Nursing Students’ Perspective on Education: From An Analysis of Reports Written by Nursing Students

Oike, Miyako
Department of Health Sciences School of Medicine Kyushu University

Nagaie, Tomoko
Department of Health Sciences School of Medicine Kyushu University

https://doi.org/10.15017/4049
Nursing Students’ Perspective on Education
-From An Analysis of Reports Written by Nursing Students-

Miyako Oike, Tomoko Nagaie

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to clarify how nursing students view education, and to inquire into an effective method for teaching patient education to the students. Therefore, this present study extracted educational philosophies from descriptions in the reports written by fifty-two nursing students.

These philosophies were classified into Category 1 [Education for giving knowledge] , Category 2 [Education organized by an educator and a learner] , Category 3 [Education for learning or a learner] , and Category 4 [Education for the benefit of a learner and an educator].

We discussed these philosophies from the viewpoint of educational practice in nursing and came to the following conclusions.

1) Most educational philosophies by nursing students were formed based on the group education or mass-education that they had received in schooldays. Category 1 [Education for giving knowledge] was especially dominant in the philosophies of nursing students.

2) Category 3 [Education for learning or a learner] , which aimed at patient education, was formed as one of the educational philosophies but was rarely seen in nursing education.

3) In nursing students’ educational activity, there was a strong tendency for education for knowledge as seen in Category 1 [Education for giving knowledge] rather than Category 3 [Education for learning or a learner]

4) Category 3 [Education for learning or a learner] was extracted from reports written by students who had some experience in teaching outside of school. These experiences are useful in the process of learning patient education in nursing. Confirmation of the learners’ knowledge and careful attention to the learners’ reaction lead to the formation and strengthening of this educational perspective.

Key words: Nursing Education, Nursing Students, Educational philosophy, Patient Education

和文抄録

本研究の目的は、看護学生が教育について記載したレポートから、看護学生がどのような教育観を抱いているかを明らかにし、これらの教育観を看護の教育活動との関わりで考察することである。

本研究への協力を得た 52 名の看護学生が教育について記載したレポートを質的帰納的に分析し、看護学生の教育観をなすカテゴリとして、【知識や情報の伝達を中心とした教育観】、
Many textbooks regarding teaching and learning part of the formal preparation of nurses and is not merely information and knowledge giving. Methods are role playing, simulated experience, and patient education as it pertains to patients’ self-management illnesses and are required to acquire theory and practical skills as part of their nursing education. Nurses are expected to teach patients about various illnesses and are required to acquire theory and practical skills as part of their nursing education. Additionally, nurses need to learn and understand patient education as it pertains to patients’ self-care. Nurses and nursing students need to practice the patient-centered approach and understand that nurse-patient relationship is a two-way process, and not merely information and knowledge giving.

For these reasons, patient education has become a part of the formal preparation of nurses and is on the curriculum at various university nursing programs. Many textbooks regarding teaching and learning have been used in Japanese schools of nursing and nursing educators have tried to teach patient education using various instructional methods. These methods are role playing, simulated experience, and using a simulated patient. Though nursing students are taught communication skills and the importance of patient-centered education by using these methods, according to Yamamoto, nurse-patient communication tended to be one-way information giving to patients with chronic disease. Adding to this, Seki and Nakazawa stated that the nursing students understood patient education as giving information and knowledge about diseases and treatments.

However nursing students already experienced the process of teaching and learning in Japanese elementary and high school education before nursing school whatever they learn educational methods. In Japan, the process of teaching and learning tends to be based on teacher-centered lectures and for the most part, a one-way process. It is hard that school teachers use methods such as group-work or discussion as in the student-centered approach because these methods require much more time to make an educational plan and prepare. Additionally, due to an educational system heavily based on examination, education tends to concentrate on memorization, rather than the ability to think. For these reasons, it is considered that the nursing students’ past educational expe-
The purpose of this research is to clarify how nursing students view education, and to inquire into an effective method for teaching patient education to nursing students.

