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Crossing Boundaries: Twitter and Online Communities of Practice for Nursing Students

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Abstract

Nurse education in the United Kingdom is changing. Widening participation initiatives present challenges for Higher Education Institutions, increasing numbers of Nursing Students from a wide range of backgrounds with diverse academic abilities. Changes also to the new NMC standards mean that those nurses qualifying from 2020 will need to be better prepared to deliver care to people with increasingly complex needs, thus requiring a wider range of skills, proficiency in those skills and a breadth of knowledge to support practice.

Social Media has the potential to resolve some of these challenges and to enhance the delivery of nurse education, providing increased opportunities to engage Nursing students outside of the constraints of traditional classroom walls, whilst enhancing the development of student knowledge and skills. Online Communities of Practice may be developed via Social Media platforms such as Twitter, supporting the creation and exchange of knowledge through active engagement and a shared discourse between Novices and Expert clinicians and Academics in the field.

Both a Student perspective and a recent student-led conference at University in the North of England are used here to illustrate how Twitter has the potential to benefit Nursing Students; contributing to an increase in student's social capital; and through real-time opportunities for feedback and reflection, the development of professional identities. A unique aspect of Twitter is also the ability to cross hierarchical boundaries without the limitations of friend requests and closed groups.

Despite potential reservations around the use of Twitter with Nursing Students, such as the blurring of potential boundaries, it is argued that both Students and Academics alike, may benefit from its innovative use and that further research is needed to establish how it can be incorporated into new pre-registration Nursing programmes.

Keywords

Social Media, Twitter, Nurse Education, Community of Practice, Nursing Students,

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CROSSING BOUNDARIES

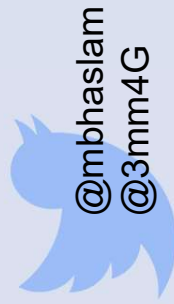
Twitter and Online Communities of Practice for Nursing Students

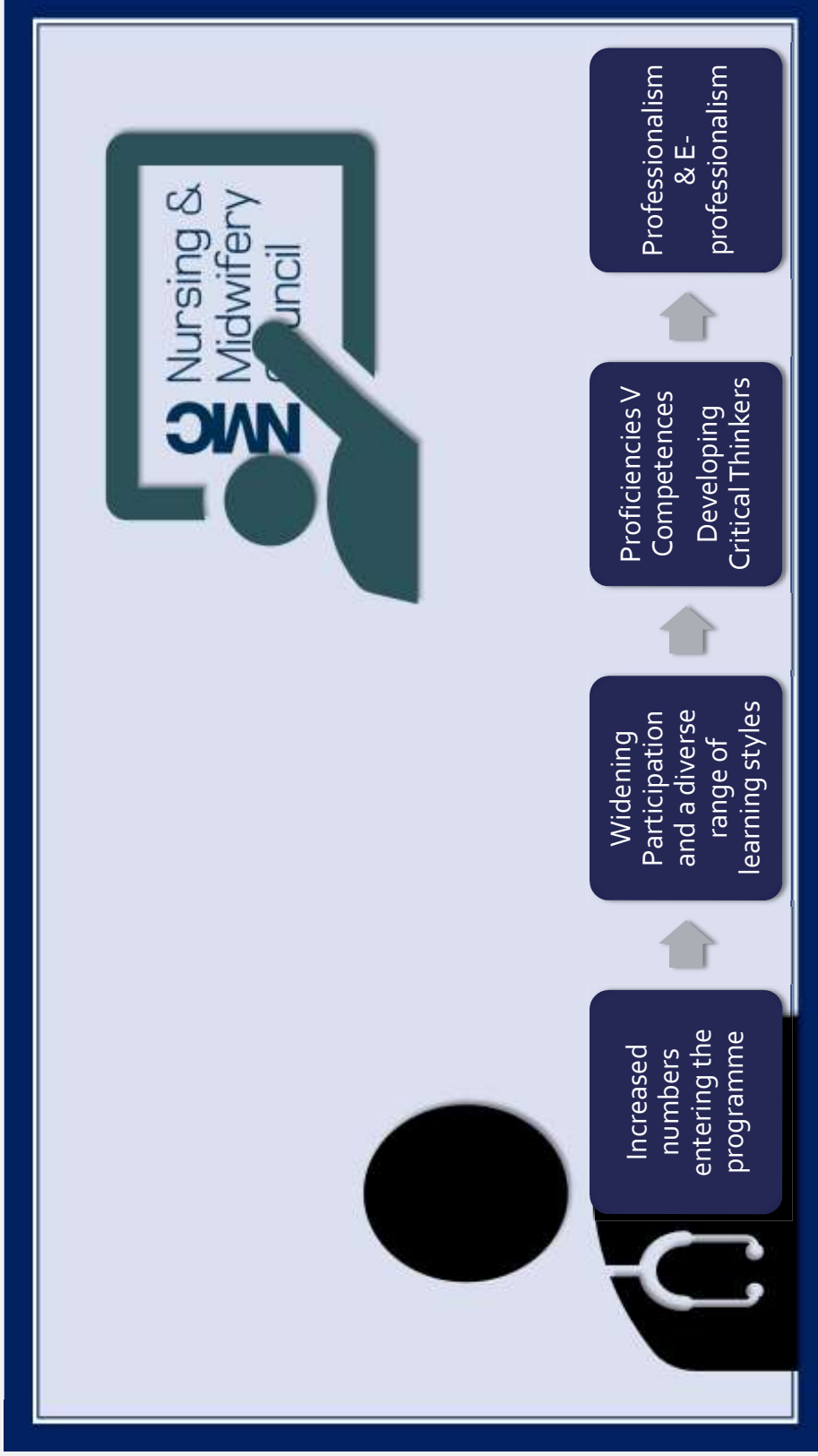
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(Slides presented at SocMedHE conference, 19th December 2019 with additional written commentary)



