

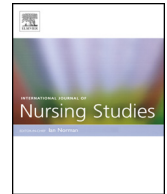


ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

International Journal of Nursing Studies

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/ijns



Graduate nurses' learning trajectories and experiences of Problem Based Learning: A focused ethnography study

J.A. Spiers^{a,*}, B. Williams^a, B. Gibson^a, W. Kabotoff^a, D. McIlwraith^a,
A. Sculley^a, E. Richard^b

^a Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

^b Department of Nursing Education and Health Studies, Grande Prairie Regional College, Alberta, Canada

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 25 June 2013

Received in revised form 6 December 2013

Accepted 5 March 2014

Keywords:

Problem-based learning

Education

Student satisfaction

Orientation to studying

ABSTRACT

Background: Problem-based learning seeks to foster active, collaborative and self directed learning. It is increasingly utilized in health professional education; however, it is difficult to ascertain effectiveness. Empirically, student satisfaction does not match academic achievement but the reasons for this are unclear.

Objective: To explore the experience trajectories and satisfaction of graduates who had completed an undergraduate problem-based learning nursing program.

Design and methods: Qualitative focused ethnography using individual and group semi-structured interviews. Categories and themes were identified using inductive constant comparison. A comparative matrix analysis of differing levels of the two core processes illuminated specific experience profiles.

Participants and setting: Forty five program graduates who had graduated between one and nine years previously from a Western Canadian program offered at four academic sites. The sample was mostly female ($n = 37$), aged 26–30 years ($n = 23$) and graduated 5–8 years previously ($n = 20$).

Results: Levels of satisfaction with the program varied markedly. Two core processes contributed to this: “understanding” and “valuing” problem-based learning. Specific experience profiles included: “Happy as fish in water” which represents those who understood and valued the approach, and flourished; “I’ll do it but I won’t like it” reflects those who understood and could adjust to the academic context but did not particularly value it; “I just want to be a nurse” characterized those who consistently disliked and resisted the process but endured in order to graduate. Each profile was characterized by attitudes, intentions, learning preferences and program satisfaction.

Conclusions: We theorize an underlying mechanism explaining these diverse levels of satisfaction are differing orientations to studying. This approach to understanding how students typically approach learning is strongly linked to perceptions of academic quality and program satisfaction in higher education research, although it has been neglected in nursing problem-based learning research. Orientations to studying include reproductive surface learning, deep learning for understanding and meaning, and strategic approaches to maximize desired objectives. These orientations are congruent with the descriptive typologies developed in this research. This provides an effective explanation as to why some students adapt easily and flourish in problem-based learning contexts, while others

* Corresponding author at: Faculty of Nursing, Level 3, Edmonton Clinic Health Academy, 11405-87 Avenue, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 1C9. Tel.: +1 780 492 9821; fax: +1 780 492 2551.

E-mail address: jaspier@ualberta.ca (J.A. Spiers).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2014.03.002>

0020-7489/Crown Copyright © 2014 Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

continually struggle to adapt. Further research is needed to determine the relationship between deep, surface, and strategic orientations to study and student satisfaction in nursing programs.

Crown Copyright © 2014 Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

What is already known about the topic?

- Problem-based learning seeks to foster active, collaborative and self-directed learning.
- Levels of satisfaction do not correspond to actual academic achievement in problem-based learning programs.
- Poor understanding of underlying mechanisms explaining why problem-based learning works for only some students.

What this paper adds

- Link between problem-based learning satisfaction and experience trajectories.
- Experience trajectories are related to varying levels of understanding and valuing problem-based learning.
- Orientation to studying is a core underlying mechanism to explain experience trajectories.
- Students have tendencies to learn for understanding or reproducing material.
- Surface learners struggle more in problem-based learning than deep or strategic learners.

Contribution of the paper: This research describes specific experience trajectories of graduate from an undergraduate nursing Problem Based Learning program based on varying levels of understanding and valuing the PBL philosophy and process.

1. Introduction

Effective nursing practice depends on nurses who continually ensure that their practice is informed by best current evidence, who think critically and who are flexible in response to changing client situations. Nursing education programs seek to foster these attributes through both the content and the process of teaching (Morales-Mann and Kaitell, 2001). The philosophy underlying Problem Based Learning (PBL) is that transformational learning for students is based on active, realistic experiences that engage students in self directed inquiry and critical thinking (Spiers et al., 2010). Undergraduate nursing programs using problem-based learning (PBL) approaches have distinct advantages in promoting skills in communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, evidenced based practice, and self-directed learning (Cooper and Carver, 2012).

The body of descriptive research indicates that student experiences in, and satisfaction with, PBL based nursing programs is highly variable. There is a paucity of evaluative research in nursing PBL contexts and current general and

nursing-specific research fails to demonstrate the effectiveness of different adaptations of PBL in different contexts with different student groups (Newman, 2004; Williams and Beattie, 2008) and to indicate why different students struggle with different aspect of the process. This has been referred to as the “black box of PBL” (Prosser, 2004). The purpose of this study was to explore the experience trajectories of nurses who had completed a PBL based undergraduate program.

2. Background

PBL is based on the assumption that both process and content must be explicit in order to assist students in attaining the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors characteristic of competent professional nurses (Rooney and Beattie, 2012). In both general PBL and health-discipline PBL curriculum research, there are significant problems in attempting to identify appropriate criteria to assess program outcomes and effectiveness (Albanese, 2009; Colliver and Markwell, 2007) and meta-analysis has not resolved the effectiveness debate (Dias, 2006; Walker and Leary, 2009).

There is limited research on using PBL in nursing education. Current work is largely focused on selective aspects of PBL, such as its use in clinical practice (Ehrenberg and Häggblom, 2007) or in particular courses (Goelen et al., 2006). It also is generally reliant on data collected at the end of the program rather than a period of time after graduation. The majority of nursing PBL research focuses on self perceived development of self-directed learning (Williams, 2004), and component outcomes of PBL (Cooper and Carver, 2012) such as problem solving, communication (Uys et al., 2004), conflict resolution skills (Seren and Ustun, 2008) and critical thinking (Tiwari et al., 2006; Yuan et al., 2008) at the completion of the program. PBL appears to be effective in supporting clinical problem solving, long term retention of material, skill development and critical thinking (Shin and Kim, 2013; Strobel and van Barneveld, 2009). Interestingly, researchers have found no relationship between PBL satisfaction and learning progress even though learning progress was significantly better (Sangestani and Khatiban, 2013); and no differences between self-reported competence between PBL and non-PBL graduates at six months (Applin et al., 2011). Critical thinking, problem-solving and communication are key strengths perceived by PBL graduates (Rakhuda, 2011; Rowan et al., 2009) although there is inconclusive evidence that PBL fosters critical thinking in undergraduate students significantly more than traditional lecture formats (Agnes et al., 2006; Yuan et al., 2008). One meta-analysis suggests student academic performance is as good

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7515917>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7515917>

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