**Methods**

**Subjects**

The subjects of this study are fifty-two 2nd year nursing students from a possible sixty-six students at Department of Health Sciences School of Medicine, K University. The subjects wrote reports after attending an "Educational guidance in nursing" lecture as part of their regular curriculum.

The purpose of these reports was to "Describe what you think about education looking back to the education you have received up to now". We didn’t put restrictions on number of characters to these reports.

We used the students’ reports for the following reasons. "Education" is presumed to be a part of daily life and few nursing students have the chance to reflect upon it. Cues or hints are necessary for students to think about the concepts of education. This lecture provided an opportunity for students to think about education, thus it was thought that nursing students were better able to think and write about their concepts of education.

**Data analysis**

The first purpose of this study is to identify how nursing students view education. Because there are a variety of meanings to the concept of education, we examined and arranged a current document about educational perspectives through bibliographic consideration. As result, we extracted two points of view about educational perspectives as follows: 1) recognition and value judgment concerning education, and 2) motivation and directionality to do educational activity. Descriptions written by nursing students were analyzed through these two points.

Each description was coded, repeatedly classified and named based on the similarities between them. Similar themes were grouped and a total of 138 items were formed. These items were subcategorized based on their similarities and further categorized. Each category was collated to descriptions of reports and discussed. To ensure the validity of the results, these categories and subcategories were reviewed and confirmed by discussion between two nursing educators who had 10 years experience in nursing education. This discussion was held over and over until we agreed on item, subcategories, and categories. If we disagreed, we read the reports again and reviewed repeatedly from two points of view about educational perspectives as indicated above.

**Ethical consideration**

Written and verbal explanations were given to sixty-six nursing students about the purpose of this study, methods, use of the study results, and anonymity was ensured. It was made clear that participation/non-participation in this study was not to influence the students grades. After these explanations, written consent for this study was acquired, and fifty-two nursing students agreed to have their reports used for this study.

**Results**

There are a total of 138 items of nursing students’ educational views. Four categories of educational perspectives are identified as presented in Fig 1.

These categories are 1 [Education for giving knowledge], 2 [Education organized by an educator and a learner], 3 [Education for learning or a learner], 4 [Education for the benefit of a learner and an educator] and are explained as follow.

In addition, descriptions written by nursing students are translated with minimal editing and are quoted as examples of each category. The number
below shows each report written by nursing students.

**Category 1 [Education for giving knowledge]**

This category had the most descriptions written by nursing students. It contained 60 descriptions (44%) and nursing students tended to understand education as described in the following:

No.37 "I thought that if we can get the information adequately, our behaviors will be changed by ourselves. It is my thought that education is to inform knowledge."

No.48 "I think that education is only transmission of knowledge. All the teacher has to do is transmit knowledge."

**Category 1** is further classified into 4 sub-categories:  
1a) [The contents of knowledge],  
1b) [The retention and the evaluation of knowledge],  
1c) [The method of giving knowledge],  
1d) [Negative effect of mass education by giving knowledge].

1a) [The contents of knowledge]

Nursing students described education and knowledge as a part of the curriculum, and also as something necessary in order to live in society.

No.6 "From my image of education, I make an association with academic subjects, studied through textbooks, such as language and arithmetic, and so on."

No.41 "I thought that there were two types of education. One is to be taught consciously such as in school. Another is to be taught unintentionally through the behaviors, words, and conduct of everyday life without noticing. In the former case, it is difficult to teach without knowledge therefore educators need to have the appropriate knowledge as needed. In the latter case, there is knowledge accumulated in life experience. It is taught from elder and youth through the conversations and behaviors
in daily life. In such instances, neither of them is aware of teaching or being taught.”

Education not only consisted of academic and life knowledge but also included selecting from right or wrong. The teacher was qualified to decide and make judgments about right or wrong. Nursing students described this as follows.

No.41 "The educator decided upon the contents of education and judged them to be right or wrong. We were expected to merely absorb what was brought before us."

No.11 "In my school days, I learned that education was to learn from right and wrong. If I did something wrong or made mistakes, the teacher instructed me to select the right thing. It is especially important to select right to wrong. Right is the only answer. We hoped to select right thing.

