Introduction

▶ About Me

- Social work experience

- Practice education experience

- Research interest

- My favourite hobby

What to cover

- Backgrounds of two studies
- Challenges identified from the two studies – diversity issues
- How to initiate the conversations
- Continuous conversations

First study:
Merseyside Practice Educator's Experience

- 13 practice educator

- Ethnic backgrounds: 12 white English one mixed race

- On-site / off-site: 9 on-site (6 statutory sector and 3 voluntary sector) and 4 off-site

- Year or experience in PE: 3 under 5 years, 4 have 5 -10 yeas, 6 have more than 11 years

Age:
Students' limited life and work experiences

▶ *They are at only 19, that is extremely young; some have never really lived away from home …. people are <u>not so emotionally mature</u> …. they are really struggling. Placement is much more like work than being at college and they find it tough. (BC)*

▶ *With younger students, they <u>ask permission to do everything</u> . . . the younger the student, the more I find they just sit there and wait for me to give them stuff. If they don't do something, they'll say it's because you didn't tell me. (BC)*

- You get others who obviously will expect to be spoon-fed. Again, this is coming back to what we were saying earlier about obviously the <u>clarification and the expectations of individuals needs</u> to be, like, crystal clear. Sometimes I think that's quite distorted that can be for a variety of reasons, they may not have listened when they were in college (university). It could be that obviously that's the way they naturally assume that things should be done for them because they are <u>paying customers</u>. (DF)

More mature students

- Higher qualifications

- Work experiences in public sectors at management level

- Probably the biggest challenge for me is the <u>resistance to change</u>, and the denial about any weaknesses the students got . . . perhaps they don't recognise 'that' isn't a weakness, that could be quite difficult to develop with the student. I think that's probably a challenge with more of the mature students, and, those who have worked in public services before or worked in a caring service. They can often be quite difficult sometimes. Mature students being team managers and then they've come to be student social workers, and they're resistant to direction. (TR)

Students' religious belief

▶ *So I've worked with a couple of students that were practising Christians. And that makes a difference in terms of their views about things like <u>LGBT stuff</u>. Not that they don't agree with equality of opportunity. But you know, people that are practising Christians often will have a view on some issues. (DS)*

▶ *Anticipated problems that do not exist ?*

Hertfordshire: practice learning experience of international students

- 20 international students: 13 Social Work / 7 Mental Health Nursing
- 16 Females / 4 males
- 19 MSc level and one at BSc level
- 14 Black Africans, three Indians, one Chinese, one Caribbean and Eastern European
- 14 said English was the most competent spoken language
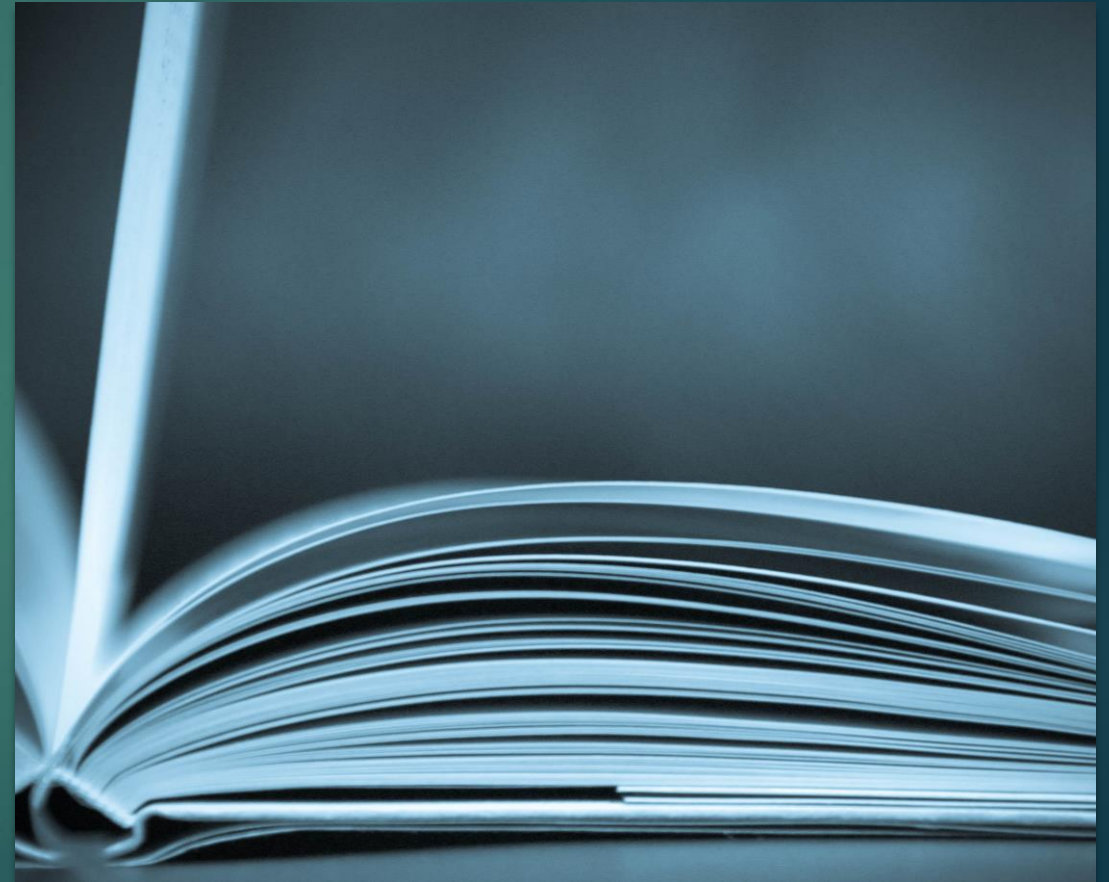
Working with International students'