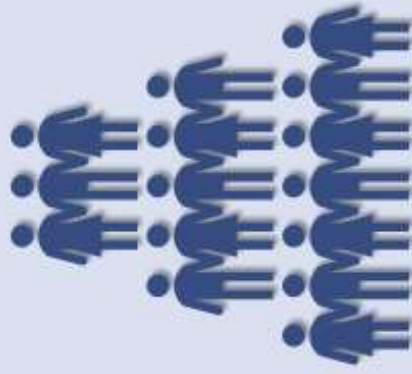


Background: UK Challenges to Nurse Education

Nurse education in the UK undergoing its biggest transformation in decades:

- Abolition of the student bursary, lifting the cap on student numbers & widening participation initiatives (Willis, 2012; Health Education England, 2015) = increase in the numbers of Students.
- Increasing complexity of patient groups (NHS England, 2014), all Nursing Students from 2020, required to have a wider range of knowledge and skills and must be proficient in these (NMC, 2018a).
- For HEIs delivering Nurse education, this means increased teaching workload as well as having to support students from diverse backgrounds to become independent and self-motivated learners and critical thinkers.

New and innovative ways of delivering Nurse education must therefore be explored (NMC, 2018b).



A climate where students have the chance to create and foster network connections within a shared domain of interest



Actively participating in synchronous and asynchronous interactions - learning achieved through engaging with discourse



Through interactions with those more senior, re-negotiating meaning & learned modelling of behaviour



Potential benefits of Social Media utilization for Nursing Students

Increasingly undergraduate Nursing Students are engaging with online communities via Social Media (Jackson et al, 2018).

Social Media support range of diverse learning styles (Whitty & Anane, 2014) and increases capacity for personal agency in learning (Viberg, et al. 2018).

Encourage a scholarly knowledge exchange and creation (Kassens-Noor, 2012) and promote the dissemination of good practice.

