

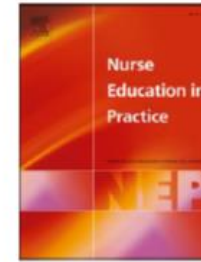


Mind the gap: the potential for constructive feedback to reduce attrition from H.E Programmes

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Review

Mind the gap: The relationship between liminality, learning and leaving in pre-registration nurse education

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Session outline

- Liminality- explanation, relevance
- Threshold concepts- potential for learning
- Attrition- impact on student and institution
- Constructive feedback- opportunity to reduce attrition

Liminality

“liminality refers to the uncomfortable space through which one passes when making a life transition” Crane and Abbott (2021)

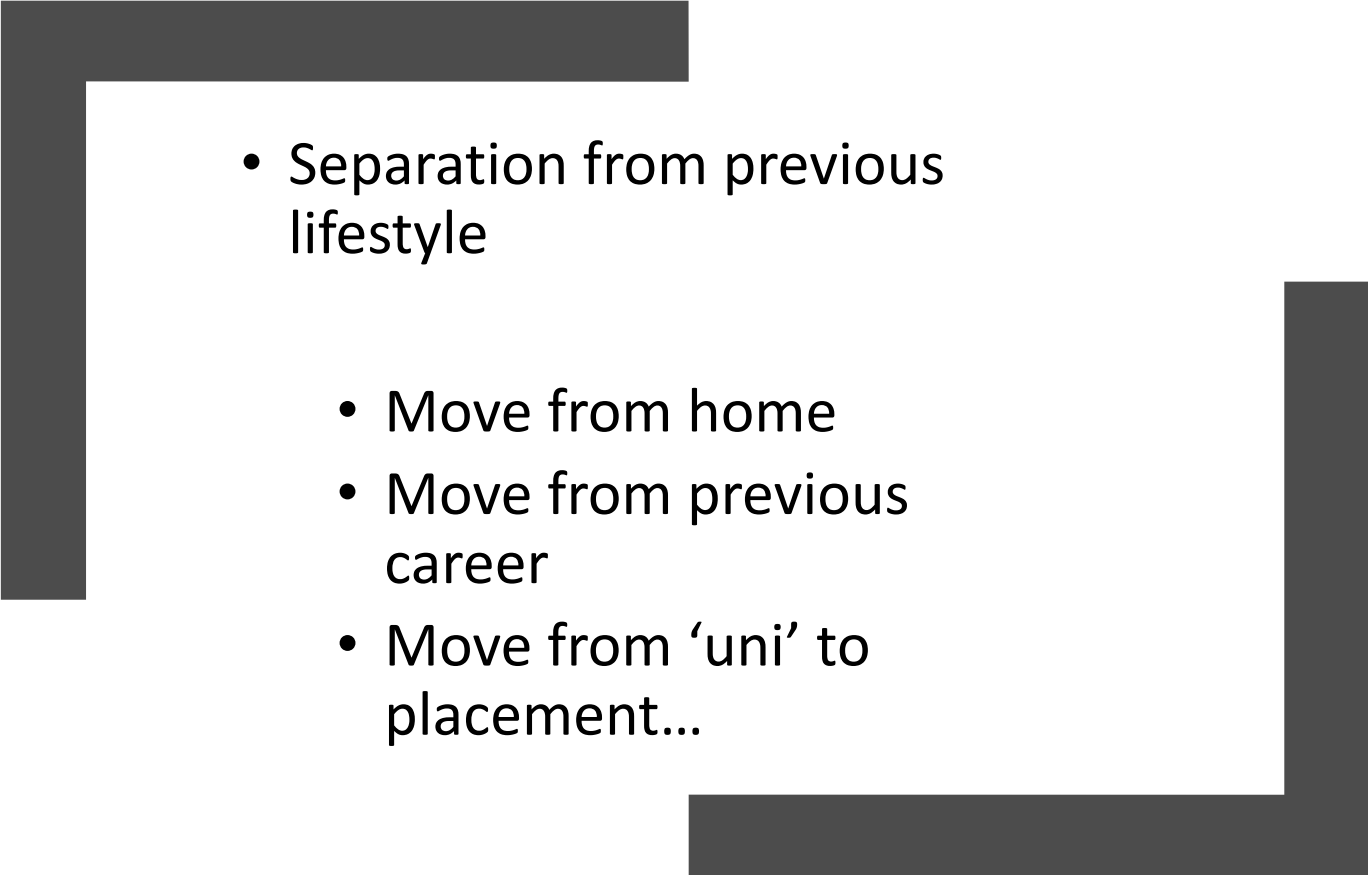
Liminality

- van Gennep, ethnographer, observed different communities and recognized that within society, there were similarities in 'rituals of social transition' (1909/1960)
- Classified 'rites' (discussion beyond scope of this presentation)
- Rites of passage a 'special categorization'
 - Rites of separation, transition and incorporation
 - Pre-liminal, liminal and post liminal
- The term liminal is from the Latin, 'limen' meaning threshold