- ▶ Increasing number of international students in HEI

- ▶ Language issues : students feel that they are not understood by service users and other workers

- ▶ Students find it difficult to understand others

- ▶ Misunderstanding because of use English

Not being understood by service users

Service users said

- What are you saying?
- Are you speaking English?
- I am tired of asking 'what do you mean'
- Have you ever done English?
- Can I get someone else?

Students' response

- But I speak English all my life
- Am I not speaking English?
- Don't know if they are rude or they can't hear you
- They made me speak in the way like they do
- It's degrading and painful
- My supervisor said it was their mental health issue

Impacts on Students

- Affected their confidence
- Change the way they speak
- Feeling degrading
- Normalised others' behaviours

Assimilation: Changing my accent?

▶ My tone was naturally adjusted to make sure they're comfortable

▶ Feeling sad that I have to mimic them

▶ Adjust my voice to sound British

▶ You start to behave the way that others do

▶ I try to find out the exact way an English person would say certain words

Integration: Maintaining own identity

I will not apologise → I've got nothing to be ashamed of → People should appreciate where I am from

I am definitely proud of where I come from → appreciate diversity , I now sound the same as I used to be → how I sound now is how I sounded with them,

There is no place for apology for anyone's accent

- The moment you start apologising because you have a different accent, what happens is that you start devaluing your identity as a person. Because my accent is what makes me, because the moment I start saying I'm sorry for speaking this way, in a way, I'm erasing who I am. So I think this was supposed to be a bridge, because they won't apologise to me for speaking in a British accent, because that's how they speak. So if I don't understand what they're saying in their British accent and they don't apologise, why should I apologise

Difficulty to understand others

▶ *But for people who have a stronger accent, I have difficulty understanding them instead - that's the reality. Because some people from the north or from a different area, they do have a stronger accent, and I struggled to understand them rather than they understand me. (SW2)*

▶ *Sometimes it's embarrassing, so when someone is talking and you didn't hear what the person said, and also you're talking to someone and the person is saying, what are you saying? So, for me, it was more - like, more <u>embarrassing to ask someone to repeat</u> themselves because I didn't hear, because of the accent, the difference in accent. (MHN 2)*

▶ *Diversity of service users from different countries (SW8)*

How to ensure effective communication

▶ Accent modification?

Other strategies

▶ Speak slower

▶ Speak more loudly

▶ Ask people politely to repeat their questions

▶ Try to use other words

▶ Mentoring / buddying to prepare placement

Support from Placement

▶ Making students feel welcome

▶ Reassurance from PE

▶ Encourage students to ask questions

▶ Mutual support and understanding : 'Working in a team with colleagues from diverse backgrounds , same as the service user group'

▶ They would be more willing to listen and take more time to understand what I was saying over the phone.

Continuous conversations

- ▶ Different student profile (more diverse backgrounds)

- ▶ Increasing number of international students (qualified social workers from other countries)

- ▶ Experiences of being non-native English-speaking learners (both home and international students)

Recommendations

Being open and honest is the key for relationship building

Clear expectation of roles and responsibilities

An inclusive learning environment for students

Support networks and forum for students and practice educators

THANK YOU