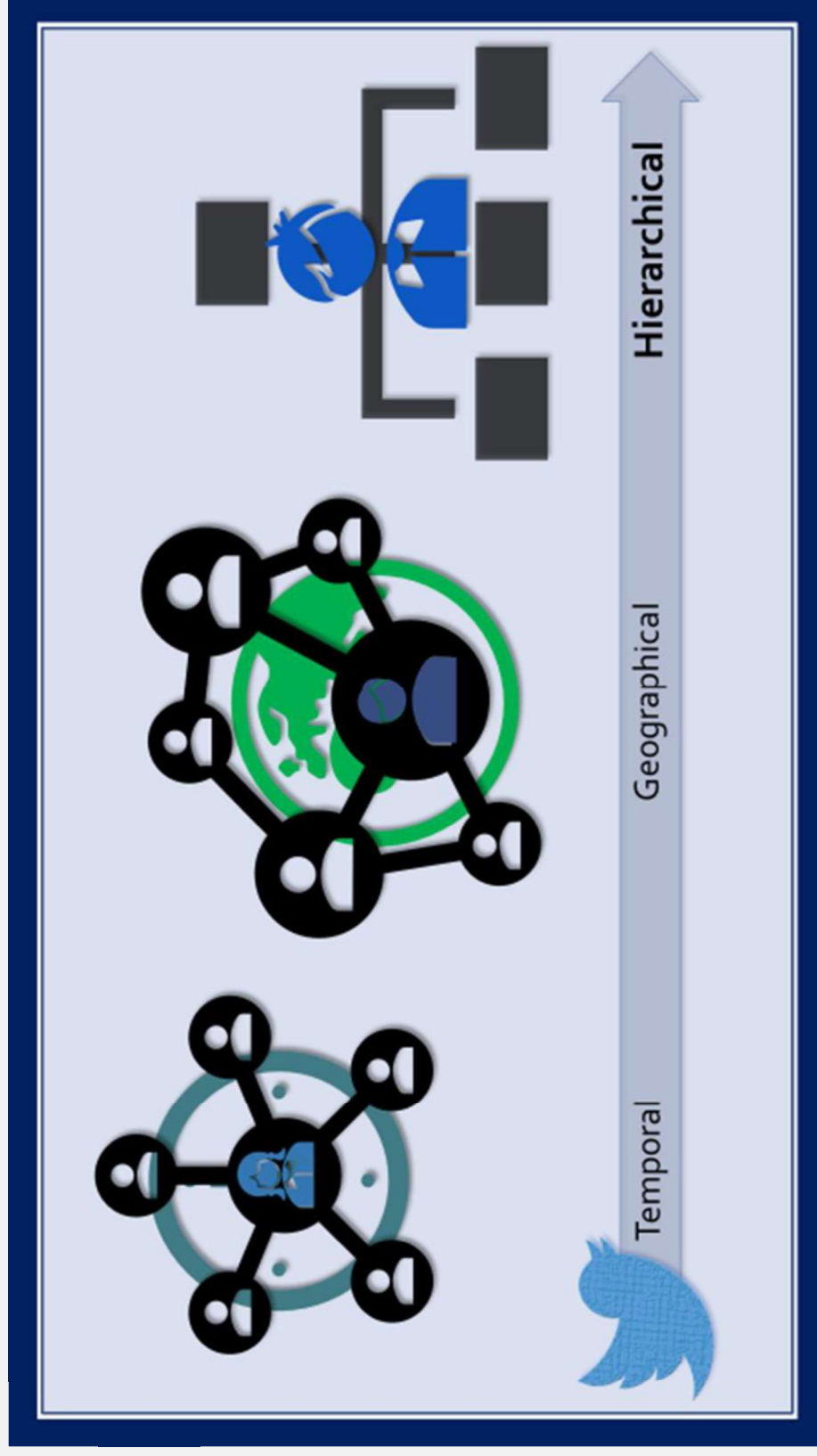
Social Media encourage self-reflection through active engagement with a shared discourse, thus facilitating socialisation into the nursing role.

Why Twitter as a preferred Social Media platform?

Unique aspect of Twitter - Without closed groups, there are fewer barriers to engaging with senior clinicians, educators and 'experts' in their field of practice and domains of interest.

As well as reducing temporal and geographical barriers, therefore, it also permits Nursing Students to cross traditional hierarchical boundaries (Daigle, 2019), allowing Nursing Students and Novice Nurses to engage directly with 'experts'.

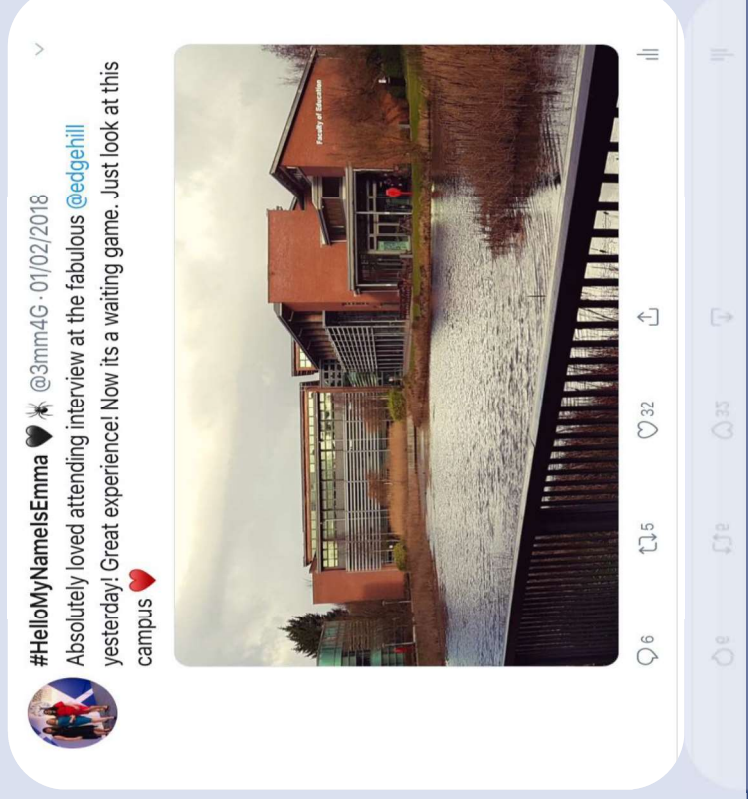
The potential benefits of the use of Twitter for Nursing Students and examples of transcending these traditional constraints and boundaries are discussed in the next few slides.



