

A Qualitative Evaluation of a Student Midwife Placement Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Dr. Clare Maxwell, Pamela Donaghy-
Binks, Amanda Robinson, Professor
Valerie Fleming

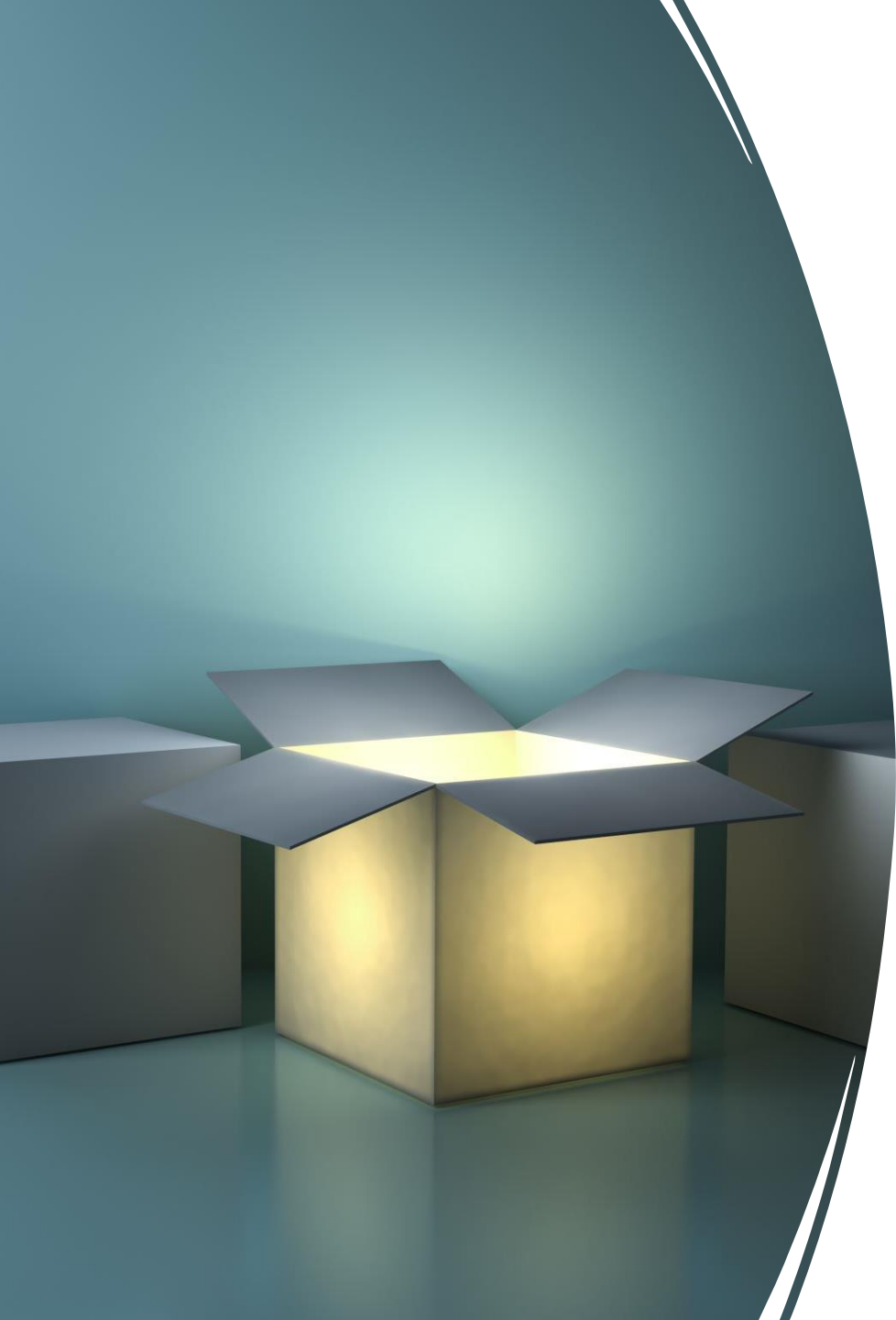


The current student placement 'impasse'

- Nursing* and midwifery students require 2300 hours of supervised practice
- In 2019, the NHS long term plan (NHS 2019) committed to increasing nursing and midwifery training places by 25%, with further increases planned up until 2028
- Attracting applicants to midwifery programmes is not a problem, however procuring increased numbers of clinical placements with resultant supervised practice is a challenge.
- Up to 600 hours can be simulated practice

