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Examining Interprofessional Education Through the Lens of Interdisciplinarity : Power, Knowledge and New Ontological Subjects / Rebecca E. Olson ; Caragh Brosnan

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Abstract

Interprofessional education (IPE) – students of different professions learning together, from and about each other – is increasingly common in health professional degrees. Despite its explicit aims of transforming identities, practices and relationships within/across health professions, IPE remains under-theorised sociologically, with most IPE scholarship focussed on evaluating specific interventions. In particular, the significance of a shared knowledge base for shaping professional power and subjectivity in IPE has been overlooked. In this paper we begin to develop a framework for theorising IPE in allied health, by drawing parallels with a cognate area in which there has already been fruitful conceptual development: interdisciplinarity. Specifically, we offer a worked example of how the two areas may be brought into dialogue, by deploying Barry, Born and Weszkalnys' (2008) conceptualisation of interdisciplinarity as a lens for understanding IPE. Following Barry et al. (2008) we delineate a number of 'modes' and 'logics' of knowledge-production that emerge both in IPE literature and in our own empirical study of IPE. Our empirical data are drawn from 32

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semi-structured interviews with 19 allied health students participating in an IPE curriculum at one Australian university. Findings point to the emergence of interprofessional practitioner identities among students that have the potential to undermine traditional epistemological boundaries and transcend role-based distinctions in future health profession(al)s. We argue that Barry et al.'s 'logic of ontology' sheds light on previously unidentified processes of transformation within IPE, and offers a theoretical framework that can explain the importance of a shared pan-professional knowledge base for the reflexive individual construction of new interprofessional ontological subjects.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)