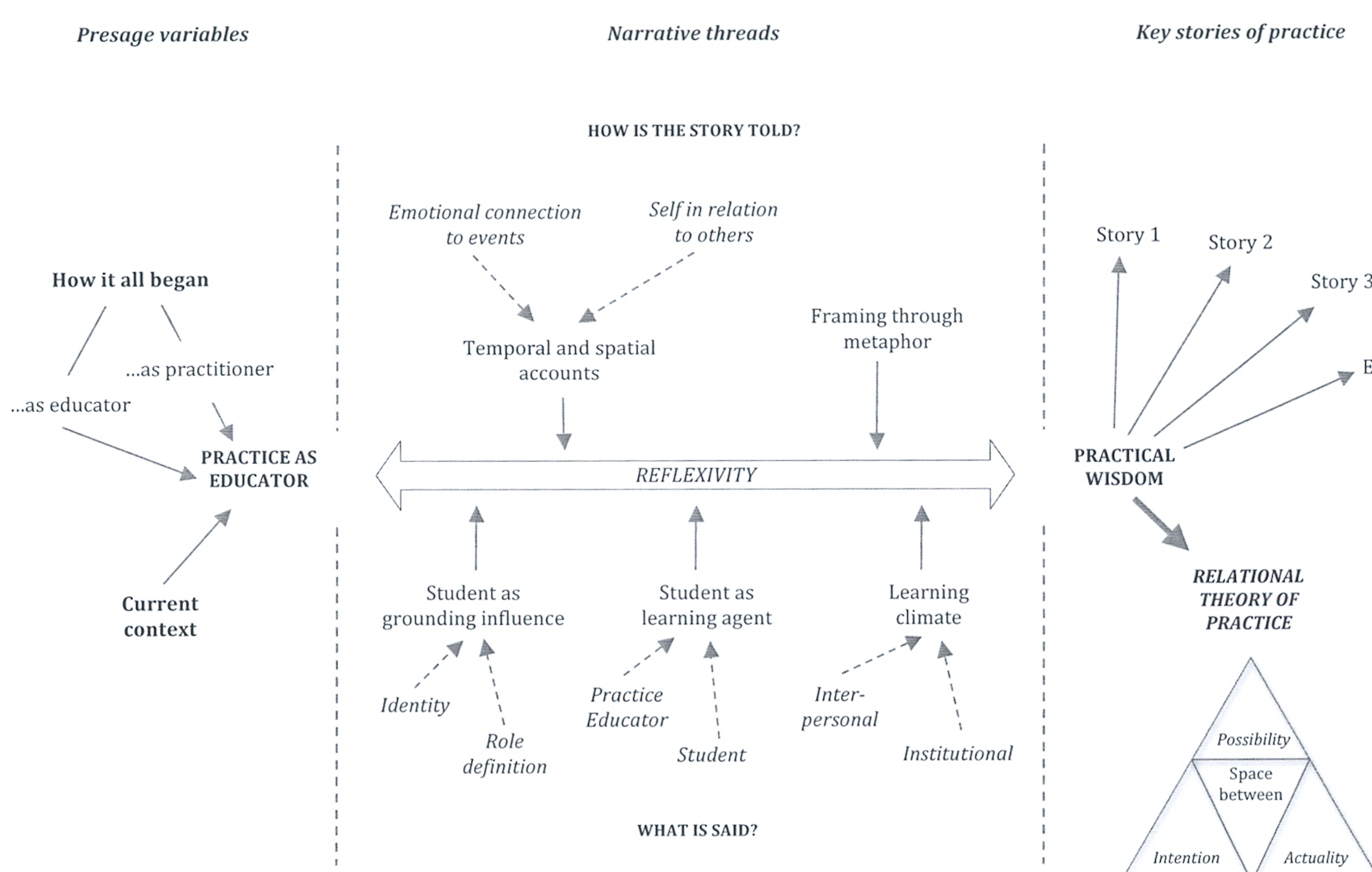
Data from the interviews have provided a workplace experience for those practice educators involved in co-interviewing participants.

The research team in collaboration with Dr Martin Glynn have developed monologues of the practice educators stories and ‘practical wisdoms’.

Extract from from a monologues based on data from a Podiatry interview (Monologues written by Dr Martin Glynn and Dr Viny Cross on behalf of the PHSC research team:

*“I had one student who wasn’t engaging as much as the other two were, and was a little bit more hands off. By the end of it she actually enjoyed it, but it was a struggle. I think we turned her round a little bit into actually enjoying it a little bit more, but it was hard work. Overall, I think the students’ feedback was quite good. They seemed to enjoy the placements as a whole. In spite of being short staffed at times and being chopped and changed, they coped pretty well. In spite of the stress of the job there were high points as a clinical educator. And I liked being appreciated. I liked seeing members of staff doing well, students progressing and moving on, patients feeling happy. I had a real sense of achievement.”*

Identifying the ‘practical wisdom’ of practice educators - evolving interpretation



**Conclusion:** Analysis focuses on the innovative metaphors used by participants to stimulate thinking about praxis in practice based education.