

Continuing Professional Development in Diagnostic Radiography: A Grounded Theory Study

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Abstract

This exploratory, interpretative grounded theory study looked at Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in diagnostic radiography in the UK. Using a combination of in-depth interviews and secondary analysis of published material, a CPD Process Model was generated, bringing together the components that affect CPD participation and effectiveness. Although much has been written previously about CPD, little has been said about the *process* – that is, how and why CPD produces widely varied results in apparently similar circumstances.

The concept of CPD is not simple: the definition used in this study acknowledges that a range of activities contribute towards CPD:

“The continuous and systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioners working life which constantly works to improve the service provided”.

The CPD Process was shown to be complex and dynamic and centred on the *Individual*. Supporting components of *Facilitation* and *External Influences* were identified as important in maximising the potential impact of CPD. The three main categories were shown to interact dynamically and prior to *Participation* were shown to have a ‘superadditive’ effect, where the total effect was greater than the sum of the three individual parts.

This study showed that individuals are generally unaware of the holistic concept of CPD, using narrow definitions of CPD with little or no expectation of any impact on practice, focusing instead on personal gain.

It is the holistic and dynamic nature of this Model and the inter-related nature of the categories outlined which is unique to this study and which offer a genuine original contribution to the field of CPD. The Model (demonstrated through two diagrams) also explains the importance of the individual nature of CPD participation and effectiveness that has not explicitly been outlined previously.