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Student Collaboration in Action: A Case Study Exploring the Role of Youth Work Pedagogy Transforming Interprofessional Education in Higher Education

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Abstract: The College of Health, Psychology, and Social Care at the University of Derby has transformed its Interprofessional Education (IPE) offer from a top-down standalone event into a five-year strategy designed and delivered in genuine collaboration with students. Across the higher education sector, IPE has been a struggle, tokenistic at best, with limited buy-in from students. When academic-led it prevents deep learning; however, by utilising an informal education approach students bring their life, programme, and practice learning together to genuinely break down barriers between professional disciplines. This paper will use an autoethnographic case study to explore the challenges and opportunities of genuine collaboration based on youth work principles in the creation of a ‘value-added curriculum’, not aligned to modules or assessments. It found that buy-in from academics and students comes when students are empowered to take the lead. This is based on youth work pedagogical principles of group work, relationships with shrinking professional distance, critical pedagogy, genuine agency, and an emotional connection made between the professionals and service users. It suggests the potential is considerable as youth workers bring their pedagogical practice to a broader range of spaces within and beyond higher education.

Keywords: interprofessional education; youth work; collaboration; empowerment; relationships; professional distance; critical pedagogy; agency



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1. Introduction

Tragically, when authorities conduct serious case reviews to examine what happened when children or vulnerable adults have died or experienced serious harm, time after time reviews demand improvements in interprofessional collaboration [1–3]. The university environment provides the ideal opportunity to develop these collaborative skills to improve outcomes for patients, service users, and project beneficiaries. This is described as Interprofessional Education (IPE) [4].

Interprofessional education is a vital component of good quality health and social care [5,6]. It is important in preparing a ‘collaboration ready’ professional [7]. IPE is defined as “when two or more professions learn about, from and with each other to enable effective collaboration and quality of care” [8]. Across the higher education sector, IPE has been a struggle and not easily taught [9]. It is tokenistic at best with limited buy-in from students. Student are often grouped together without pedagogical thought, reinforcing separation and difference [10], despite IPE being increasingly identified as essential work-ready skills for professional practice [7]. It is described as a collaborative movement [11] and requires the ability to discern between common competencies, complementary competencies, and collaborative competencies [12]. This requires relationship and dialogue rather than observation.

When academic-led it often becomes either an observation, where students attend an event, planned and facilitated by academics, or an awkward discomfort, where students are put together in a room [13], taught common learning that is relevant to them all [14],

and academics leave confused as to why there was no relationship or collaboration with no sense of long-term impact where small group teaching is essential [14].

This paper will examine through autoethnography, using a case study of the College and Health, Psychology, and Social Care at University of Derby, the author's reflections on adopting a youth work pedagogy for interprofessional education. The research question to be examined is 'how would youth work pedagogy support the delivery of interprofessional education in health and social care disciplines at the University of Derby?' In other words, what would happen if interprofessional education at the University of Derby was 'youthworked'? This starting point could initiate a broader discussion of the potential of youth work pedagogy in a broader range of spaces both within and beyond higher education.

Youth work is a distinct pedagogical practice, a process of informal education located in supported relationships, with the facilitation of participation and social justice at its heart [15]. Inherent in this practice is the tension of 'youthworking' a context; creating democratic relationship-driven processes in a market-orientated context [16], such as higher education.

2. University of Derby Context

2.1. Before the Youth Work Approach

At the University of Derby, there were pockets of programme-level good practice in IPE. However, the college-wide IPE portfolio was high on aspiration and perspiration but a frustration for those involved in it. There was a strategy in place, but it was a roadmap to embedding evidence-based IPE and sought senior leadership support to embed across programmes with an IPE steering group. This led directly to an 'IPE forum' being made up of department heads and discipline leads, a top-down approach disconnected from both the academics with most contact with students, and the students themselves. This made deep learning and meaningful experiential learning [17] unlikely and problematic.

