

A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY ART EXHIBITION TO CHALLENGE PERSPECTIVES IN NURSE EDUCATION



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INTRODUCTION

One of the many challenges in nurse education is adequately addressing philosophical, ethical, cultural, and person-centred topics -- yet this is vital for ensuring that nurses are knowledgeable not only about the clinical aspects of their profession, but also the human dimensions of applying these skills in circumstances that can be emotionally fraught.

Creative pedagogies offer one solution to this problem. They can improve observation, communication, empathy, understanding, and openness to 'otherness' (Crawford & Baker, 2009; Jones et al., 2019). Additionally, this approach can help students confront issues such as racism and sexism, which have historically shaped -- and continue to impact -- our profession (Lait, 2000).

However, many students are uneasy about the idea of creativity in the classroom; it is typically framed as lacking rigour or gravitas, and, further, students often claim 'I am not creative'. Our challenge, therefore, was designing a nursing module that incorporated creativity in a way that overcame the students' initial suspicions and ultimately led to deep, meaningful learning.



THE MODULE

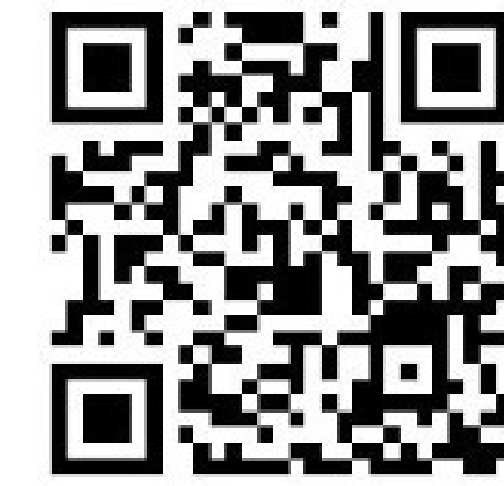
The Art and History of Nursing is a 15-credit module accredited at both undergraduate and postgraduate taught level. Art is used as a means of reflecting on the history of nursing and health care practice. For example, healthcare students examine clinically-themed art and learn from patients and practitioners who have used art to capture their experiences. In addition to lectures and seminars, students also attend art masterclasses where they learn how to use a range of creative techniques to express themselves. This supports their final assessment: creating an original artwork and accompanying 250-word exegesis, worth 30% of their mark, and a 2000-word reflective essay, worth 70% of their mark. The artefacts are displayed in a public-facing exhibition (see QR codes at right).



2022/23 exhibition



2023/24 exhibition



THE EXHIBITION

Students pieces must be aligned to one of the module's themes: spirituality, palliative and end of life care, pain, oncology, cultural insights, wellbeing, historical nursing leaders, military, and women's health. They also choose a medium (poetry, visual arts, music, sculpture, collage, etc.) suited to representing different perspectives and challenging assumptions. To date, the public art exhibitions attracted a total of 117 visitors, including:

- Academic staff and students (from multiple cohorts) representing a range of disciplines (e.g., nursing, medicine, occupational therapy, primary and secondary education, medical imaging, advanced practice)
- Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) group members in Department of Health and Care Professions
- Clinical staff/mentors, Hospiscare staff, chaplaincy, military personnel, Arts and Culture readers, family/friends of participating students, and other members of the public

Feedback on the exhibition



NEXT STEPS

The exhibition, and the module as a whole, represent a pioneering approach to nursing education. They enable us to build community, in part through facilitating dialogue with patients and non-nursing students. They also foster inclusion, by valuing students' unique experiences and modes of expression. Our student nurses are keen to continue with these creative practices in clinical settings, so our primary next step is finding ways to support them to challenge existing perceptions and practices that currently act as constraints.

RELATED LITERATURE

- Clancy, M. and Jack, K. (2016) Using poetry to explore difficult issues in children's nursing. *Nurse Education Today*, 44: 127-129.
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- Crawford, P. and Baker, C. (2009). Literature and madness: fiction for students and professionals. *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 30: 237-51.
- Jenner, C. A. (1997) The Art of Nursing: A Concept Analysis. *Nursing Forum*, 32 (4), p3-33.
- Jones, E. K. Kumagai, A. K. and Kittendorf, A. L. (2019) Through another lens: the humanities and social science in the making of physicians'. *Medical Education*, 53(4): 328-330.
- Lait, M. E. (2000) The place of nursing history in an undergraduate curriculum. *Nurse Education Today*, 20: 395-400.

