**From impostership to mastersness: Experiences of a post graduate student’s transition to higher education reflected through poetry**

**Mary Gobbi
Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Southampton, UK**

This fascinating article portrays the challenges experienced by mature experienced- and often expert- nurses- who enter Higher Education for postgraduate taught programmes. Through the use of poetry and creative writing skills, the author portrays a learning journey that draws upon three concepts associated with their self-identify and learning ‘new’ skills in an alien environment- the university. These concepts are impostership, masterness, and the role of personalised learning strategies. The paper argues that the creative arts have a particular role in enabling the necessary learning transitions to occur. The journey itself is conceptualised using a novice to expert continuum where expert is defined as having masterness and where the analytical stages are framed using the 7 facets of the QAA Scotland Masterness Toolkit (2014).. With refreshing honesty, the author critically reflects on her feelings, barriers and enablers to unpick the journey and concludes with a series of recommendations for others. As a self-reflective case study, the paper has much to commend it to students and academics alike.

Several aspects of this paper warrant further consideration from a theoretical, research and pragmatic educator perspective. First, we have a well-established pedigree of literature concerning the adult learner in HEI and in this case within professional practice. . The paradox is that while the *evidence* is there, it seems that for each student within each student cohort, academics need to effectively help students to learn how to address the range of disturbing emotions and intellectual demands that may emerge due to their unique personal/professional biography, learning style and socio-cultural context. By definition, the paper addresses those students who have a learning style receptive to the creative arts. There are others whose learning style may be more suited to a scientific discourse and methods, for example logic and the critical thinking skills of philosophy. Whether one considers the work of Kolb, or Myers Briggs analysis, the point remains that each student is an individual who may, or may not, share similar traits and experiences with others. Certainly, there would appear to space for communities of learning practice in these contexts. The strategies best suited to different learners need further research. The dominant discourses of reflective models do not suit all learners. Similarly, the role of educators in *normalising* student experiences through pedagogic strategies that address their feelings of impostership; identity reappraisal; and degree of assessment literacy needs further analysis.

The journey undertaken by the author seems to have followed a sequential programme where it is easier for programme leaders to focus support along a structured pathway. One challenge in modularised programmes that are flexible, is that because there is little prescription about modular sequence, then the ability to support the student’s individual journey becomes more challenging. As CPD itself becomes fashioned more towards organisational goals and patient outcomes, then the development of the critically detached, yet engaged, practitioner becomes even more important.

As the author has demonstrated, masterness requires a change in perspective, a new form of rationality and a valuing of the expertness within one’s own existing practice.