Essentially, this college-wide IPE offer was a value-added curriculum, with tension between wanting mandatory engagement but with no way to enforce that as a non-credit bearing learning programme. Complexity was added based on the structures of different programmes with some students full-time on campus and others on campus for day release and having literally no room in their timetables for additional opportunities, a common issue in IPE [18]. The more professional groups involved, the harder this becomes [14]. At the University of Derby, there were almost fifty distinct programmes and almost 7000 students in the college IPE offer. There had to be another way.

Individual programmes collaborated, and although these were popular initiatives, they stood alone, and their reach was limited. For example, social work and mental health nursing students participated in a very engaging simulation where they had to assess a range of service user actors and examine their mental capacity. Adult nursing and radiography students collaborated similarly in acute care simulations. Less successful were attempts for postgraduate students to learn topics together from study skills to careers advice, where some programmes (particularly from non-health backgrounds) did not engage at all.

The only genuine cross-college IPE event was the flagship IP Conference for 400 new students. At the conference, there were high profile speakers such as celebrity social worker, Sharon Shoesmith; and experts by experience, talking through case studies or practice. Students listened and talked to their neighbour when requested. The conference happened two months after students started, and for many students they had limited understanding of their own professional identity and were ill-prepared to articulate that, let alone synergise other disciplines into deeper learning around improving outcomes. The timing of IPE is highly contested [19]. The layout of the room was theatre style, so discussion was limited to those sitting around you, which were chiefly peers from their own programme, which did not lend itself to deeper learning [20]. The critical point that inspired me to volunteer to fill the IPE lead vacancy was a well-meaning attempt to

introduce the programmes of the college where academics introduced their programmes from the stage. As the more dynamic academics received a more enthusiastic response from students, it became clear to me that engagement on this scale needed to be student-led, and an edutainment approach [21] could transform the potential of this event.

The author is an experienced teacher, lecturer, and youth worker. I often find myself with adults and students where I 'youth worked' the room using informal approaches, relationship and agency-driven. I taught across several programmes in social and community studies, primarily located in the youth work team. Youth work students are notoriously insecure around other professionals who they feel do not value their contribution, in particular social workers. This is not new and was identified in the Albemarle report of 1960, where youth workers felt neglected and held in low regard [22]. Cooper [15], argues this is not surprising considering the interprofessional and diverse contexts and practice, myriad of funding pathways, and the fact it is practiced from anyone from untrained volunteers to postgraduate professionals. Jeffs [23] argues this is compounded by the range of other professionals appropriating youth work pedagogy, while De St Croix [16] argues many human services face pressure to move from person-centred practice to market-orientated targeted work and see their professional status and values threatened. However, teaching social workers, I was surprised that they felt similar powerlessness when comparing themselves to other professionals, most notably doctors. There was clearly an angle to pursue examining professional assumptions and prejudices. I decided to 'youthwork' IPE and seek to transform the IPE offer into a programme genuinely student-led from top to bottom but with a critical pedagogy approach to tackling the big issues head on and foster an emotional connection to their disciplines and 'making a difference'. I wanted to apply my background in large-scale faith-based youth events, where dynamic facilitation enabled transformative learning into the large-scale IPE conference, and expand it to a second event.

2.2. After the Youth Work Approach

In 2018, the IPE steering group led by managers, evolved into the IPE forum, a collaboration made up chiefly of new academics and students. They designed and delivered a new college-wide IPE offer developed across the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the college as follows:

- 'Induction to IPE' (online for undergraduate, on campus for postgraduate).
- 'Cake and Debate' discussion-based workshops looking at the issues of the day for all students.
- 'Case Study Case Conference' assessing the needs of a complex family for second year undergraduate students.
- 'Experts by Experience World Café' exploring service-user experiences for all postgraduate students.
- 'Collaborative Leadership Workshops' for all final year students (commissioned and externally facilitated).