1b) [The retention and the evaluation of knowledge]

Having firm knowledge played an important role in the educational evaluation of nursing students. Scores from examinations and interviews were used to evaluate student’s degree of knowledge.

No.23 "There were periodic examinations to measure our learning in our school. The purpose of these examinations were to check if we memorized or established knowledge essential to life”

No.40 "The teacher administered written examinations, oral examinations, and interviews etc. It’s the method we went through during the period from elementary school through high school."

No.43 "Up until high school, the purpose of studying was to enter university. This was attained by cram education which raised our grade point average and increased the number of universities one can apply to."

Tests and examinations reflected and established the extent of knowledge retained, and were carried out consistently through school life from elementary school to high school.

1c) [The method of giving knowledge]

Nursing students described the transmission of knowledge as a method of one-way group instruction performed by teacher. Few teachers were interested in the student’s opinions. Most teachers did not consider the importance of learning readiness.

No.1 "Most teachers explain the contents of the textbooks to forty students by using one-sided instruction. After we heard this explanation, there were exercises to solve. This was the method of instruction."

No.52 "I thought until now that education was a one-way process where the teacher supplied us knowledge. Learning readiness did not matter to the teacher. In order to give knowledge, the teacher suddenly starts the lecture."

No.44 “The educator prepares teaching material and performs instruction. All classroom members use the same material and these are not individualized for each student. Education is aimed towards the group, not the individual student.”

1d) [Negative effect of mass education by giving of knowledge]

In transmitting knowledge in the form of mass education, nursing students noticed that this type of education was not individualized and that motivation for learning has been lost through the experience of this education.

No.1 "I think one-side instruction doesn’t include individual teaching. In mass education, the teacher doesn’t give special instruction to students, especially to those who do not understand the content of the lesson. Such students have to learn without adequate understanding of lesson content."

No.14 "In my thought, the teacher is someone who
comes to the classroom and leaves when it is time. The teacher proceeds with the education content without considering the students reactions."

No.21 "Education is a one-sided teaching process and a type information transmission. To teach individual students is not important when using this educational method."

No. 3 "Education is carried out without relating to our interests, concerns, and motivation."

Nursing students are aware of the harmful effects of education by using one-way teaching. They are concerned about the harmful effects of mass education in their school life, but they have not done anything about it.

Category 2 [Education organized by an educator and a learner]

The types of relationships between teachers and learners are sub-categorized into four parts: 2a) [The existence of an educator and a learner] , 2b) [An educator and a learner: Hierarchy as superior-inferior] , 2c) [An educator and a learner: Active-passive relationship] , 2d) [An educator and a learner: Educator’s credibility and authority].

2a) [The existence of an educator and a learner]

Nursing students describe teachers and students to be in different positions from each other. Additionally, they recognize that in education, it is important for teachers and students to have a relationship.

No.11 "Education is where one with knowledge provides knowledge to the person without knowledge. The image of education is the relationship between teacher and me, the student."

No.41 "I have always been taught from someone, I have never experienced teaching someone. This requires at least two people in educational contexts. The two people are defined as educator and learner."

Nursing students recognize that the teacher-student learning process is a relationship. However, they describe this relationship as not being equal but rather teacher-centered.

No.30 "I think in education, the teacher lectures the students in the school or the classroom etc. And family members, such like parents and siblings, teach us rules and the customs in order to live in society. There are such people as mentors and teachers, and education was delivered by these people. I thought that education was teacher-centered."

In addition, nursing students describe the teacher and student relationship as a superior-inferior hierarchy or active-passive relationship as shown in the following 2c) and 2d).

2b) [An Educator and a learner: Hierarchy as superior-inferior]

The difference between educators and learners are dependant on the amount of knowledge each one possesses. Persons with an abundance of knowledge are superior, and others with minimal knowledge are inferior. Nursing students state that teachers were confident about the correctness and absoluteness about their knowledge. This stance of the teachers transformed into a position of authority over the learner.

No.44 "Education means that the teachers only give students knowledge and answers to a question. This hierarchy is a superior-inferior relationship between teachers and students.

