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Higher education change and professional-academic identity in newly "academic" disciplines : the case of nurse education

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Abstract

This article is a study of the competing academic and professional identity frameworks of lecturers whose discipline has only recently become part of the business of higher education. The article engages with important questions about higher education change and purpose, standards and parity among disciplines. Taking a critical ethnographic approach, it combines policy discussion of shifting higher educational and nurse education regimes with an insider investigation into the attempts of a group of new nurse lecturers in a pre-1992 English university to make sense of their work and identity in an already contested site. These experiences and perceptions are analysed from the perspectives of autonomy, status and rival knowledge regimes. By underlining the diversity of lecturer experiences in these terms, the article contributes to discussion of new stratification. It suggests that despite the apparent merging in many respects of professional and academic frameworks, higher education practitioners in such newly "academic" disciplines can still find traditional professional identities more reliable conferrers of meaning than academic ones. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Findlow,

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