Over the next three years the IPE offer became characterized as a student-led collaboration and informal education pedagogy with equality and deeper relationships at its heart. There was an overt focus on examining the prejudices between professional disciplines. This paper reviews that evolution and focusses on three aspects: the changing IPE forum, the large case study case conference, and two online events, the current practice debates, 'cake and debate' and 'experts by experience world cafe' exploring the testimonies of service-users.

3. Materials and Methods

This paper adopts an autoethnographic methodology. This is where the writer develops a research question regarding a specific experience and then describes and analyses his/her own behaviour and experience. The purpose is to develop an objective understanding of the behaviour and experience by positioning the writer as the insider describing

what happened and the outsider analyst [24]. The writing style is often personal, emotional and more artistic than the traditional journal article. It can enable the inclusion of highly nuanced meanings, depth, and knowledge about the lived experience often unavailable to 'outsider' researchers [24].

This qualitative approach is not without its critics, and often challenged for generating more of an autobiography than rigorous scientific research [25]. However, it offers an innovative way to examine the lived experience. It is highly appropriate when examining the social interactions from a pedagogical approach to holistically explore the self (the author), the sociocultural group (experiencing IPE at University of Derby), and the writing style. This is especially pertinent when the author wishes to engage and resonate with the reader's own experiences [25]. This resonance is described by Dadds [26] as 'empathetic validity'. In this context, such empathetic validity is sought in terms of the potential for youth work pedagogical approaches in higher education and to engage with the highly emotional nature of the curriculum described below.

To answer the research question, a qualitative case study examines one individual case in a context [27] to enable understanding of the social reality to explore how the author made sense of his world [28]. Qualitative research leads to an interpretive paradigm with thick rich descriptions of the researcher as the biographer, interpreter, and evaluator [29].

The ethical issues with this method are most likely in terms of the vulnerability of the writer especially when faced with the academic demands for positivist validity, reliability, and generalizable research findings. Furthermore, autoethnographers by their nature will include other social actors whose anonymity may be challenging to protect [24]. Whilst advised that no formal ethical approval was necessary, long conversations were held between the author and his manager and the special issue editors to ensure the journey does not appear to criticise or damage the reputation of the university identified in the case study. It does refer to anonymous voluntary student evaluations from participants, which included standardised consent to their use in published research papers. These support the reflections of the writer.

4. Discussion—The Journey in IPE

4.1. Shifting the Power—The IPE Forum

After selling the idea to the Head of School and Dean, the first IPE Forum meeting had standing room only. After pitching a proposal to managers, they stepped aside. This had to be a bottom-up approach based on relationships with students and frontline academics. The first student representatives had just been to the IPE conference and had no problem giving their feedback. It was interesting that they were exclusively mature students, new to higher education but experienced practitioners which made them ideal candidates to drive forward a new strategy. It was no accident that the first representative was from the youth work programme, and she could see clearly how a different pedagogical approach was needed. She thought the conference needed to be focused on group work principles; using one case study to explore the different disciplines in the college took hold. This has continued to this day.

As a youth worker, I have a long-standing commitment to cooperative learning through group work as a successful teaching and learning method [30]. Effective group work is a proven tool to enable learning in the classroom. There are many benefits to group work including involving learners actively and facilitating the value and exchange of ideas and opinions. There is much value from students receiving peer recognition when they agree with another's viewpoint. Group work is effective in developing communication, leadership, and teamwork skills. It also helps to manage more extreme or radical opinions through the negotiation of consensus opinion. It enables learners to discuss topic content in specialised language and encourages shy participants who would not present their ideas in large groups. Group work allows learners of mixed abilities to work side-by-side and draw on individual strengths to complete tasks [31].