No.50 "Education is about educators having an abundance of knowledge and outstanding personalities. Educators believe that learners should be moved by what was taught, and that what the educator says is always correct. Therefore, the concept of education sometimes includes a meaning of imposition."
2c) [An educator and a learner: Active-passive relationship]

As discussed above, the knowledge gap is the basic reason for the hierarchy of superior-inferior between teachers and students. In addition, this relationship has become an active-passive one.

No. 20 "The educator gives the learner his knowledge and the learner acquires the new knowledge. To educate is an active behavior; to learn is a passive behavior."

No. 36 "Education is one-way from the educator to the learner. The educator gives the content of study to the learner. The learner responds to it passively."

2d) [An educator and a learner: Educator’s credibility and authority]

In the following, nursing students describe the concept of trust towards the teacher. This trust was based on the professional and social position of the teacher, rather than the personality.

No. 44 "The educator is an absolute person, and the learner has to comply with him/her. It is not compulsion. The educator doesn’t especially care if the learner trusts the educator. The educator hopes that the learner follows through with the learning objectives being taught. The student as the learner trusts the teacher as the educator to some degree. If the learning objective of the educator is different from mine (the learner), I do not speak of my intentions. I don’t trust my teacher. It is my thought about the educator and the learner."

No. 19 "I was always in the position as the learner, taught by the teacher, from kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, high school, and university. I think that to learn was an obligation. Absolute trust and respect between teachers and us existed. I believed that what the teacher taught was accurate and trustworthy. To me, trust or respect is not in the relationship between the educator and the learner, but in position or role of the educator."

Category 3 [Education for learning or a learner]

Up to this point, the teacher-centered education has been described. The following are descriptions of the category [Education for learning or a learner] written by nursing students. There are three subcategories here: 3a) [The perspective of a learner], 3b) [Learner responsibility], 3c) [The significance of learner motivation]. In addition, the use of the terms "learn" and "learner" was not clear in nursing students’ descriptions. In this study, the term "learner" is used.

3a) [The perspective of a learner]

Nursing students describe the perspective of the learners as a concept where Education for learning or a learner and includes support. They thought of this as the ideal educational system, although they did not experience learner-centered education in the past.

No. 9 "Education is to recognize the learner as not a student in the group but as an individual person. I think that education is to support learners mentally, not to teach in a one-way fashion."

No. 34 "To teach is to provide information (such as knowledge or skills) to learners which they don’t have. When the learners’ knowledge is inadequate, it is up to the teacher to provide appropriate knowledge. Education is where educators answer to what learners want to know."

No. 41 "I thought until now that it was important for teachers to be trusted by students and to have useful knowledge. But it is most important for the teacher to think and become aware of the learners’ position as this takes priority."
3b) [Learner responsibility]

The results of this study indicate that education is considered to be the responsibility of both educators and learners. Furthermore, several students felt it was the learners’ responsibility to have a learning attitude. As the following indicate, learners strove to initiate a learning attitude.

No. 48 "It is the assumption that learners have willingness to learn. Learners who are willing to learn can expand their knowledge through instruction by teachers. No matter how boring the lecture may be, it is a matter of fact that learners have to listen to the teacher. If teachers lack knowledge, learners have to learn by themselves in a positive way by using books or other sources of information. If the learner fails to meet the academic standard, it is more the learners' responsibility rather than that of the teachers."

3c) [The significance of learner motivation]

Nursing students described that learners’ motivation was important through their experience outside of the classroom.

No. 1 "I had a good teacher in my elementary school during the 5th or 6th grade. He took care all of 32 students and always found something good about someone and would praise them. I remember the jiman taikai, where we would meet and boast about ourselves to each other. It was his way to give us motivation and confidence."

No. 11 "For example… if I have my favorite or interesting subject… I would become so absorbed that I would forget about the time. We are well aware that the result of learning is greatly different depending on the learners’ presence or absence of motivation and need. There is the phrase "what one likes, one will do best". If learners can do their favorite thing, they can make an effort without getting bored. One’s desires and motivation are very important to learning."

No. 33 "I wonder if teachers have the motivation to teach, even if they are not able to educate well. If learners don’t have motivation, they cannot learn for all time.

