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Professional development for radiographers and post graduate nurses in radiological interventions: Building teamwork and collaboration through drama

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The rapid development within Interventional Radiology presents new challenges. Hybrid operating rooms consist of interventional radiology, open surgery, computed tomography, magnetic resonance imaging and other techniques. This means that several disciplines and professionals need to work in new constellations creating a multidisciplinary team around the patient. In accordance with this development, higher professional education must provide new pedagogic strategies to successfully address the knowledge expected in today's complex working life.

Aim: To explore the use of Applied Drama as a learning medium, focusing on the use of Forum Theatre, to foster team work and collaboration in the field of radiography and learning.

Methods: A qualitative approach, closely related to Ethnography, was utilized.

Result: The Drama Workshop utilising Forum Theatre created a dynamic learning environment and enabled the participants from three professions to understand each other's priorities better. The use of drama within health care education allows the students to take different roles in order to find the best way to co-operate.

Conclusion: Forum Theatre is a useful learning medium in order to promote teamwork and collaboration in the radiological intervention field. By choosing a personal working experience, Forum Theatre seem to engage the participants at a deeper level and to experience various communication strategies and how the outcome changed depending on the approach. This can lead to improved teamwork and collaboration.

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Introduction

Fast developments within the field of radiology present new challenges. Interventional radiology is an important and rapidly growing area, serving the patients with surgical treatments that previously meant open invasive surgery. Hybrid operating rooms, where interventional radiology, open surgery, computed tomography, magnetic resonance imaging and other techniques are

performed, are now common in larger hospitals all over the world.¹ This means that several disciplines and professionals need to work in new constellations to create a multidisciplinary team around the patient.² Sensing a patient's needs and responding to these in order to create a trusting atmosphere is important during radiological interventions.³ In response to this, teamwork and collaboration are vital professional competencies that must be developed. Thus, professional development may need to consider new pedagogic strategies that can successfully address the forms of knowledge and understanding expected of professionals in today's complex working environment. Benner et al.⁴ suggest a transformation of nursing education from traditional classroom teaching towards more integrative and experiential learning needs to be considered.

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Competency of teamwork and collaboration

Interventional radiology is a source for various surgical treatments and this means that different professions cooperate in so called “hybrid environments”.⁵ Being able to effectively work as a team and collaborate is considered the key to success in ensuring efficient workflow and economic gains.⁶

Teamwork is one of the six core competencies for professionals within health care as defined by the Institute of Medicine (IOM),⁷ and the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses.⁸ Higher Education Ordinance⁹ in Sweden states that general qualifications at post graduate level in nursing require additional higher level skills in comparison with basic requirements in terms of knowledge and attitudes. In the future, the need for cooperation between professionals across disciplinary boundaries will increase. The demands of interdisciplinary collaboration require a professional to have skill within their own field as well as ability to collaborate as part of a team.^{10,11} Registered radiographers in Scandinavia are in a unique position because they are responsible for the entire radiological examination this includes the patient and the technical equipment.¹²

Teamwork promotes continuity, strengthens security for the patient, and fosters interdisciplinary dialogue. Teams are successful when all members work together and there is equality and balance within the team. The most challenging, but positive, situations are where team members from different professional backgrounds work together, but they need to be adaptable and flexible when working across professional boundaries.^{13,14} However, professional groups appear to ‘guard’ their territory and radiographers sometimes experience that other professionals are unfamiliar with the radiographers’ role. This is particularly obvious when diagnostic radiographers visit other departments and is common in the operating theatre environment.¹⁴ Although professionals may have highly developed professional clinical skills, the competencies required to work effectively as a collaborator may need support for further development. Opportunities to learn through experience can offer the development of these competencies.

Experiential learning

Experiential learning has been defined as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (15, p. 41). Kolb suggests that in order for that interaction to be rich and meaningful in terms of learning an individual must have time not just to interact and react as they experience a situation, but have time to reflect. In fact, one of the four core phases of experiential learning, is the point where an individual can consider and reflect before next action. Kolb sees this form of learning as a cyclical process whereby concrete experience stimulates reflection, which in turn informs new conceptual understanding leading potentially to new or modified action, and the cycle continues.¹⁵

In terms of utilizing experiential learning as a form of pedagogic practice, it has the potential to develop professional competencies and provide perspectives and insights that may not be possible through more didactic forms of teaching and learning. At its most powerful, experiential learning “... has the capacity to unsettle the established order and hence transformative potential” (16, p. 175).

Nursing education and drama

Nursing educators struggle to find teaching methods that enable students to understand the connection between the theoretical course content and its practical application.¹⁷ In previous studies, drama has been used to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practice in nursing education.^{18–21} Through drama,

nursing students can experiment with different roles²² and investigate their own experiences from different perspectives and points of view.²³ In this way drama provides an approximation of concrete experience, and a way to stimulate an experiential cycle of learning. One key interpersonal professional competency is the ability to care and communicate with patients. The meeting between the caregiver and patient needs to be of good quality and it is important professionals are trained to reflect on interactions to broaden their perspectives.¹² Arveklev et al.²⁴ found that there is a lack of research regarding the application of drama in nursing education at post graduate level, and yet it would seem a valuable tool.

Applied drama

Applied Drama, unlike Theatre or performance, requires the active engagement of participants. This form of drama fosters critical reflection on key issues and dilemmas within a field of study, allowing participants to explore the human aspect of professional interactions. Engaging emotions and interacting leads to deep learning and promotes personal awareness as well as creative and critical thinking.²⁵ Applied Drama allows participants to investigate experiences from different perspectives and enables them to experiment with different roles and relationships.²³ Furthermore, it allows participants to act out experiences and situations in order to better understand themselves.²⁶ In this way participants are able to approximate the kinds of lived experience that could provide fresh insight and understanding through experiential learning. Drama can aid personal growth and help students to increase their self-esteem, and their management and team work skills.²⁷ In addition, drama may enhance empathy, collaboration and critical thinking.²⁸

Forum Theatre is a form of Applied Drama where an issue or dilemma is used for exploration by a small group of participants (as actors) in front of a larger group of their peers.²⁹ Forum Theatre is a strategy explicitly developed as a medium for actively exploring issues related to social change. The audience members in Forum Theatre (what Boal calls the ‘spect-actors’) are asked to enter the performance and by taking over the role of one of “the actors” explore alternative interaction. These interactions may lead to a more positive outcome than the one presented in the original scenario.³⁰ The purpose is to stimulate discussion and interactive reflection on the dramatized scenarios.³¹ By working through and exploring issues and situations collaboratively, Forum Theatre provides the opportunity for collaborative reflection and self-reflection, and may enhance personal and professional development through increased self-awareness.^{32–34}

From another perspective in clinical practice, Murphy³⁵ has studied radiological interventions from a different and more theatrical perspective, and states that each intervention can have an “act, scene, and agency”. Furthermore, the operating theatre has also been described from a dramaturgical perspective.³⁶

Aim

To explore the use of Applied Drama as a learning medium, focusing on the use of Forum Theatre, to foster team work and collaboration in the field of radiography and learning.

Methods

Study design

The context in which this study took place influenced greatly the approach that could be taken to address the research questions. It utilized a qualitative approach most closely related to Ethnography

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