By recruiting new academics to the IPE forum, this provided them with a great opportunity to induct themselves into their new college as well as communicate with their own teams. Splitting the IPE leadership across different schools in the college helped share the relationship-building remit and is a model that has continued since. The relationship business was crucial to achieve buy in from busy academics who, like students, were focused on the core business of teaching, learning, and assessment of mandatory modules. By literally walking around the college offices talking to colleagues, learning names and faces, real momentum grew. Enthusiasm for learning and working together was shared. This took time. Relationships take time to develop and contribute to learning [32,33]. Universities are full of committees and groups, but students are rarely actively involved and chiefly have to fit in to university designed processes. This flipped approach [34] was deliberate and contributed to both the strong relationships with academics and greater responsibility taken by students, such as facilitation roles in the programme.

The need to achieve buy in from academics and students led to an emerging informal approach and transparent information sharing where professional distance was intentionally shrunk. After several experiments, a college area on the virtual learning environment (VLE) was created, which all students were enrolled in, enabling the location of all materials and resources and emailing directly the 6700 students. Drawing on youth work practice where engagement required support, the IPE lead made himself available to students. Rather than signpost to a document and enforce sanitised distant professional relationships, direct communication was invested in with intention, as a specific pedagogical approach. An interest in students, their programmes, practice experience, and aspirations were demonstrated. More authentic interactions in education require staff and students to get to know each other on a personal level [35]. The IPE lead and students had email exchanges and became excited about the programmes they were on, their journeys towards university, and built enthusiasm for the opportunities on offer. Students on the IPE forum were treated like equals; academic representatives were interested in their lives, partners, and families, empathetic to workload struggles, and gave them as much responsibility as they could handle, as genuine co-creators [36]. Shrinking professional distance is not without its problems [37] and needs genuine reflective practice to minimize vulnerability to prevent intentional informal professional relationships crossing boundaries into peers or more intimate relationships. However, in higher education, there is significant crossover where many academics are still in practice and may encounter students in practice settings as peers. One of the largest challenges of this approach was workload. It took significant time to sustain relationships with multiple students, in particular, when authentically responding to emails using an informal education approach. Rather than just answering the question, I expressed interest in their experiences and journey, which promoted engagement but took significant time.

The commitment to collaboration embodied a critical pedagogy, a complete contrast to the student as customer in the marketized higher education sector in England [38]. Critical pedagogy refers to an intentional approach to develop awareness of power dynamics and injustice enabling problem solving and collective action [39]. This commitment to praxis [40] encouraged students to be fully informed of the problems and issues, structurally and institutionally, to enable them to work as genuine partners to problem solve. This is argued to be the corner stone of the new pedagogical approaches in higher education which enable deeper learning [17]. It certainly formed the basis of the IPE forum meetings looking at student-led ideas to encourage engagement recognising how students were engaging with their studies more generally as consumers. This was in direct contrast to their other experiences of collaboration with academics and university processes. This authentic engagement is a crucial component of critical pedagogy [41].

It was reaping rewards and was reflected in a similar informal approach to the pedagogy.

4.2. Students as Partners

Collaboration with students adopted an ‘asset-based’ approach, identifying and responding to opportunities and strengths, building on their agency to take control and develop their potential [42]. Their skills and competencies were built on and empowered. Mutual accountability, high expectations, and responsibilities were communicated with space for reflection and challenge [43]. It was based on genuine respect and treating students as equal adults, respecting their autonomy and agency [44]. In youth work terms, agency is about starting where the young person is, where the voice of the young person is central to the process of the work [16]. In IPE, this translates to the student professional identity. At its heart was a need for students to have a solid professional identity [45].

Practitioners need to invest in relationships, build on strengths, and find common spaces and build accountability [43]. This requires, trust, care, safety, and reciprocal exchanges for effective relationships. It requires effective trusting relationships [46], where students are pushed to the edge of their comfort zones [47]. The IPE offer was developed around student voice and learning needs informed by conversations and relationships, with their voice integral rather than what professionals perceived they needed [48]. They demonstrated and advocated co-participation in learning rather than being kept at arm’s length [49] and the right balance of being challenged and supported [50]. This led to students taking on significant roles and responsibilities as discussed below.

