

Stream: Sharing Good Practice

Submission title:

Dramatic effect: enhancing nurse education through performance

Presenter:

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Health and social care education programmes use the 'professional world' to enhance authentic learning. This real-world learning is one of the most powerful pedagogical experiences a student can have. Authentic learning employs innovative and motivational real life processes, which allow students to pursue unique individual learning opportunities (Educational Research, 2007. Finding creative ways to enable students to 'step into someone else's shoes' as a learning and teaching approach is central to the process of fostering feelings of empathy and compassion within healthcare students that lie at the heart of care (Kyle and Atherton, 2016). Furthermore, the use of drama has been shown to be an effective strategy for enhancing learning in entry level courses (Arveklev et al.2015). Within the School of Health and Social Care, we have adopted innovative approaches to authentic learning to enhance engagement and understanding of social sciences and development of empathetic practice within the undergraduate nursing curriculum.

In October 2017, six students from the Bachelor of Nursing and Masters in Nursing Programmes volunteered to form a drama group 'The School of Health and Social Care Players'. Students were invited to prepare and perform the drama 'Mad, Bad, Invisible' based on a real-life story about one woman's experience of dis-integrated care. This was achieved in partnership with the charity COMAS. The play was performed in November 2017 at Serenity Café in Edinburgh, a community café run by and for people in recovery from substance use. The drama was followed by a debate that invited the audience to discuss the impact and learning points raised. A cartoonist and photographer were hired to capture the essence of the play and debate, and a video recording of the play was made. These materials will be fed forward into social science modules on the undergraduate nursing and Allied Health Professional Programmes in the School. The event was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as part of the annual Festival of Social Science.

All the students who took part expressed both personal and professional privilege at being able to 'step into another person's shoes'. They reported being able to 'explore a different perspective' from that of professionals. 'Getting a glimpse' into the world of the people they care for was considered especially important, as was the value and significance of performing and stimulating debate in an authentic public setting. Being able to relate to

emotions that people, their families and other care workers have experienced was reported to be a 'highly meaningful' learning experience.

This project demonstrates the value of drama to further the understanding of the 'lived experience of care' for health and social care students. Moreover, it demonstrates the application of an innovative and evidence-based approach to learning and teaching, moving away from the didactic model in favour of encouraging students to explore, innovate and express themselves and a mechanism of learning. It provides an example of the value of partnership working with external agencies and the public in settings which create real-life learning environments for student nurses.

References:

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