Category 4 [Education for the benefit of a learner and an educator]

Up to this point, education has been referred to as there being an educator and a learner. This category is extracted from descriptions of both the educator and student as learning from each other. This category has a mere two items out of a possible 138 items. These items indicate that there is no superior-inferior hierarchy in the teacher-student relationship and that teaching occurs as a joint effort.

No. 6 "Education is to be performed by using educational methods like the group work, in order to learn from one another among friends, and to solve problems through discussion with both the teacher and student. This method is best for learners because they can feel a bond with the teacher, thus making the educational content more interesting."

No. 25 (a home tutor for junior high school students)

"When my student says, 'I passed this examination thanks to your teaching' I feel very glad. I decided that the next students whom I teach will pass. But I find something wrong with the idea that the teacher has the core position in education. I realize that teachers have to learn effective educational methods and that education means to mature synergistically."

Discussion

In the descriptions written by nursing students, there are numerous thoughts regarding educational perspective. The main category extracted from these
thoughts was **Category 1 [Education for giving knowledge]**. This category indicates that education included communication of knowledge/information, assessment by tests, and one-way group-education. Furthermore, these mean nursing students’ experience in their school days. We considered that this educational perspective was instilled into nursing students well before receiving nursing education.

In addition, nursing students learn by using various educational methods such as practice and exercise in nursing education. Most of these methods are taught by way of lecture, which does not target the individual student, but rather the group. When nursing students learn patient education, they continue to perform one-way teaching in nursing practice as they had learned earlier. They do not have the chance to change this educational perspective and will teach patients based on this perspective. With the result that, this category could potentially direct the patient education practice of nursing students once they start working, and it can be assumed that nursing students have the tendency to use a type of one-way teaching when administering patient education as they had learned earlier. This result is related to research by Yamamoto and Katayama\(^5\)\(^9\), whose research shows that nursing students tend to use as a type of one-way teaching when administering patient education in their nursing practice.

Nursing students are required to learn a great number of technical terms about medicine in nursing education, and this specialty knowledge increases as their education progresses. As this knowledge increases, quantitative and qualitative differences in medical knowledge become apparent when compared to non-healthcare providers, which leads them to believe that they are well-informed when compared to the rest. These technical medical terms differ from the ones used in everyday life, and if one is not familiar with diseases, they are not used at all. Although it may seem that nursing students are well-versed in medical knowledge, the reality is their knowledge accounts for only a small percentage of total medical knowledge. It is this belief that in turn, leads nursing students to engage in one-way teaching methods. It is considered that there is a possibility of increasing Category 1 reinforcement related to nursing education.

The amount and quality concerning information and knowledge related to medicine or nursing are included in **Category 2 [Education organized by an educator and a learner]**. In this category, there is a distinction between teacher and learner based on the amount and quality of information and knowledge. Additionally, the relationship between educator and learner is described as a hierarchy as superior–inferior or active–passive relationship by nursing students. In the same way, there is little difference in the amount and quality concerning information/knowledge between nursing students and patients. It can be said that this perspective influences the nursing student–patient relationships. When using this perspective as it pertains to clinical nursing practice and patient education, nursing students consider themselves to be in the active role and the patients to be in the passive role. This indicates that nursing education is based on a hierarchy and that learning occurs on an active passive basis. In order to teach patient education, there is a need to reform nursing education methods.

On the other hand, there are **Category 3 [Education for learning or a learner]** and sub-category 3c) [The significance of learner motivation] including the position of learner. These categories only reflect the nurse students’ wishes as seen in reports No.9, No.34, No.41. Additionally, as seen in report No.21, few teachers conduct an educational method where the learner is a priority. Most of nurse students haven’t experienced learner-centered education, and there are limited opportunities to learn in the context of **Category 3 [Education for learning or a learner]**.