4.3. Shrinking Professional Distance

Relational sharing is a cornerstone of social pedagogy, an approach to relationship development with hard to engage young people [51]. Being genuine and authentic, to build trust and demonstrate your humanity is a key component of relationship building [52]. While professional boundaries have existed in health since the Hippocratic oath from Socrates in the 5th century BC [50], these boundaries are rarely challenged and emerged from professional ethics and regulations [53]. They are aligned to the medical model where the professional is the expert rather than co-participating in learning [49]. Professionals are neutral and anonymous [54]. The danger zone is any kind of contact, physical, emotional, or spiritual [55]. However, such simplistic assessment hugely underestimates the role of subjectivity and unconscious dynamics in all relationships [56].

The alternative is a relational approach, offering relationships “characterised by mutuality and safe connection rather than . . . boundaries and distance” [53] (p. 21). Going that extra mile has huge potential and is significantly under-researched. It encourages educators to question ‘taken for granted’ views and assumptions [49].

4.4. The IPE Strategy

Reflecting the student voice, the new IPE strategy responded to students’ lived experience of joined up working. While communication and trust are important [57], what rarely is examined is the need for a solid professional identity [45] and the professional stereotyping and prejudices among different disciplines [58]. Only by making the hidden transparent can authentic interprofessional relationships develop. This really struck a chord with me. Authentic discussion of professional stereotypes and prejudice can have a transformational impact on interprofessional learning.

The strategy was built on the three core values of solid professional identities, creating communities of practice, and a co-created pedagogy. In practice, this led to many changes. The conference became built around a case study, student-led, and moved to the second year where professional identities are more secure. Seating plans ensured as much as possible students would engage with peers on other programmes and students would facilitate multi-professional groups.

The new aims in the strategy were to:

1. Demonstrate an enhanced understanding of the roles and responsibilities of their own and other health and social care professionals through respecting, understanding,

- and supporting the roles of other professionals and the changing nature of health and social care roles and boundaries;
2. Discuss stereotyping and professional prejudices and the impact of these and other barriers on interprofessional working;
 3. Demonstrate a set of knowledge, skills, competencies, and attitudes that are common to all Health and Social Care professions and that underpin the delivery of patient/client focused services;
 4. Develop teamwork skills and improved knowledge of the nature of multidisciplinary teamwork and subsequently make an effective contribution as an equal member of an inter professional team;
 5. Apply learning from others in interprofessional teams in a variety of contexts through collaboration with other professionals in practice, online, in programme teams, and on college wide initiatives and projects.

This strategy appeared to have significant overlap to the four cornerstones of youth work [59] with a focus on equality (specifically discipline-level prejudice), learning, and empowerment both in terms of student contribution to interprofessional teams and crucially in the design and delivery of the offer.

Next, this paper will examine how youth work pedagogy presented itself in this interprofessional education programme of events. The new academics and students co-created the programme based on the principles of genuine agency, shrunk professional distance, and strong relationships, with opportunities for developmental group work at the heart. Starting from the professional identities of student, their voice and experience was to be central in both the design and delivery of IPE opportunities. The collaboration with academics saw them repositioned as colleagues and partners with strong relationships, where all opportunities were designed around creating the opportunities to meet with students on other programmes in small groups to share perspectives and learn with and through one another [8]. This is where the paper now turns, looking at the case study conference, and then adapting this pedagogical approach to digital activities during the COVID pandemic and remote teaching.

5. Informalising the Pedagogy

5.1. *The Conference—Interprofessional Needs-Analysis of a Complex Family Case Study*

Firstly, the conference was moved to year two, to directly address the first strategic aim and give them more time to understand, own, and be able to communicate their diverse professional identities. Next, the IPE forum sought to give a platform for students to talk about their programmes. It also needed a focus to enable students to share deeply about how different professional groups need to work together to meet the needs of patients, service users, and project beneficiaries. The case study became the focus. Interprofessional student groups were seated wedding table style, multi-professional by design, and facilitated by trained practitioners, students, and academics to encourage genuine debate around professional stereotyping and other barriers to effective collaboration to address the needs of the given case study. The original case study was a video written, performed, and filmed by academics and students.

