



Using flash cards to engage Indonesian nursing students in reflection on their practice



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SUMMARY

Background: Reflective practice is now widely used as a critical learning tool in undergraduate and postgraduate nursing programs in most developed countries. However in developing countries, reflective practice is in its infancy.

Aim: To introduce reflective practice to postgraduate students in an Indonesian nursing education institution. This paper presents the positive meanings of reflection and reflective practice experienced by the students and the way they used reflection within their practice.

Design: A descriptive qualitative study was conducted to explore the meaning of reflection or reflective practice using flashcards.

Method: A clinical reflective practice model taking into consideration Indonesian culture was developed and applied during students' clinical placement. A few weeks post clinical placement, 21 students participated in an evaluation session. The meaning of reflection or reflective practice was explored using flash cards containing images of people and environment with different situations and events. Students were asked to choose a card that represented their viewpoints about reflective practice and share it with the group. Data were digitally captured and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Findings: Reflection provided a positive experience for the students. In their own words, they discussed their journey of using reflection during the clinical placement period. The use of reflection was identified as expanding their view of nursing practice, providing a safe place to explore their experiences and clarity when they encountered challenging situations during their clinical practice. Reflecting on practice experiences resulted in increased self-awareness, and enhanced their learning.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that reflective practice can be implemented successfully in Indonesia and may have value for other Eastern countries that share similar cultural characteristics. The use of flash cards assisted the students describe through stories their experiences of participating in this reflective practice program.

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Background

In nursing, reflective practice is widely used as a critical learning tool in undergraduate and postgraduate nursing programs in most developed countries (Glaze, 2001; Wilding, 2008). However in developing countries, its use is at a beginning stage in undergraduate nursing programs (Ip et al., 2012; Stockhausen and Kawashima, 2002). The literature demonstrates that student nurses gain significant benefits from reflection (Bulman et al., 2012).

The term 'reflection' was coined by Schön (1983), who developed the theory of reflective practice, based on Dewey's philosophy about how a person thinks about something i.e. an event or situation (Dewey, 1998), indeed for a spontaneous action (Schön, 1983). Reflection involves a process of looking back on the action taken in order to think thorough whether the action was effective or not (Jasper, 2011). This type of learning is important in a field of study that contains professional knowledge, such as nursing. Schön (1983) emphasizes that professionals often face uncertain situations in their practice, and reflection assists them to be more aware of their own practice. Schön (1983) states that *reflection-on-action* and *reflection-in-action* are two types of reflection that facilitate learning during professional education. *Reflection-on-action* is when the reflection process is undertaken on completion of an action, whilst *reflection-in-action* is reflection undertaken during the action (Schön, 1983). When reflection is used in practice, it is called reflective practice.

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Reflective Practice in Nursing Education

Nursing scholars have identified the positive impact on nursing education following the implementation of reflective practice. In undergraduate programs, reflective practice has been seen to improve student nurses' development during clinical practice placement (Lie et al., 2010). In another study examining structured reflective practice, Glynn (2012) found that whilst students' self-confidence rates decreased slightly, they increased their insightfulness about both their knowledge and skill level. Reflection assists in transformation of student nurses' behavior in terms of self-awareness and self-confidence as a nurse (Glaze, 2001) and enhances students' thought processes during clinical placement (Durgahee, 1996). Despite the fact that some Eastern countries have started to implement reflective practice in their nursing curriculum, the majority of studies related to reflective practice or reflection in the literature were conducted in Western countries.

The implementation of reflective practice in eastern countries

Eastern countries such as China, Indonesia, and Japan have started to integrate reflective practice into their curriculum (Ip et al., 2012; Kuswando, 2014; Stockhausen and Kawashima, 2002). Challenges were identified that needed to be resolved for successful reflective practice implementation. A major issue is the different cultural characteristics of Eastern countries compared to Western countries (Stockhausen and Kawashima, 2002). This has resulted in the influence of culture becoming a contested and debated issue amongst scholars in Eastern countries, particularly in Asia (Joyce-McCoach et al., 2013).

