

The shock of reality: digital stories of newly qualified nurses

It is widely reported that newly qualified nurses often experience a reality shock during their transition from student to qualified practitioner. Evidence suggests this may have longer term negative consequences on quality of care and the maintenance of person centred values. Attempts to prepare students for this difficult transition process during their pre-registration training have proved to be limited and it appears that the difficulties reported by newly qualified nurses have become accepted by education and practice as an inevitable aspect of professional socialisation.

This paper will report on a project which aimed to capture the experiences of newly-qualified nurses during their transition from student to professional through the medium of digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is a powerful reflective process, offering storytellers the opportunity to reflect on their experiences (Hardy, 2007). The short stories created through this process offered current students and educators the opportunity to step into the shoes of the storyteller and gave insight into what can be a difficult journey, from the relatively safe and predictable world of university to the maelstrom of clinical practice. This aimed to promote the development of strategies to better manage this transition period. The potential for experiences to be shared and lessons learned is enhanced by the inclusion of the stories in the Patient Voices programme (www.patientvoices.org.uk)

Evaluation of this educational development suggests there is potential for students to learn from these stories and for educationalists to reconsider the curriculum so that students can be better prepared for the real world of clinical practice.

References

Hardy, P. 2007. 'An investigation into the application of digital patient stories in healthcare education: quality of learning, policy impact and practice-based value' (masters' dissertation, University of Ulster), <http://www.patientvoices.org.uk> (last accessed 22.02.2009).

Patient Voices website <http://www.patientvoices.org.uk> (accessed 22.02.2009).