Introducing programmes was delivered in chat-show format, with microphones and leather sofas. It was like Graham Norton meets Ted Exchange. Finding a student from each programme who could talk on microphone in front of 500 people was difficult, but the result was spellbinding. Students from all walks of life spoke with passion and dynamism, sharing their journey to higher education, and passion for making a difference in their chosen fields. Whilst the audience remained spectators, the speakers were motivational and inspiring and enabled students to have a similar dialogue with their neighbours. By the second conference, the chat show role was being shared with a student from the IPE forum asking the questions. Students must understand the roles and responsibilities of other disciplines to promote effective collaboration [60]. More than that, this fostered professional empathy, so crucial for overcoming misunderstandings and miscommunication [9].

The classic youth work icebreaker of bingo explored the experience in the room. This is where students identified peers with common experiences despite differences in their professional identities by talking to one another and annotating the bingo sheet of the names of student colleagues who had, for example ‘worked in a prison’, ‘worked in a hospital’ or ‘used outdoor environments in their practice’. The youth work students facilitated this with support. The academic spent her time preregistration building relationships and asking for donations from student delegates to the prize, with prizes ranging from biscuits and lottery tickets to lanyards. It was fun and funny and set the scene for creating a safe place to play and explore. This deliberate approach helps foster professional adulthood, the ability to give up professional territory to work across boundaries [61]. Completely organically, students were realising that they were building relationships in a way that was not happening on campus. Their academics were having fun with them. Suddenly, students wanted their photo with their lecturers, grabbed the microphones at lunch, and whole discipline cohorts of 20–100 in size took group photos from the stage. Barriers were breaking down between students and between students and staff [62].

The conference was built around a case study, with an original drama (used from 2018–2020) performed by staff and students, recorded, and played at the conference to identify the presenting needs and multi-professional response, debated on the day in multidisciplinary groups. It concluded with a case conference simulation and keynote speaker on one of the emerging themes. However, the direction the discussion evolved was directly driven by students and their contributions. Case study approaches in IPE are proven to promote collaboration in decision making and familiarity with different disciplines [60]. Dispelling the myths of disciplines has become a major theme in the IPE offer, and this started with a session facilitated by dramatherapy students, to explore the feelings of the practitioners involved in the case study. Whilst there is a long-established recognition that successful teams need trust [62], the underlying cause of mistrust is a perception about different roles in the sector [58], and this powerful dramaturgy approach [63] made the unseen, seen which was shocking to both those within and beyond the specific disciplines. Here in this space, every single discipline began to see they speak interprofessionally into a space where perceptions, stereotypes, and prejudices were creating genuine barriers to collaboration, way beyond ‘lack of trust’ [62].

After three years, the case study was renewed. In 2020 a local production company was commissioned to support writing a new case study. The IPE forum pitched ideas, then a plot was storyboarded, and four scenes created. Two students and two staff wrote one scene each, which was then reviewed by the production company and the script evolved with feedback from disciplines and the two student writers, before the whole script was critically evaluated by a student sub-group. ‘Somebody isn’t listening’ is a short film about family breakdown with a grandad with dementia, an overwhelmed mum, a dad on gardening leave, a daughter hiding a secret, and a teenage young carer risking his college course trying to be everything to everyone until he breaks. Students and their networks recorded the voices, modelled for the photos, and even offered their homes up as venues. This online conference with the new case study will be rolled out next year.

5.2. IPE under COVID—Participatory ‘Cake and Debate’—Debating Current Practice Issues

The move towards online learning under a global pandemic, created significant opportunities. Firstly, it removed the pressures in timetabling and finding large rooms for large events. Students clearly valued talking together about current practice issues. Real-world learning with students accelerated into placement to support the National Health Service response [64], meant there were multiple topics students wanted to discuss. Whilst research into online learning is emerging, one of the early outcomes was how it changed discussions. The anonymity of being online and on your own, led to many students participating differently and often engaging online especially using chat functions in ways that would not have happened face-to-face [65].

