

## **Abstract for 2013 Ethnography Symposium – The Politics of Meaning-making / Meaning-breaking.**

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This abstract/paper is based on lessons learnt from a doctoral thesis for a Professional Doctorate.

### **Title**

Discussion and Story-telling in Diagnostic Radiography.

### **Introduction**

The doctoral study being reflected upon explored the culture in a Diagnostic Imaging Department (DID), looking at how radiographers work and what the issues were within their working environment. This study was carried out within one DID in a District General Hospital in the East of England.

Meaning making is often achieved through discussion about the work and through story telling amongst Diagnostic Radiographers.

Within diagnostic radiography, as with other professions, the staff members discuss their job as they are doing it. In doing this the radiographers are supporting one another, expertise can be shared and specialist knowledge can be developed. Lave and Wenger (1991) have written about this professional support, calling these groups 'communities of practice', and Southon (2006) describes 'professional networks' in radiography. These groups allow for social learning, support and collaboration in the workplace.

### **Methods**

The study used ethnography to study the culture in a DID. Observation for a 4 month period was carried out by the researchers in a DID in the East of England. The first author, who is a radiographer was the lead researcher and took on the role of observer as participant during the observation period. Field notes were recorded and used to formulate topics for the interviews that were to follow.

After the period of observation the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with key informants from the DID to explore issues uncovered from the observation in further depth. Ten key informants were purposefully sampled from the DID to provide a cross section of opinion from the staff.

The data collected was analysed so that key themes were identified. This paper discusses one of the themes that arose from the data.

### **This paper**

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the ways in which radiographers share stories and experiences amongst themselves and contribute to the creation of a community

of practice. The example of one department is used as part of a doctoral study to inform these deliberations.

The researcher will discuss how this discussion and story-telling contributes to meaning making within the culture of the DID.

The researcher will also briefly touch on the implications of her findings for her own profession.

## **References**

Lave J and Wenger E (1991) Situated learning. Legitimate peripheral participation. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Southon G (2006) The role of professional networks in radiology services. Rev Panam Salud Publica 2006, 20(2/3) p99-103.

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