Liminality: Victor Turner (1969)

- U.K Anthropologist
- Ethnographic studies in Africa, recognised similarities between his own empirical findings and the (newly translated) work of van Gennep
- Focus on liminality, and coined the phrase “betwixt and between” to explain the liminal phase

Separation rites

- 
- A decorative frame consisting of two dark gray L-shaped brackets. One bracket is positioned on the left side, and the other is on the bottom right, framing the list of separation rites.
- Separation from previous lifestyle
 - Move from home
 - Move from previous career
 - Move from 'uni' to placement...

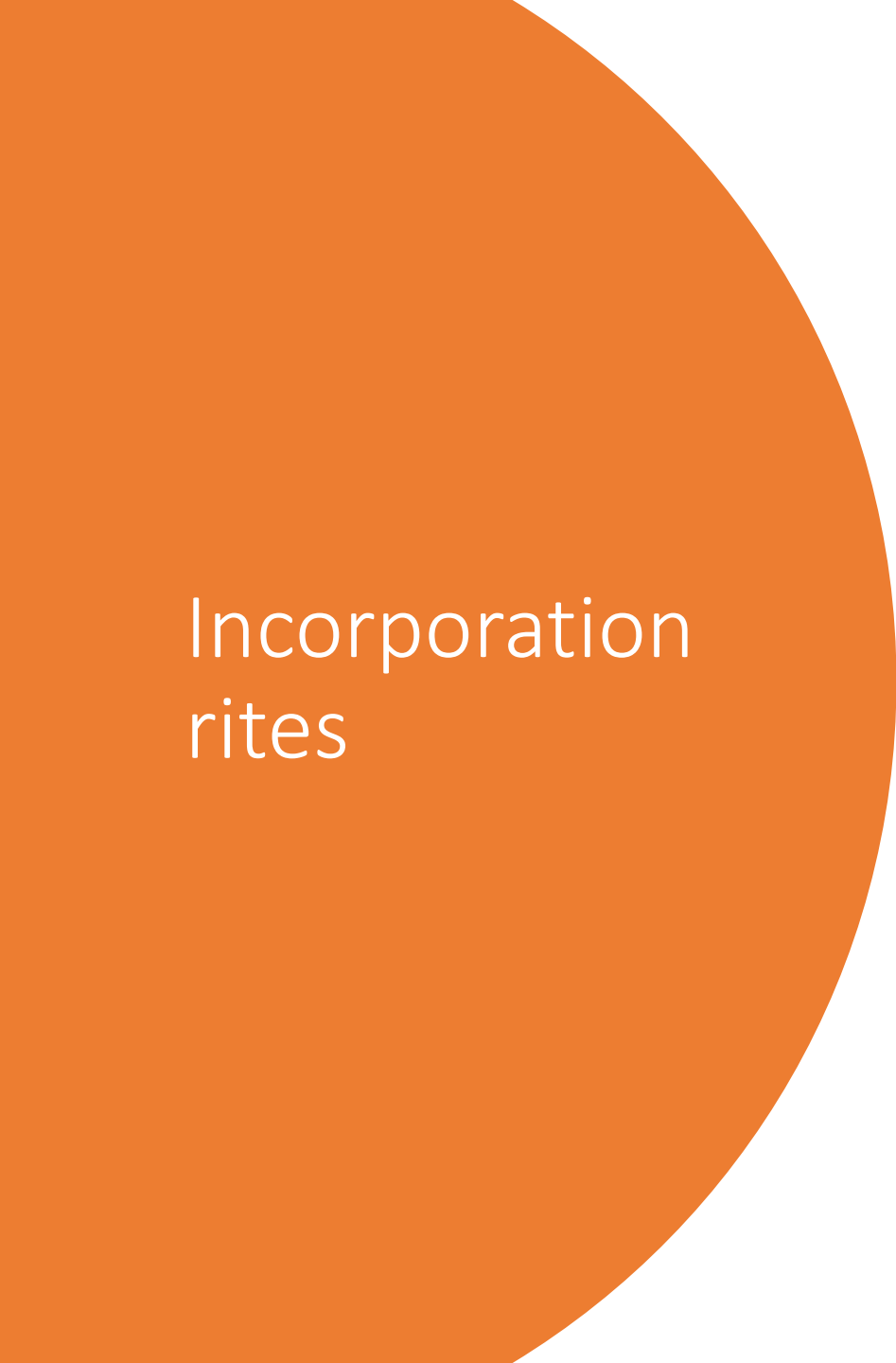
Transition rites...