The IPE forum was driven to provide a group work discussion opportunity for current practice issues, but needed to consider how this could avoid a top-down process where academics chose the topic and drove the discussion. Under COVID a new informal discussion event emerged, 'cake and debate', mirroring a youth work activity from Greenbelt Festival [66]. The online live discussion began where staff and students left a five-minute video to stimulate dialogue on a given topic, and students then shared and debated their experiences using a Padlet discussion board in advance. Topics and points obtained votes (through likes) and comments. The most popular were then explored during the live one-hour debates on Microsoft Teams. The facilitation style built on the edutainment philosophy [21], creating a dynamic and engaging discussion. Rather than facilitating as a value-free neutral, anecdotes were shared, passion and enthusiasm was communicated with conviction for the social justice value-base of multiple disciplines, and how the emancipatory approach had relevance, was appropriate and desirable across the health, psychology, and social care sectors.

It evolved over the academic year, where academics created the original opinion piece and facilitated the debate. However, by the end of the year the 'opinion pieces' were coming from students, and an IPE forum student facilitated the live discussion. Over 150 students from across all three schools and all disciplines in the college debated COVID and mental health. Other topics included poverty and racism and were decided by the students through college-wide polls.

As the event norms evolved, students soon developed the habit in the preparation activity and live event to start every contribution with 'speaking as a [e.g.,] adult nurse . . . ' which enabled all the strategic aims to be met, with student insights on the experiences and values of the different disciplines. The learning was significant, as students had insight into the specific discipline-level nuances and challenges and how these related to multi-professional teams with feedback such as the participants below:

"Hearing perspectives and priorities from other disciplines helped me to understand the differentiation between the different professions and how they can all work together in a multi-disciplinary setting."

"This has been a fantastic opportunity to hear and understand how working as a team will achieve better outcomes and remembering to put and keep that person right in the centre as ultimately the goal is a satisfactory outcome for them."

Clearly, enabling students to apply their own experiences to real world problems was fast-tracking their own insights and deeper learning [20]. These student reflections affirmed my belief of the power of informal learning and relational based programmes, where sharing their experiences with one another, whether a student or a service-user, was a powerful learning approach.

5.3. IPE under COVID—Group Work Edutainment 'Experts by Experience World Café'-Workshops Exploring the Testimonies of Service Users

The Experts by Experience World Café postgraduate day evolved from a face-to-face event with 60 students and four service users (referred to as Experts by Experience), into an online event where over 500 students authentically listened to the stories of seven service users. They enquired into their experience to demonstrate the importance of the person-centred caring attributes of care, compassion, dignity, honesty, and empathy. The service-users shared the highs and lows of their experiences in health, social care, and the community. In preparation for the event, each service user or carer shared their experience on a pre-recorded video testimony of 20 minutes. Their testimonies included stories of misdiagnosis, medical negligence, mental health and eating disorders, being a looked after child, hearing impairments, sensory processing disorders, and brain injury. On the day, students joined facilitated breakout rooms to meet with and talk deeply with three of the service users. This event has been running nine years, but in response to student opinion, it has diversified and now includes a young person and a service user with a learning disability.

It was a huge logistical challenge to maintain youth work principles of agency and choice, registering five hundred students into their preferred three breakout rooms from the seven on offer. Quite deliberately facilitators were chosen from a youth work background or similar with facilitators exclusively from programmes who taught group work, namely youth work, social work, children's nursing, and mental health nursing. As such the excellent facilitation and use of Socratic questioning [67] enabled deep learning examining the issues from multiple professional disciplines lenses [68] while considering how the wider sector can improve in the future. This directly addressed the skills required for multi-professional teams in strategic aims three to five.