Based on Hofstede's culture dimensions, Wanda et al. (2014) note that there are four culture dimensions of Eastern countries that relate closely to reflective practice: (1) high power distance, (2) strong uncertainty avoidance, (3) collectivist and (4) masculinity. High power distance refers to the wide gap between educators (regarded as having a higher power position) and students. Hofstede (2011) suggests that strong uncertainty avoidance may result in insecure feelings when confronted by ambiguous situations such as learning a new skill. The collectivist viewpoint may result in prioritizing group interest before individuals interest (Hofstede, 2011), while masculinity relates to the concept of men being more dominant and visible than women. Each of the cultural dimensions potentially influences the implementation of reflective practice in Eastern countries. For instance, Indonesian people may not be able to discuss their personal feelings or thoughts as this may be regarded as focusing on self rather than the group (Kuswando, 2014). Similarly, Ip et al. (2012) found that Chinese students were resistant to sharing their reflections openly with their peers or educators, even if this assists in increasing students' critical thinking abilities.

This paper will now focus on the implementation and evaluation of a reflective practice model in a postgraduate nursing program in

Indonesia. Table 1 provides examples of how the cultural dimensions relate to the education setting of this study in particular high power distance, collectivist and uncertainty avoidance. Masculinity has not been included as it was thought to have limited if any influence as the nursing workforce, the educators and the students were all female.

Method

Research Approach

An action research (AR) project was conducted to develop and implement a Clinical Reflective Practice (CRP) model for clinical educators and student nurses in a postgraduate nursing program in Indonesia. This new model integrated reflective practice with Indonesian cultural characteristics (high power distance, collectivist, and uncertainty avoidance) in its design. The CRP model was introduced to the educators and students prior to commencement of the one-year clinical placement. This paper reports on the findings from students perspectives of using the model. Data was collected 6 weeks after completion of the clinical placement. Other aspects of this project, such as the experiences of clinical educators and evaluation of the new model, will be published in separate journal articles.

To assist the students during the implementation of the CRP model, a structured format was developed based on data collected from cycle 1 of the study which consisted of 5Ds: doubt, description, dissection, discover, and decision. It was anticipated that the weekly reflective report using the structured format would assist the students in overcoming uncertainty avoidance (or insecure feelings) that might occur during their writing process (Wanda et al., 2014). The intention of the format was to decrease students' uncertainty feelings as they knew what was expected of them in the reflective activities (Ip et al., 2012). Students were encouraged to use the structured format and to submit a weekly reflective report to their clinical educator.

The clinical educators facilitated group discussions using the students' reflective reports to minimize the impact of high power distance on interactions between the students and educators'. The students also held student led reflective group discussions in order to reduce the possible impact of collectivism by balancing individual learning needs with the overall needs of the group. The use of structured reflection, frequent individual reflective reports and group discussions are strategies used in this study to overcome the possible impact of cultural dimensions on reflective practice.

Design

A descriptive qualitative study design was used to explore the students' experiences of reflective practice. This approach is generally based on principles of constructivist inquiry (Polit and Beck, 2014) whereby the meaning of a situation is constructed from participants.

Table 1

Culture dimensions and its relation to reflective practice.

Culture dimensions	Example of culture dimension in education setting	Possible impact of culture dimensions to reflective practice	Strategies used to reduce impact of culture dimensions when implementing reflective practice
High power distance	A teacher will have more power than students in the learning process (Kim & Cha, 2013).	Students are unlikely to initiate reflection to improve their own learning as they believe that it is the teacher's responsibility to make them learn.	Student-centered learning Regular reflective discussion Group discussion
Stronger uncertainty avoidance	Avoidance behavior in uncertain clinical situations (Ekintumas, 1999), therefore students prefer a structured and detail information.	Students avoid new experiences related to using reflective practice or reflection.	Structured reflection Clear guidelines on reflective activities
Collectivist	Students are hesitant to speak up if it will break the group's harmony or to challenge the teacher (Burnard and Naiyapatana, 2004).	Less chance that the students will conduct reflections since they will be viewed as 'different' amongst their group.	Group discussion Regular individual reflective report Written feedback

(Summarized from Wanda et al., 2014).

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