

## **Creating a space for students to learn from their own stories of clinical practice (0003)**

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For the award of professional doctorate I researched my own practice, which grew from my personal process of learning from stories of clinical practice. The trigger for this work was found in my dissatisfaction with current nurse education curricula. The methodology for this work is found in my own method of investigating my own learning from practice (my pre-narrative, remembering stories, telling stories, writing stories and sharing stories), and my own special learning that emerged from it (emotional, intuition, personal, ethical, connected learning and learning through time). Therefore, articulating this style of learning from experience.

I set my own personal process alongside other theoretical methods of learning from story (McDrury and Alterio, 2003; Moon, 1999; Mason, 2002). These authors use reflection, and may not have fully uncovered the importance of story (Bruner, 1986) or searched beyond reflection (Bradbury *et al*, 2010) to support learning. The literature advocates the benefit of using, sharing stories and experiences written by other nurses and patients, but generalises the use of story as only an extension to develop areas within the mainstream curriculum. This does not encapsulate story as a learning space.

I used my personal process of learning with participants in an attempt to see how it worked and what student nurses might learn from their own experiences when written as stories. I included the students in the research as participants as researchers (Reason, 1994). I collected forty six students written stories and their learning. The analysis of student stories used my own special learning from my stories and showed evidence of ethics, emotions, intuition and personal, and from these initial themes connections emerged between them as patterns (Leiblich *et al*, 1998) and learning through time (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Other areas of learning were also identified

The students' stories and learning seemed to initially capture the meanings, interpretations of what the essence of learning from story was all about and it helped me see learning from the students' perspective. Yet it is my view this initial analysis only gave a small insight into the search for learning from students written stories of clinical practice and as such called for a more thoughtful, meaningful analysis. I set out from here to explore the fundamentals of story (Bruner, 1986; van Manen, 1990) and discover what was really concerning me was something essential to my role as a teacher. Is the student learning from their own stories predetermined by the curriculum and set out as learning outcomes, or by me as in my learning from stories or more specifically is it the students' individual learning from their own stories that is special.

My recommendation is to identify the value of including opportunities in nursing courses for students to learn to use their pre-narrative experiences and to gain insights from their stories of clinical practice experience. It is about the teachers' working with students sharing and valuing story, creating a space for it. The teachers' perspective on student learning is absent. Core to this is my contribution to practice that story connects students with the nature of nursing, the humanness which is essential in their personal role as a nurse; if you do not achieve the essence of nursing you cannot perform fully in your role. Stories live because they are held by the student who experienced them; these stories come forth as they are unique to the individual.

This applied research outlines a number of innovative elements while researching my own practice:

1. What I wanted initially was to develop a guide to exemplify learning from practice to students as some kind of supporting device, which gave order to the way in which learning can develop from story, but this was not what I was looking for.
2. In addition, what I was also looking for in the individual analysis of the students learning from their stories was something that would represent it, and not me, as the teacher thought they were or should be learning from their story. By surprise I came upon poetry the students were speaking to me in a poetic frame. It is inappropriate to ask for a conclusion or a summary and to present a result would destroy the result, because the poems themselves are the result.
3. I was looking for the missing element in current learning in higher education; the individual student learning gained from their own stories, outside of current set learning outcomes and what is predetermined by the teacher. What this research highlights is the additional learning that can be achieved through students analysing and critiquing their own stories.

My future research work will continue through the development of the use of story using unobtrusive methods (Lee, 2000). This involves data gathered by means that do not involve direct elicitation of information from research subjects and avoids the problems caused by the researcher's presence. It involves using the evidence people leave behind them in various ways e.g. student reflection assignments, evaluations.

In addition, consider learning from stories as an additional framework to inform nurse education curriculum by creating a space for student individual learning from stories. The use of story as a space may have relevance and be applicable to other settings, whereby the findings in a particular context are transferable to similar situations with similar types of participants. This includes other healthcare professional settings that have a related context such as medicine, physiotherapy, paramedics, social workers, radiotherapy, microbiology and pharmacy. However, there is also other practice professions' whereby the use of the approach may be of benefit such as education, management, business and engineering and law. This requires further research.

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