MY TWITTER JOURNEY SO FAR.....

By Emma Grady
2nd Year Student Mental Health
Nursing & Social Work

It started with a new Twitter account.....



 @3mm4G

.....then an interview

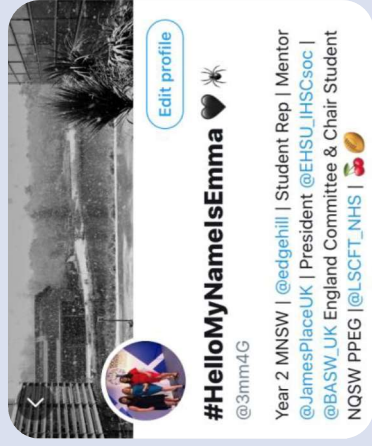
Why Twitter?

Less personal ? More professional?

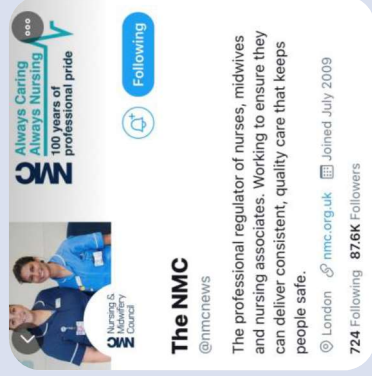
❖ Create an identity

❖ Shaped to my interest

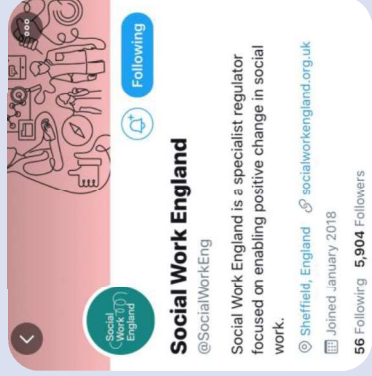
❖ Explore University



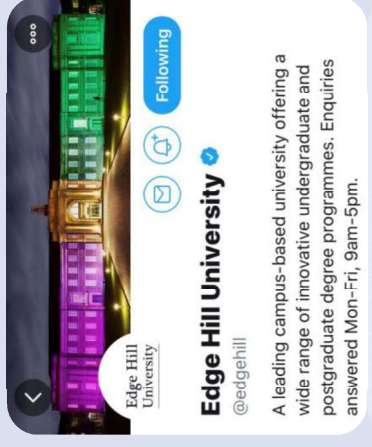
#HelloMyNameIsEmma @3mm4G
Year 2 MNSW | @edgehill | Student Rep | Mentor
@JamesPlaceUK | President @EHSU_IHSCsoc |
@BASW_UK England Committee & Chair Student
NQSWS PPEG | @LSCFT_NHS | 🇬🇧



The NMC @nmcnews
The professional regulator of nurses, midwives and nursing associates. Working to ensure they can deliver consistent, quality care that keeps people safe.
London | nmc.org.uk | Joined July 2009
724 Following 876K Followers



Social Work England @SocialWorkEng
Social Work England is a specialist regulator focused on enabling positive change in social work.
Sheffield, England | socialworkengland.org.uk
Joined January 2018
56 Following 5,904 Followers



Edge Hill University @edgehill
A leading campus-based university offering a wide range of innovative undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes. Enquiries answered Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm.

Successes so far

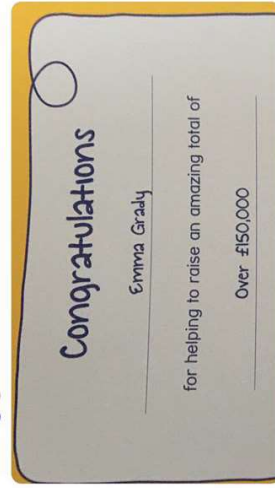
All because of Twitter.....and a bit of hard work 😊



Mark Harvey @MWharvey · 29/11/2019
Loved being with everyone tonight and getting to meet social workers from across the country. Have a soft spot for this fab SW @3mm4G who will help lead our professions future, you mark my words. #SWA19



