

Workplace Learning of Urban Paramedics in a Small Canadian City

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1 INTRODUCTION

- Paramedics must undertake work tasks in stressful and often, chaotic work environments. Consequently, on-going formal learning is **challenging**.
- As such, paramedics often rely on informal and experiential workplace learning.
- Knowledge about workplace learning processes **quickly turn into** knowledge about workplace pedagogy (Dornan, 2012, p. 16).
- This understanding could help bridge the gap in paramedic formal training practices.

2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do paramedics learn on-the-job?
2. How do paramedics receive interdisciplinary training and what are their perspectives associated with this?
3. How do paramedics stay current with their professional qualifications and how are they involved with professional development?

3 METHODS & ANALYSIS

- Institutional review board approved of the study (HE09631) and participants were recruited via snowball sampling for an interview within the municipal emergency medical service.
- All participants signed consent forms and the interviews were conducted in-person or via Zoom. All were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed.
- Semi-structured interviews informed by an interview guide piloted in 2018.
- Total of eighteen (n = 18) participants. There were two (n = 2) flight medics who had recently just transitioned from the municipal emergency medical services and two (n = 2) Chiefs who had recently been promoted. Average interview length ~1:37:00.
- Interview data analysis was informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-phase thematic analysis, which involves phases: 1) familiarization with data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and naming themes, and 6) producing the report.

4 INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Participant	Sex	Age	Level	Years of Experience
1	M	34	PCP	10
2	M	41	ACP	11
3	F	24	PCP	4.5
4	M	37	ACP	17
5	M	32	ACP	10
6	M	40	ACP	12
7	F	42	ACP	22
8	M	40	ACP	12
9	F	43	ACP	12
10	F	33	Flight Medic	8
11	M	46	ACP	9
12	M	38	PCP	7
13	M	43	ACP	16
14	M	44	Flight Medic	23
15	M	36	PCP	5
16	M	47	District Chief	19
17	M	37	Assistant Chief	19
18	F	35	Flight Nurse	10
Average		38.5		12.6

5 PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- The preliminary findings demonstrate a **discrepancy** between the formal training received and the perceived value of learning required for sustainable performance on-the-job.
- Participants primarily valued experiential and self-directed forms of learning in the workplace.
- Further research is necessary to explore self-directed and experiential forms of learning in the workplace, especially involving the role of technology (e.g., uses of mobile phones, phone apps, and podcasts).
- Moreover, coaching sciences could offer a novel contribution to the area of paramedicine research as both areas require performance on demand in intense situations, though the outcomes are different.

"[the training process] is hyper-focused on that 10% of that work we do. It's hyper-focused on the medicine [and] does not focus at all on any of these other kind of ancillary parts of the job." (Participant 4)

"I was taught to do a cricothyrotomy six years ago when I became an ACP. It's never been revisited since... Like I mean you're talking about cutting somebody open and throwing a tube down the throat because you can't vent them and they can't breathe... Those types of things I like to go review them on my own and I'll read through the protocol. I mean, unfortunately, we don't get the opportunities to do as much hands-on practice as I'd like." (Participant 2)

"I've managed to find a good sleeping schedule that works for me, which helps with the nights and just sleeping in general, but that took probably six months to figure out what worked for me" (Participant 3)

"I literally model how I do things in a combination based on how not to do things on how my first partner did things and a lot of the things that I learned from the other successive mentors that I had along the way" (Participant 15)

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