USING POETRY TO DEVELOP WRITING CONFIDENCE AND REFLECTIVE SKILLS IN NURSING EDUCATION

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Background
Pressure to conform to academic conventions on entering HEIs can be daunting and some students face considerable challenges engaging with the literary process. Some students may experience a degree of anxiety when beginning to write and some are fearful of the actual process of writing.

The focus was on non-traditional students: mature students; may have left education early to start families or support a relative through illness; and had negative educational experiences. Often they manage competing interests: work and family; and students experience anxiety when required to bridge gaps in their academic literacy in a ‘highly-accelerated way’ (Whiteside and Wrigley, 2013, p.107). They may also be the first in their family to go to University, coping with the financial burden of study, as well as the transition into a culture of HE.

Aim & Objectives
To explore how classroom-based poetry writing activities might support students in developing their skills as student-writers and reflective practitioners in the School of Health and Social Care.

• To use poetry as a writing strategy
• To explore the possible benefits of such an intervention for both language and subject development.

Method
Research design: A qualitative approach was employed to explore emergent themes in students’ poems and students’ reactions to creative writing teaching strategies.


Participants: A cohort of 25 students undertaking a Health Science Foundation Degree.

Methods: Data collected from student poems were analysed thematically using the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006).

Interventions
A collaborative approach to embedding academic literacy was used to support a cohort of Health Care Support Workers (HCSWs).

Sloane and Porter (2010) CEM (Contextualisation, Embedding, and Mapping) pedagogical model was adapted (Hawthorne and Cronin, 2017).

Embedding and contextualising language materials within the HSC community of practice, improved levels of academic literacy and confidence within the cohort.

References


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Results
Students found the experience of writing poetry challenging at first, but ultimately rewarding.

Compared with writing more formal academic reflections, many students valued the opportunity to express their emotions and experiences more freely.

Analysis of the student poems also revealed a rich bank of data relating to key professional themes and students’ lived experiences.

Examples of poems

Work poems

\[\text{Examples of poems}\]

Poetry helps students to develop writing craft and reflective skills.

It encourages students to articulate often complex emotions associated with their professional worlds

Provides invaluable insights into the everyday lives of healthcare workers.

This paper should provide others working in nursing education with a deeper understanding of possible benefits of incorporating poetry writing into the curriculum.