



ELSEVIER

Emotional learning within the framework of nursing education

Björg Christiansen ^{a,*}, Karen Jensen ^{b,1}

^a Oslo University College, Faculty of Nursing, P.O. Box 4, St. Olavs pl., N-0130 Oslo, Norway

^b Institute for Educational Research, University of Oslo, P.O. Box 1092, Blindern 0317 Oslo, Norway

Accepted 4 January 2008

KEYWORDS

Emotional learning;
Role-play;
Peer learning;
Baccalaureate
nursing students

Summary Nursing requires a certain degree of emotional investment as well as the capacity to align one's emotions to the norms and values of the profession. The article is based on a qualitative study among nursing students in Norway. It discusses how peer learning in connection with sessions involving role-play may contribute to developing these qualities in future professionals. As researchers, we acquired access to a particular communication course for the third year nursing students at Oslo University College. The study combines two methodological approaches: observation and focus group interviews. The findings illustrate how students, by commenting on each others' experiences and performance, may be able to help each other to develop a richer repertoire in how to express themselves and to adapt their behavior to the needs of those being cared for.

© 2008 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

In nursing, the importance of interpersonal and expressive qualities has long been recognized. 'Caregiver's work', as with many other types of work, requires different ways of managing emotions (Bolton, 2000). In nursing education, the student's ability to cultivate emotional qualities in

caring is usually associated with her experiences in relationship to patients. In addition to clinical settings, interpersonal skills may also be developed in a classroom setting, for instance by role-play practice and student feedback.

A communication course was implemented during the third year of nursing education in a norwegian Faculty as an applied research-based educational innovation. Role-play is considered to be a suitable method for students to enhance communication that expresses a professional, compassionate concern (Eide and Eide, 1996/2004). Role-playing provides opportunities for students to verbalize experiences, and to comment and reflect on each

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +47 22453738; fax: +47 22453855.

E-mail addresses: bjorg.christiansen@su.hio.no, Karen.jensen@ped.uio.no.

¹ Tel.: +47 22855357; fax: + 47 22854250.

others performance even if the teacher is not necessarily present all the time. This may be considered as an element of "peer learning" incorporated in a formal teaching strategy created by the staff. But if the teacher is not there, how do we recognize student reciprocity as a vehicle of learning? A qualitative study among nursing students was used as part of the specific educational innovation. Drawing on data from this study, the article focuses on a form of classroom-based peer learning that enables the students to cultivate their modes of expression for working in a care-giving profession.

Background

Emotional learning

The emotional reactions of nursing students in relation to patients are reported in several studies, indicating that nursing care can be extremely challenging. A study from the USA describes a myriad of emotions experienced by the undergraduate students, such as frustration, sadness, fear and empathy in caring for cognitively impaired elderly people (Beck, 1996). Oerman and Lukomski (2001) describe stress, challenges and emotions experienced by pediatric nursing students in the USA. A further study describes how critical incidents in mental health practice aroused strong, negative emotional responses in the student (Fisher, 2002). Smith (1991) reports that emotional issues were discussed by the tutor in specific educational sessions in a ward learning environment. The students, however, received little formal training in techniques for mastering emotionally difficult situations.

These studies reflect the need for students to pay more attention to the emotional implications of care-giving, but tell us little about how this can be done within an educational framework. Freshwater and Stickley (2004) underline the need to strengthen commitment to emotional competency during nursing education, addressing among other things, reflective learning experiences and focusing on developing self and dialogic relationships. The students have to learn how to manage their subjectivity in a way that promotes caring and compassionate conduct (Christiansen, 2003). Hochschild (1983) draws attention to the efforts and costs involved in managing and expressing emotions related to the field of working life. Through social interaction we learn to fashion our emotions in accordance with the norms and limitations of the group, or what Hochschild (1983) terms as the "feeling rules" of a given culture. These rules not only influence the expression of feeling, but the actual feelings we hold

as well. Hochschild distinguishes two ways of fashioning emotions: surface and deep. In the first way, we try to change our outward appearance. This is *surface acting*. As a nurse one sometimes has to disguise one's own feelings, for instance when one is unpleasantly affected by specific sights, smells and noises. Even so, separating the display of the feeling from the actual feeling is hard to maintain over long periods. "In surface acting we deceive others about what we really feel, but we do not deceive ourselves" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 33). The other way is *deep acting* which requires that the performer actually feels that which is communicated. "We must dwell on what it is that we want to feel and on what we must do to induce the feeling" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 47). Grief and suffering in the field of nursing involve a wide array of emotional challenges which require deep acting: the nurse projecting herself or himself into the position of the patient, comprehending reactions in a professional way as well as drawing on similar memories as a source of compassion.

Peer learning

"Peer learning" in higher education encompasses a broad sweep of activities. It involves students learning from and with each other in both formal and informal ways, by referring to networks of learning relationships among students and significant others (Boud, 2001). Slavin (1990) emphasizes the life-long aspects of peer learning, particularly fostering skills or attributes such as collaboration and teamwork; critical enquiry and reflection; communication skills and learning to learn. In that frame of reference, Boad et al. (1999) point at the increased possibilities for students to engage in reflection and exploration of ideas when the authority of the teacher is not an immediate presence. Whether these possibilities are realized depends on the ways in which peer learning is established and the context in which it operates.

In this article peer learning refers to the use of role-play as a formal teaching strategy in which students learn with and from each other without the immediate intervention of a teacher. According to Boad et al. (1999) students gain more practice in communicating in the subject area than is typically the case when staff are present. They are able to articulate their understanding and have it critiqued by peers, as well as learn from adopting the reciprocal role. This is a sort of feedback which is specific and relates to the detailed qualities of the work under consideration. Boad & Falchikov (2006) suggest

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/367106>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/367106>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)