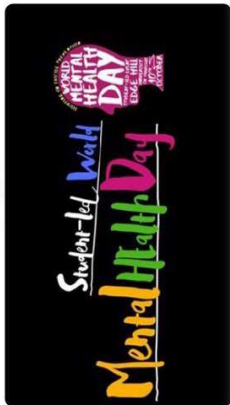
#HelloMyNameIsEmma @3mm4G · 22/11/2019
When a group of like minded people get together to run for an amazing cause, this is the kinda money we raise ! 🙌 Well done to all the runners for @MindCharity who ran in this years @ToughMudder events ! 🙌



Absolutely wanting to describe the feeling of crossing that finish line after 26.2 miles of pushing your body to the limit and making it back home safe and sound. #MindCharity #ToughMudder #Mentorship



#HelloMyNameIsEmma @3mm4G · 09/10/2019
It's tomorrow!!! 10/10/19 🎉 VIP List 🙌 @J.R_MerseyCare @LancsPolice @J.E_Boland @Emad.Ilo @markybt @BenHarris1982 @TheWriteVoice @Keirwales @AreYouAVeteran @bamboosgirl1 @AlfiesSquad @JamesPlaceUK @LifeRooms_MC @LifeCycleCoach GET YOUR FREE TICKET -> bit.ly/2nblgNg



Nearly choked on my coffee when I saw my mugshot in the @BAM_UK Professional Social Work Magazine 🙌🙌🙌
#Student @EHSU_JHSCsoc @Emmakimmer3 @LVANB9 @CarmelStofoth @markybt @Emad.Ilo @mbhaslam @RichieJW86 @ehulohsc_suc @EHU_JHSCM @edgehill



#HelloMyNameIsEmma @3mm4G · 11/10/2019
Ahhhhh my good @JHSCgovuk friend 😊 Thank you @markybt for being as passionate about Integrated Care as we are and thank you for visiting @edgehill @EHU_JHSCM on our super special student led World Mental Health Day Event 2019. @EHSU_JHSCsoc #YouRock #TeamMNSW 🙌🙌🙌



Graduation Day 🎓 Suicide Prevention Mentors 2019. It all begins here 🙌 @Zer0Suicide @JamesPlaceUK @J.E_Boland @DyAlisonSavage @emmavorsleys9 @testa.portia @Mersey_Care @edgehill @JimmyJamid @CarmelStofoth @mbhaslam @MerseyPolice @SBUK11



Done it ! I am now a Mental Health First aider 🙌 The most valuable asset for @EHSU_JHSCM for @EHSU_JHSCM @EHSU_JHSCM @EHSU_JHSCM



Social work with adults

Mental health social workers will guide the services of tomorrow



#HelloMyNameIsEmma @3mm4G · 11/10/2019
If I get even close to being like @robMITch92 @ElaineJames or @MWharvey in my career then I know I'm winning. Such a valuable morning. So passionate and dedicated to helping others live their best lives. We all need people like you beside us 🙌🙌🙌 AMAZING 🙌🙌
#MesajStuff



#HelloMyNameIsEmma @3mm4G · 11/10/2019
I'm ready to have that conversation. Are you? Make a start by completing the free training with @Zer0Suicide. For more info on the James Place Mentorship programme get in touch with them @JamesPlaceUK @Clarita_MH @J.E_Boland





#HelloMyNameIsEmma ❤️ 🕷️
@3mm4G

1,217 Following 504 Followers



EHSU Integrated Health & Social...
@EHSU_IHSCsoc

825 Following 381 Followers



- ❖ **Connections from across the world**
 - ❖ Useful for research
 - ❖ Direct to the source of work/books
 - ❖ Opportunities to meet new people
 - ❖ Make yourself known to the right people
 - ❖ Make new friends
- ❖ **Quick, free and easy to make contact with connections**
 - ❖ Breaks down hierarchical barriers
 - ❖ Less personal than other social media platforms
 - ❖ Focused on professional career