Welcome week...

- Induction process at University
- Usual requirements and also
 - Documentation for DBS
 - Health concerns to OH
 - Measurement for uniform
- Clearance of all the above and receipt of uniform

- ***“they must obey their instructors implicitly.... It is as though they are being ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to cope with their new station in life”***

- ***Turner (1969p95)***



Incorporation rites

Likened to the notion of professional socialisation
(Melia, 1987)

Research into nursing culture is relatively limited
(Holland, 1999; Brown, Stevens and Kermode, 2012;
Holland, 2020), but it is acknowledged that there are a
variety of rituals and routines that nursing students
need to negotiate (Brown, Stevens and Kermode, 2012).

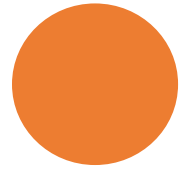
Incorporation Rites extend beyond nursing...

“there is a professional culture [medicine] and I am
becoming part of it” (Neve et al, 2017)

Turner (1969p95)

- *“Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial...”*
- *...Liminal entities such as neophytes*... have nothing to distinguish them from their fellow neophytes...their behaviour is normally passive or humble...they accept arbitrary punishment without complaint....*
- *Amongst themselves, neophytes tend to develop an intense comradeship and egalitarianism”*

**neophyte – a person new to a discipline*



*“They have nothing
to distinguish them
from their fellow
neophytes”*



Attrition

Attrition from pre-registration nursing programmes is a worldwide problem (Eick, Williamson and Heath, 2012; Hamshire, Willgoss and Wibberley, 2012; Hamshire, Willgoss and Wibberley, 2013; Ten Hoeve *et al.*, 2017) and is costly (Ten Hoeve *et al.*, 2017; Lovegrove, 2018).

Significant impact on institutional income

Small scale studies / literature reviews

Theoretical underpinning (if any) Tinto's (1975) theory of integration

Voices of students

- *"I got so fed up with the nurses on the ward addressing me as 'student' all the time, it's as if I didn't have a name, 'student' come over here...'student' go to lunch, 'student' can you run this over to...It was as if I wasn't a person, I am not sure that the sister ever asked my name"*

Crombie et al. (2013p1284)

- *"This patient needs escorting, where's the student? They can do it"*

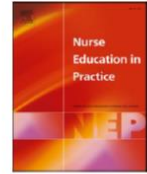
Lovegrove, (2018p42)

I felt like I didn't have a job. I'd lost the status of an adult and, although it sounds very old fashioned, as a provider"

Bowden, (2008p52)

"I support an 18 year old first year student nurse who is training a long way from home... She is very homesick and doesn't fit in, she is a 'fish out of water'...It is the first time she has been away from home and she doesn't have any confidence. It is also the first time she has ever had a job, there are some many firsts for her, she is overwhelmed"

Lovegrove, (2018p75)



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Lack of preparedness for academic study

*"I tried to overcome the gap
but I failed miserably but I felt
a sense of failure...I kept going
but I felt it was just wearing
me down... and I just said 'no',
I can't take any more"*

O'Donnell, (2009)



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Threshold concepts (Meyer and Land, 2005)

Complex concepts (profession bound)

Transformative – once the concept has been learned, cannot return to old position of not knowing

Students cross ‘thresholds’ between old situation and new situation, and the space in between is the liminal space.

Threshold concepts in nursing: patient centred care, professionalism, evidence-based practice

