

Nursing and the arts: a recipe for creativity in care

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Summary

This paper outlines the various ways in which student nurses benefit from taking an art module in their training. It describes what happened as part of The Creative Project, a component within a nursing training class in the USA. Using observations of the class and feedback gathered via student evaluation the paper shows how the experience was highly enjoyable for the student nurses, how it made them think afresh about nursing and equipped them with the means to respond creatively to challenges they may face in a clinical setting.

The students created their own artwork

The programme involved writing a paper as well as generating some kind of artistic output (what the programme called 'creative expression') that directly responded to a patient that had been under the care of the student nurse. The creative expressions took various forms: a painting, poem, photography, dance etc. The paper was then shared with (and critiqued by) a fellow student and the artwork presented publicly by its creator.

The experience led to increased empathy and creativity

Nursing students are predominantly taught to approach problems with a focus on its physical elements. Some of the students were cautious about embarking upon the project since it asked them to take a different approach to their subject. Overall after completing the programme the students reported

increased levels of empathy for their peers and patients, and that 'they have found their creative side'. The experience was also useful for teaching and administrative staff who were able to understand the student's perspectives from beyond a strictly physiological teaching framework.

Keywords

creativity **USA** **education** **health** **nursing**

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