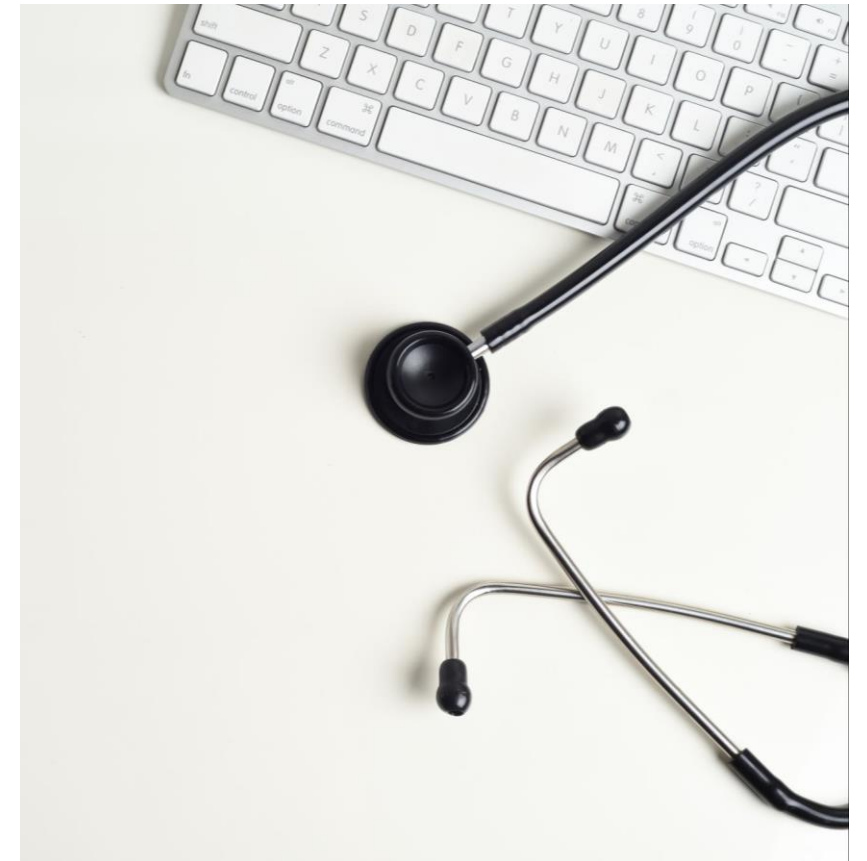
Thinking outside of the box – trying to solve the placement impasse

- SSSA, CLiP
- Non-placement simulation used as practice hours
- Widening of the type of placements for nursing and midwifery students
- Clinical placement expansion programme



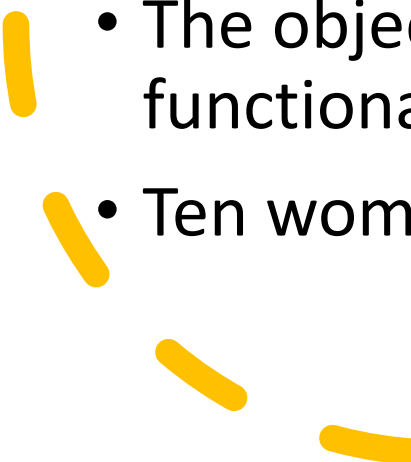
Health services and women from ethnic minority groups


- Khan (2021) identified five key themes which impact women from ethnic minority groups experiences and use of health services: communication, midwife-woman relationship, healthcare services and systems, culture and social needs.
- Konje and Konje (2021) found language difficulties, lack of cultural awareness by caregivers and lack of continuity as impacting effective access to maternity care
- In 2020 in the UK, women from black ethnic groups were four times more likely to die in pregnancy than women from white groups, and women from Asian ethnic backgrounds were almost twice as likely to die (Draper et al 2022).





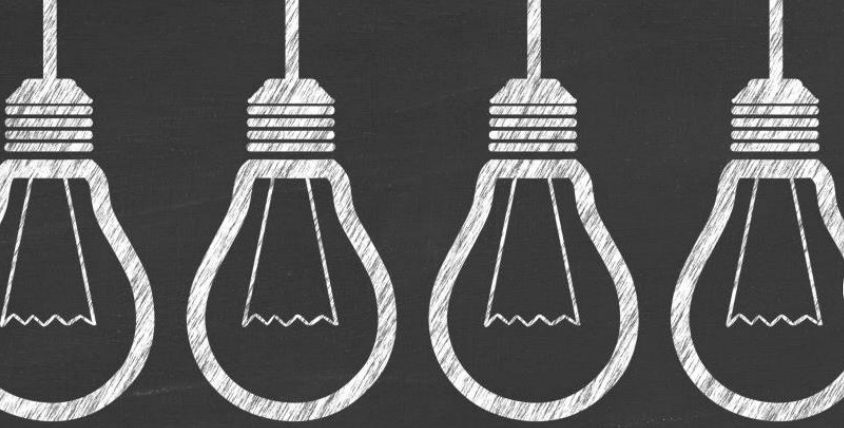
The ESOL Stepping Stones project

- ESOL Stepping Stones is an innovative course designed to deliver basic English language provision to mothers new to English in community settings
 - It is offered to vulnerable women and their babies in local communities
 - The objective of the Stepping Stones© project was to give women functional language skills and information on health and parenting
 - Ten women had signed up to the project in the North West of England
- 



The student placement

- Funding was secured by LJMU from HEE to expand clinical placements.
- A lecturer in practice placements was appointed and scoped out the ESOL Stepping Stones project as a placement that student midwives could attend
- The overarching aim of the placement was to provide student midwives with a non-traditional community placement
- This would allow them a unique opportunity to increase their understanding of the challenges faced by those who do not speak English and to develop their communication skills in relation to this.