But the purpose of patient education in nursing is to facilitate self-care. In order for effective patient
Nursing Students’ Perspective on Education - From An Analysis of Reports Written by Nursing Students

...there is a need to recognize learning readiness, motivation and ability to learn. Furthermore it is important not to use the nurse-centered approach but rather the patient-centered approach. The patient-centered education perspective is based on trust, respect for the patient as an individual, and a synergistic relationship. Category 3 [Education for learning or a learner] and subcategory 3c) [The significance of learner motivation] is favorable in patient centered education practice. We consider that nurse students need to have experience related to these categories not a one-way teaching method.

The nursing students are aware of the situation surrounding learner-centered education perspectives as described in the reports. Sample of Category 3 and subcategory 3c) is described in report No. 1. This description is about a teacher who intentionally used self-efficacy in his teaching methods. Additionally, report No. 45 too is described as follows:

No. 45 "In the high school I attended, a senior who had become a lawyer after graduation, spoke of his experience. As another example, a teacher showed a specimen of an ancient fossil, and we were able to actually touch the specimen during the lesson. I think learning is about realizing things on one’s own, not through being instructed or led by others."

As previously mentioned, not all nursing students were able to experience the educational experience that No. 1 and No. 45 did, because efficiency of the education is often a priority.

Reports No. 3, No. 13, No. 25 had similar educational experiences through their part time jobs as follows:

No. 3 "Through being a home tutor, I think in order to get students to study hard, it is important to motivate them to study from within themselves."

No. 13 "I had the chance to teach new employees at my part time job. If I only had to provide knowledge to them, it was a quick and easy task. However, a person is not always able to carry out tasks based on simple verbal explanations. I cared whether or not the person understood the content. That is, education isn’t only about providing verbal information, it is also important to check the level of understanding."

No. 25 "My policy is to make studying interesting. So I tried teaching general studies and history in a fun manner. However, my method of education did not always motivate learning."

As seen in these reports, several nursing students have part-time jobs that gave them a chance to think about education from the educator’s perspective. They noticed that their intentions did not influence learner’s behavior, and that they had to be aware of the learner’s response and understanding level. Through these personal experiences, the educational perspective of the nursing students was altered. To experience the position of educator is possibly a strength in forming the perspective of Category 3 [Education for learning or a learner]. In particular, each nursing student in these reports could think deeply about teaching and learning, because he/she had a responsibility to obtain the best results by teaching. Though nursing teachers use educational methods to teach patient education, they need to devise ways of teaching effectively. When nursing students experience patient education through role-playing or simulation in nursing school, they need to assess the outcome of teaching after the exercise. This assessment is useful in showing how much their patient education was effective and helping them to realize their ability to teach. We considered that these experiences lead to a resolution of Category 1 [Education for giving knowledge].

Summary

This present study extracted educational phi-
philosophies from descriptions in a report written by nursing students. These philosophies were Category 1 [Education for giving knowledge], Category 2 [Education organized by an educator and a learner], Category 3 [Education for learning or a learner], and Category 4 [Education for the benefit of a learner and an educator]. We discussed these philosophies from the viewpoints of educational practice in nursing and came to the following conclusion.

1) Most educational philosophies by nursing students were formed based on the group education or mass-education that they had received in school. Category 1 [Education for giving knowledge] was especially dominant in the philosophies of nursing students.

2) Category 3 [Education for learning or a learner], which aimed at patient education, was formed as one of the educational philosophies but was rarely seen in nursing education.

3) In nursing students’ educational activity, there was a strong tendency for education to be the transmission of knowledge as seen in Category 1 [Education for giving knowledge] rather than Category 3 [Education for learning or a learner].

4) Category 3 [Education for learning or a learner] was extracted from reports written by students who had some experience in teaching outside of school. These experiences are useful in the process of learning patient education in nursing. Confirmation of the learners’ knowledge and careful attention to the learners’ reaction lead to the formation and strengthening of this educational perspective.

This study is not without its limitations. The type of educational perspectives obtained for the purpose of this study is from a somewhat limited report of nursing students from a particular year, and do not necessarily reflect nursing students in general.

However, it is thought that the results of this study shed light on the educational perspectives of nursing students and can possibly be a building block in nursing education. In the future, increased clarity about nursing students’ educational perspectives, further research in patient education and nursing curriculum development is needed.

References