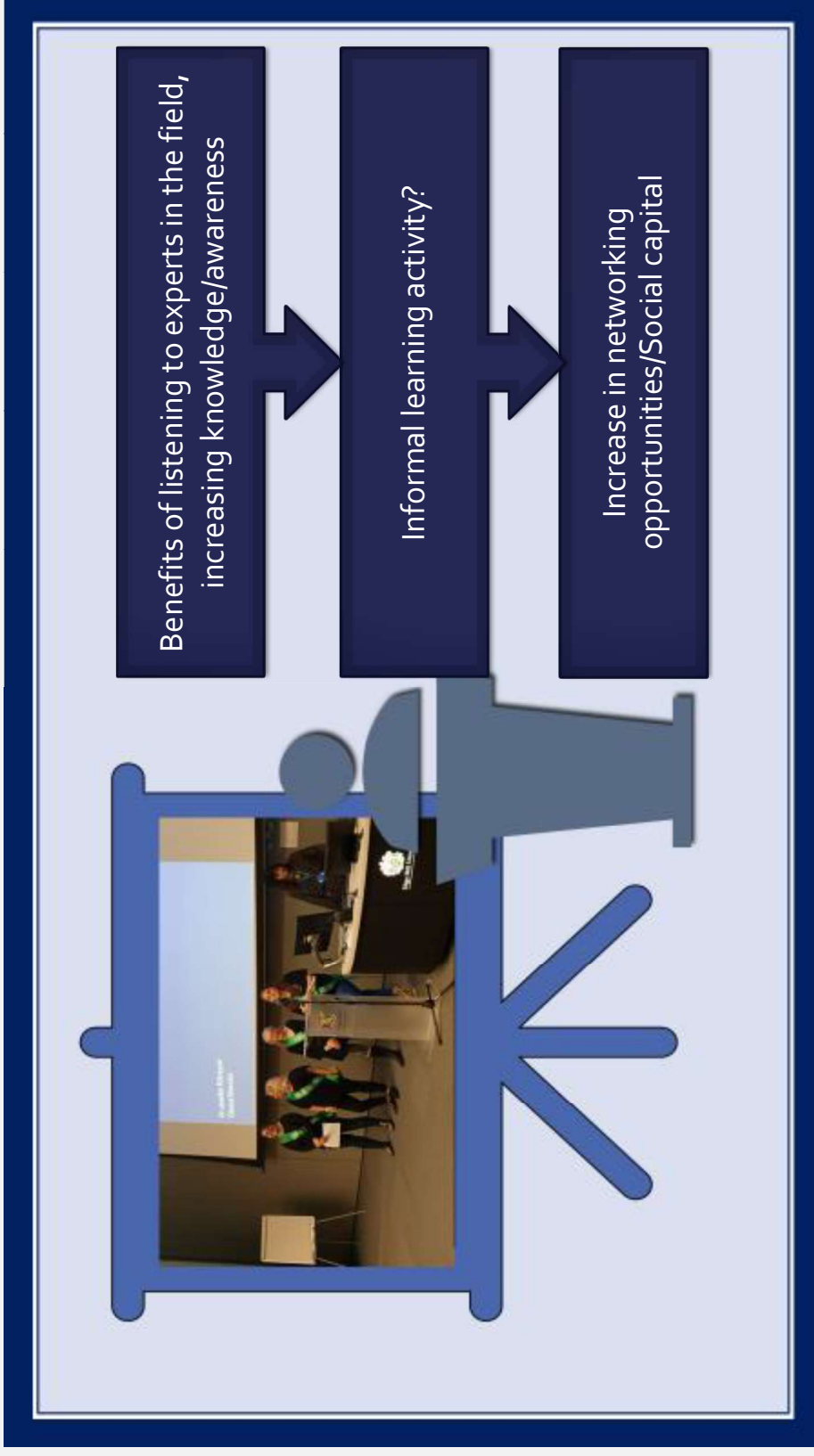
Potential benefits of Twitter

Potential benefits of engaging with Twitter may also be illustrated through a student-led conference at a University in the North West of England.

Twitter was the catalyst for this event as speakers were known to students online beforehand and agreed to speak after being contacted directly.

A noted increase in interactions on Twitter preceding, during and following the conference. Many interactions focused around a unique hashtag to the event.

- *By-products of the conference:*
 - Informal learning activity appeared to take place online throughout and following the conference through tweeting and engaging with the speakers. Potential knowledge transfer and real-time opportunities for personal reflection?
 - Increasing networking opportunities with other experts and Novices thus potentially increasing personal social capital



Online Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) - social model of learning through which professional development occurs. Being immersed in the social and cultural practices of a community, contribute to learning.

Provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding the development in professional identity; a dynamic and social process.

Already applied to Nursing, particularly in practice settings but can this be applied to online communities and E-Professionalism?

Virtual settings could transpose both practice and academic environments (Sinclair, et al, 2015).

Argument whether the virtual environment can be viewed as a COP depends upon if the conditions discussed by Lave and Wenger (1991) are met. Rosell-Aguilar (2018) argues that virtual environments can be considered as CoPs. Learning occurs through the active participation in social practices of a group. Meaning is negotiated and renegotiated through a shared discourse.





Communities and discussions formed around the use of hashtags:

#EHUNurses

#TeamMNSW

#WMHDEHU19

Module Codes?

Developing online Communities on Twitter

The use of shared hashtags on Twitter facilitate the development of community and fosters engagement and debate. Hashtags such as #WorldMentalHealthDay increase engagement with discussions around specific topics, whilst hashtags such as #WeStNs are used to organise group discussions.