Again, the facilitation of the event utilised deliberate edutainment [21] with an attempt to engage the students on an emotional level and foster authentic empathy. This was a hugely powerful event with exceptionally strong feedback from participants as captured by the participants below:

"An extremely powerful day. To be immersed in that way and to that extent in a patient's world is never not going to be thought provoking. In stage 1 of my nursing journey, I believe it is something that will stay with me, and not just in my working life. I don't think I am over stating it when I say it was almost a life changing event."

"The ExE event gave me an intimate insight into the human experience of complex health and care situations across a variety of practice settings. I really liked that there was thought and respect throughout the program design, from the interviews for background/history to the selection of individual health stories that you felt more connected to. I was amazed at how open the ExE were to the whole process and their generosity in sharing such personal and tough situations was remarkable."

"It was really amazing that all three ExE's I listened to, were using their lived experience positively and they reflected on both their own responsibility and the need for professionals to address inequalities to bring about good change."

This event embodied the cultural shift in IPE at the University. There was a powerful shift from discussing joined-up working and the traditional themes of communication, trust, and information sharing [56], towards creating an emotional experience connecting practitioners across health, psychology, and social care and with the social justice of service users.

6. Conclusions

This study should be seen as an example for broadening the use of genuine student collaboration. A more holistic innovative programme built on the interests and aspirations of students is crucial to effective IPE [69], complementing their core programmes of study [70]. However, the benefits are reliant upon high quality programme design and practice [71]. Relationships between staff and between staff and students are crucial to achieve buy in and engagement to any value-added learning opportunities. However, when these relationships recognise and value the student contributions and practice experiences, they significantly enhance both the quality of the programmes and the engagement of students. When there is genuine collaboration with students as co-creating partners, this speaks powerfully into the values of the broader health and social care sector about valuing people and promoting voice, empowerment and agency or patient-centred care. Student-led collaboration is essential for deep learning and value-added curriculum [20,30] and crucially for strengthening their own secure professional identity [72]. Delivering large learning opportunities at scale, requires a different approach both in terms of the pedagogy and the engagement. This is amplified further when these opportunities are delivered online. An edutainment approach [21] built on the participatory youth work principles [59] enable large group learning where educators are much more the meddler in the middle than the sage on the stage [73].

After a decade of austerity and significant cuts to services, youth workers are finding themselves in an exceptionally broad range of multi-professional spaces [74], where youth work pedagogical approaches are making a significant impact on the lives of young people,

far beyond the traditional open access youth club. However, this paper has explored what happens when youth work pedagogy is utilised in higher education. Youth workers in higher education, especially those not teaching on youth work programmes, are making a significant impact across different disciplines. At University of Derby, the IPE offer is planned and delivered in genuine collaboration with students. Strong relationships and shrinking professional boundaries have made a significant impact on the quality and quantity of the offer, and crucially the level of engagement from both academic colleagues and students themselves. This provides useful insight into the value of informalising the relationships with students, especially in a post-COVID world of online learning. However, it invites a broader enquiry. It begs the question, what would a university look like, pedagogically, philosophically, and in terms of student experience and engagement, not to mention transforming campuses to arenas of social justice, should youth work academics take up positions on the executive or senior leadership team? It would be interesting to undertake further research into the impact of informal educators in senior positions of responsibility within leadership, management, local authorities, politics and of course, higher education.

Reflecting on my own journey in IPE, it does exemplify one of the largest challenges in informal education; relationships take time to build, develop and sustain [32,33]. There is a resource implication for embedding informal education pedagogies in higher education. The time for relationships, genuine participatory practices, and collaboration needs resourcing. For higher education to reap the rewards of youth work teams' influence across institutions there does need to be a recognition of the value of stronger relationships and the time commitment needed to build and sustain them. This is crucial as higher education transitions into a post-COVID world, where the impact of relationships and critical pedagogy on the student experience, especially online can have a significant impact on key student metrics such as the National Student Survey [75]. A conscious commitment to the more informal approach to relationship building in education is not only appropriate, it is professional and needs to become a conscious tool for liberation [76].

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