Our research project

- Aim: To assess the impact of the ESOL Stepping Stones placement on student and participant learning.
- Design: qualitative
- Ethics: received from LJMU
- Participants: 10 student midwives, 3 ESOL participants
- Data collection: 3 focus groups via MS Teams with the students, 1 face to face interview with the ESOL participants
- Data analysis: Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2018) and Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning used as a framework to evaluate learning



Our Findings



Putting the scripts aside: expectations versus reality of being an educator

- The students were enthusiastic about being able to make a change to the women's lives they would be working with, however the circumstances of the women they would be working with had changed
- The students quickly had to 're-set' their original expectations of the work they would be undertaking during the placement
- Further challenges came in the guise of the concept of 'role play,' which was the original educational tool the student would be using with the women.

Her English was really, really limited, so we kind of almost put the scripts aside because we realised that it just wouldn't get anywhere

We tried anything, it took us about 5 minutes to try and ask her to pretend and she couldn't understand "pretend"

So she actually spoke fluently in Arabic and then she said she was basically trying to say to us that's what it's like for her the other way around....it is really, really difficult. And it really put it into perspective, cos we don't know what you're saying



Adapting and personalising teaching

- The students worked in pairs with the same woman for 5 teaching sessions.
- This provided an element of continuity, which the students recognised was critical to them building a rapport with the women.
- For each woman, the students learnt to gauge the individual level of understanding they possessed and were able to respond to this
- The students displayed a level of ingenuity and creativity, working to produce resources prior to their next teaching session

She was really, anxious about it all and she didn't have any confidence in her ability with English. She could speak really, really, really limited, basic English; but she couldn't find the confidence to say it out loud.

We brought some props today and the lady could say what the objects were.... you can see she's wants to show you what she's saying.... you can see, the concentration when she's trying to tell you what the object is. And she enjoyed it probably just as much as us

A red pushpin is pinned to a blue background with faint numbers and lines, suggesting a calendar or a grid. The pushpin is in the lower-left quadrant of the image.

We are learning too: an environment for mutual learning

- The placement created a mutual learning environment for all
- For the women this encompassed not only English language skills acquisition but also listening skills, pronunciation, education and general knowledge
- The students referred to improved confidence and relationship building and better understanding of the challenges the women faced

Here, they explain in simple ways. This is the first time I actually learned some useful English.... (EP)

We also learnt some Arabic which is really helpful... so we are learning too (SM)

I learned how to set up an appointment at the GP and not only how to make one for the same day but for upcoming days or weeks (EP)

I think it's given me confidence as well, for when we do qualify, because although I think many of us have had some exposure to women who need interpretation, you can't choose what exposure you get as students (SM)

Kind of made me think and reflect on our practice, about how continuity models can be. Just because you can see that the relationship which has developed within what like 5 sessions (SM)



Taking our learning forwards

- The students wanted to improve the service that had been offered to the women and made numerous suggestions based on their placement experiences
- The programme also impacted on some of the students who appeared to exhibit a 'new found empathy' when reflecting on the challenges of being in a country where a person's first language wasn't spoken

• It was actually really good, wasn't it? Was really, really helpful. I think it's something that we need to take forwards in placement

Made me think how vulnerable it can be in a country where it wasn't your first language and you were having a baby and you couldn't get across to the midwife even the simplest concerns



Conclusion

- The shortage of midwives in the UK has led to an increase in training places being commissioned
- However this in turn places pressures on the existing midwifery workforce tasked to supervise and assess the students.
- This study demonstrates how placing student midwives in a unique non-maternity setting can lead to clear benefits in their learning
- It also illustrates that small scale placements can give big returns
- Importantly, it confirms that quality of learning during a non-traditional placement is not compromised and that health students can gain valuable knowledge and skills that they may not otherwise achieve in traditional placements.



References

- Draper, E. et al. (2022) MBRRACE-UK Perinatal Mortality Surveillance Report, UK Perinatal Deaths for Births from January to December 2015. Oxford.
- Health Education England (2019) Maternity Workforce Strategy – Transforming the Maternity Workforce Phase 1 : Delivering the Five Year Forward View for Maternity. London.
- Khan, Z. (2021) ‘Ethnic health inequalities in the UK’s maternity services: a systematic literature review’, British Journal of Midwifery, 29(2). Available at: <https://www.britishjournalofmidwifery.com/content/literature-review/ethnic-health-inequalities-in-the-uk-s-maternity-services-a-systematic-literature-review>
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Konje, J.K and Konje, J.C. (2021) Experiences of accessing maternity care in the UK: Perspectives from Somali migrant women in Leicester. European Journal of Midwifery. 5(56): 1-10. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.18332%2Fejm%2F143167>
- NHS (2019) The NHS Long Term Plan. Available at: <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/>