Through active participation with these, communities are formed.

Barriers to Twitter use

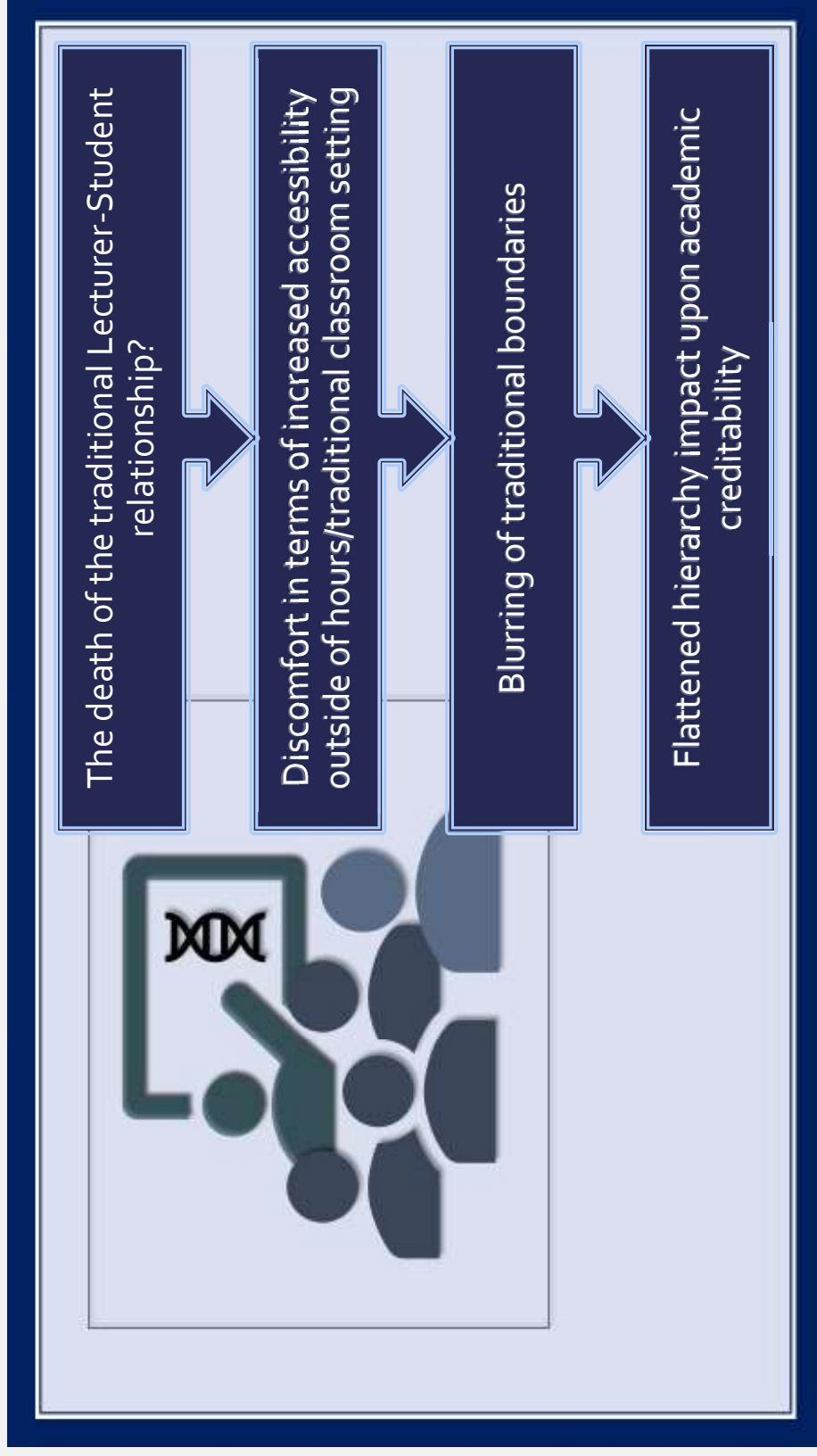
Despite potential for innovative ways of working with Students, use within Nurse education still in its infancy (Price, et al, 2018) and examples of how Social Media is currently used in Nurse education are limited (Smith and Lambert, 2014).

Dependant upon 'buy-in' from staff and students. Is Twitter the preferred platform?
Skill set?

For some Academics, concerns that the use of Social Media in general leads to the erosion of traditional Lecturer-Student relationships, presenting challenges, such as increased accessibility outside of the classroom and a potential blurring of boundaries and of professional relationships (Daigle, 2019).

Academics may also struggle with the informal nature of Social Media discussions, whilst an online presence with a social aspect may be perceived as impacting upon the credibility of Academic.

