Chapter 2
Understanding Interprofessional Expertise in Terms of Beliefs, Values and Attitudes

Adrian Bromage
University of Birmingham, UK

ABSTRACT

It is arguable that expertise in interprofessional working can be defined as effective team working to place clients' needs as paramount: a particular kind of problem solving. Psychological definitions of expertise focus upon problem solving in general, so it is arguable that this literature differs only in emphasis rather than the underlying nature of activities described. This opens possibilities to draw upon literature concerning the development of expertise, which tends to concern how high performers differ from non-experts. For example, Dreyfus & Dreyfus (1986) conclude this is in terms of how experts think and solve problems, rather than their personal knowledge. It seems that experienced problem-solvers discern regularly recurring environmental patterns, drawing upon a body of domain knowledge and experience to do so. In exploring these parallels, this chapter examines beliefs and attitude change, in terms of how they might relate to each other, to outline some possible implications for educators.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will take a conceptual stance, examining recent writing on the nature of interprofessional education (IPE), interprofessional working (IPW) in terms of psychological literature on the development of expertise. In doing so, it also explores beliefs and attitude change, in terms of how they might relate to each other, outlining possible implications. The relationship between interprofessional working and domain expertise is arguably an important consideration for interprofessional educators. It has potential to impact profoundly upon the curriculum design process, given it is arguable that one educational aim is to enable learners to develop expertise.

Interprofessionalism refers to a particular approach to team working. It is characterised by professionals who work together across professional and role-defined boundaries, underpinned by an attitude of mutual understanding and collabora-

tion (Finch et al., 2000). Similarly, Peile et al. (2001) proposed an aspirational model for what they named 'The Renaissance School of General Medicine', which will:

produce broadly educated doctors who think in terms of patients rather than organs and are strong, multiprofessional team players (Peile et al., 2001, pp.1454-1455).

The Combined Universities Interprofessional Learning Unit (CUILU) (2006) examined interprofessional learning strategies in the UK and the related interprofessional 'capabilities'. Their report includes material which that suggests interprofessional working tends to rest to some extent on values and attitudes, rather than domain knowledge. For example, page 7 of the report notes a key finding that:

The culture of the practice context is one of sharing and collaborative team working in which the contributions of all the team are recognised, understood and valued in the interests of providing high quality, integrated care for patients/clients and carers (The Combined Universities Interprofessional Learning Unit, 2006, p. 7).

The above quotation appears to emphasise a particular attitude to working with others, recognizing, understanding and valuing their contribution. Given this emphasis, the question arises of how this attitude might act to facilitate "*sharing and collaborative team working*" the activity that achieves the overall aim of interprofessional working: high quality integrated client care. Arguably, this question must be examined from the point of view of tutors who are involved in interprofessional education (IPE), who aspire to help their learners to move towards developing an understanding of this model of working. This chapter will explore this question, using insights from the psychological literature on expertise and beliefs, attitudes and attitude change. The first task is to explore the nature of values and attitudes in order to set the scene for attempting to understand how this might relate to literature on the nature of expertise.

Beliefs and Values

The interprofessional notion of recognizing, understanding and valuing one's fellow professionals contributions, which it has been argues is suggestive of an attitude to interacting with others, invokes questions regarding the consequences of holding particular attitudes. In particular, how attitudes are manifested in behaviours. This section considers these questions, issues that have attracted an exploratory literature from a variety of perspectives ranging from cultural anthropology to behavioural psychology and cognitive science. A particularly suggestive literature can be found in accounts that psychologists and cognitive scientists offer on the relationship between thought, beliefs and actions.

At the heart of this particular body of literature is an intractable problem concerning the epistemology of 'beliefs'. Abelson (1979) notes that the term 'belief' is hard to define in a clear-cut way, and is used in different ways across the social sciences. While the lay-person might imagine that there is a qualitative distinction between belief and knowledge, many academic writers follow Abelson in viewing them as sharing many features. For example, both could appeal to personal experience and both are unbounded to some extent. Hamlyn (1970),

Rappaport (1986) and Abelson argue that given a plausible truth claim, belief can be promoted to knowledge, although what counts as knowledge tends to be defined by the truth tests prevailing within specific domains and circumstances, which may be the product of a particular culture or community. Nevertheless Abelson concludes that belief and knowledge differ sufficiently to

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