Embracing the liminal space provides an opportunity for deeper learning

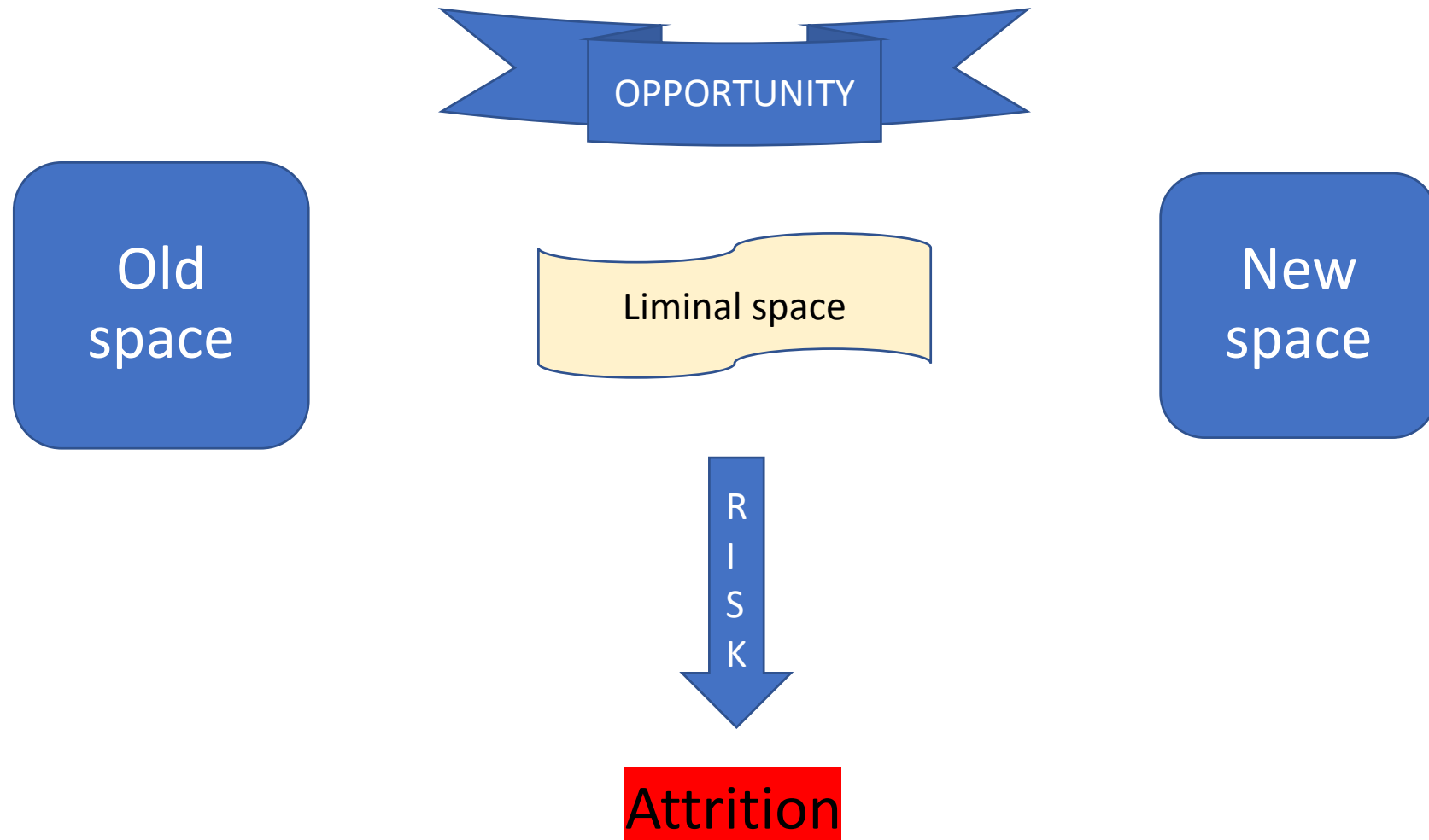


Practical Threshold Concepts

- Anna, a nursing student experiences difficulty in performing a clinical skill. Anna's success in mastering the skill is inconsistent and oscillating; the authors note that this uncertainty causes the student to spend a long time in a liminal space **leading her to feel overwhelmed and questioning her fitness for the profession.**
- Eventually, a 'new' tutor re-explains the process to Anna, and suddenly she appreciates what is required. In addition to understanding the skill, the authors report that **Anna sees herself differently and no longer questions her ability to belong to the profession.**

Fredholm et al. (2019)

Excellence: deeper learning





What can we do?

- Be mindful, students might be in liminal (or multiple liminal) space(s)
- Discuss liminality with students: teach them that when learning, it is normal to feel 'betwixt and between'
- Refer to Threshold Concepts literature to encourage students that growth might be possible during these squiggly times
- BE KIND! The student might genuinely have done their best – but got it wrong...
- Develop a system of pro-active support when students fail. Especially in the situation where as a teacher you fully believe that the student has the ability to succeed and has simply made a mistake. For the student, that failed assessment might be the tipping point.

International student experience working group

- “I have changed that much that I don’t really know who I am, identity wise”
- Year One student,
School of Health Sciences



Conclusions from our research

Crane and Abbott, (2021)

- Feeling betwixt and between might underpin a student's decision to leave a course prematurely
- Failed assessments are likely to exacerbate feelings of liminality
- **Threshold concepts** – is there a potential for growth through discomfort rather than attrition?
- Be explicit that discomfort might indicate deeper learning
- Lingering longer in liminality? Is this possible?

Constructive feedback – take home message

- Feelings of discomfort and uncertainty are not necessarily indicators that the student needs to leave the course
- Instead, they are potentially a sign that students are moving through the necessary thresholds and are therefore closer to the end point of incorporation.

Crane and Abbott, (2021)

- Academic failure is likely to raise feelings of discomfort and uncertainty – how can YOU provide constructive feedback which will lead to growth rather than attrition?



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