Face-to-face teaching seen as pedagogically more sound?

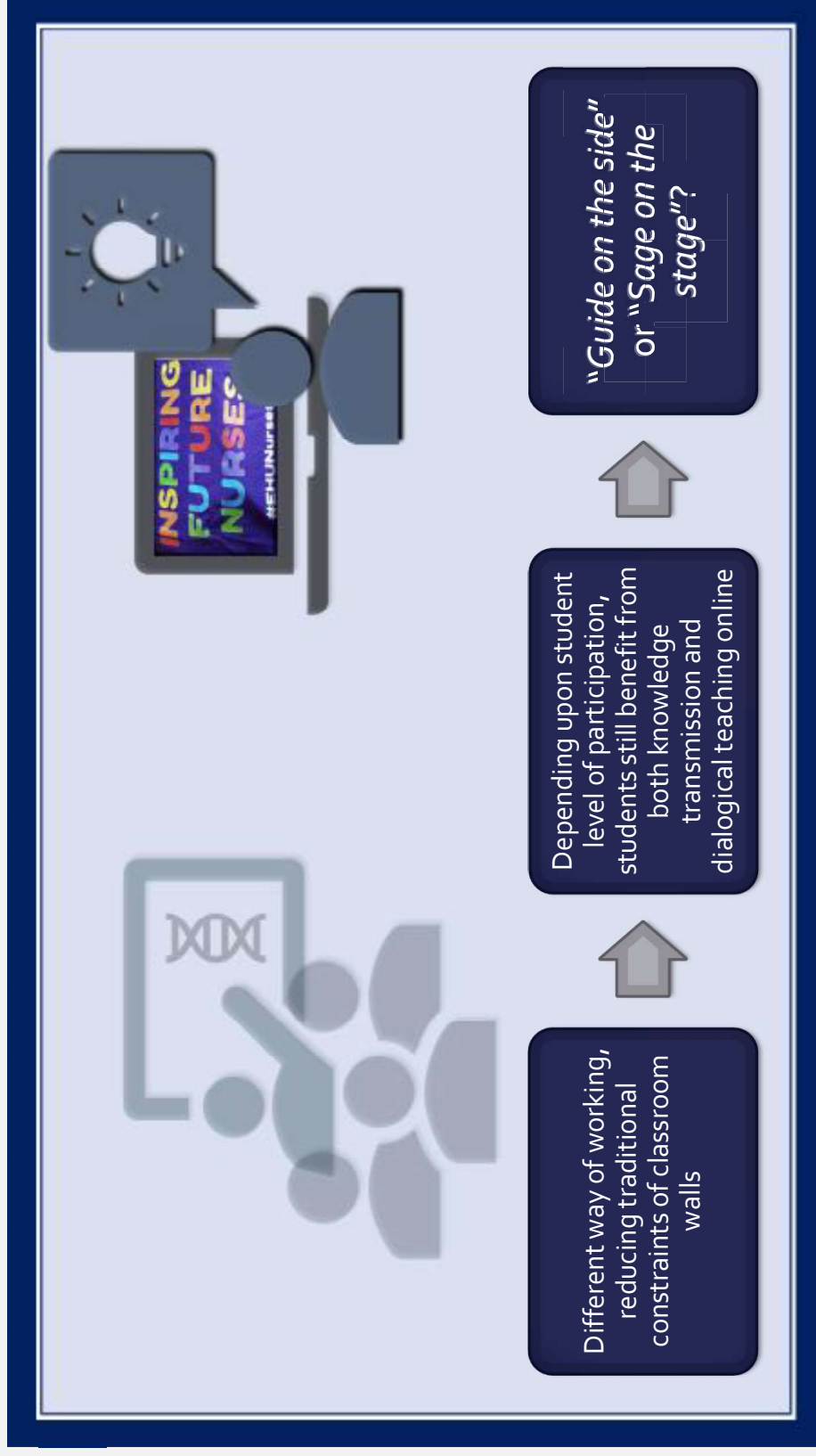


Implications for practice

Engaging Students in this way, however, may positively contribute to positive Lecturer-Student relationships (Matzat & Vrieling, 2016), providing that professional judgement is exercised by the Academic around professional boundaries.

Developing and encouraging involvement in online communities has the potential to promote an interactive and dynamic learning experience; encouraging Students to become active participants and contributing to the changing discourse around nursing issues, as opposed to being passive learners (Price, et al, 2018). May go some way to addressing the current challenges to nurse education discussed at the beginning of this presentation?

Not a replacement for face-to-face teaching, but can supplement this? Authentic tasks must provide relevance and meaning to the learner (Viberg, et al. 2018).



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