The power of storytelling: Student reflections on clinical placements, what they remembered and what they learned.

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Let’s start with a story….

‘I take note of the professional practice I have encountered, reflect on it and decide whether it fits in with what I have learnt and if it adheres to policies and procedures. If so, the professional practice will ultimately inform my future practice as a beginning level Registered Nurse, although, even if the professional practice I encounter is not professional and does not adhere to any applicable policies or procedures, it will still inform my future practice because I am learning what not to do.’
Project background

Aims:
- Is digital storytelling a useful strategy to promote reflection and encourage learning from clinical experiences?
- To better understand how and what students learn from their clinical experiences.

Participants – 92 Final year nursing students
275 stories and reflections, about 2 meaningful placement experiences of the students’ choosing.
- The stories were analysed thematically.
- Reflection assessment (Callens and Elan, 2015).
Findings

- The stories described a diverse range of events and situations:
  - Clinical, professional, ethical and workplace dilemmas
  - Scope of practice concerns
  - Anxiety about their level of skills/knowledge
  - Lack of confidence
  - Reinforcement or questioning of their career choice
  - Satisfaction with therapeutic engagement with clients/patients
  - Examples of good role modelling
Three key themes

- Re-imagining practice
- Learning to become a nurse
- Nursing as my career
Theme 1-Re-imagining practice

‘I have decided to turn this negative experience into a positive one by reflecting on the incident and learning from this experience in a constructive way.’

‘The two incidents influenced and informed my view not only on how nurses in general should deliver care but how I personally want to deliver care, how I would manage such situations, and the kind of nurse I would like to be.’

‘Finally and most importantly, the main lesson I gained from these experiences, was that it highlighted who I am, not only as an individual, but also as a soon to be registered nurse. These experiences highlighted not only the type of nurse I want to be, but more importantly the type of nurse “I do not want to be”,'
Re-imagining practice (contd..)

‘I almost made myself physically sick because I was so worried that I would be judged on the amount of time it takes me to do things. I have started to become less critical of myself and to better understand that the clinical workplace is challenging and not as controlled as when you do skills in the lab. I am hoping that I will develop my thought processes and speed as my practice develops.’
Theme 2- Learning to become a nurse

‘Through witnessing this event unfold and acknowledging all the factors associated I realised there is immense value in just stopping and taking a deep breath. Taking a deep breath, centring myself, taking the time to prioritise care and the tasks at hand. Transitioning from a student nurse to a Registered Nurse can be quite scary and quite concerning in regards to undertaking an autonomous role and developing professional credibility. Expectations of a new graduate nurse can be quite overwhelming.’
Learning to become a nurse (contd..)

‘Reflecting on the situation and going through the events it was evident that my registered nurse not only had a heavy patient load she was extremely exhausted from the night before and stated she had little sleep if any at all….She did not carry out her duty of care….Her best on the day was not good enough and could have resulted in death. Duty of care to herself and her patients was compromised and she was only lucky this mistake was not deadly. I need to learn to recognise when I don’t have the skills or am not at my best..’
Theme 3- Nursing as my career

• ‘I think at some stage of our working, or student life we are touched by someone that truly inspires us to forge ahead and strive to obtain the highest of goals. This is the kind of nurse I want to be.’

• ‘One of the professional issues I encountered was an extremely positive experience for me and one I am sure in years from now I will look back and it will stick out as a major learning curve and point in my life that I was sure a career in nursing was exactly what I wanted to do’.

• ‘It made me question the reason as to why I wanted to be a registered nurse.’
Nursing as my career (contd..)

‘I know now through this reflection that I can be a good mentor because I can reflect upon my own feelings as a student nurse and hopefully make other students’ experiences more positive throughout my career’.
Conclusion and Recommendation

• Digital storytelling as a pedagogical approach - encouraged reflection and a valuable tool for future practice.

Recommendation: adopt digital storytelling across nursing curricula
References


Thank you –
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