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THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEER REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION AMONGST NURSE EDUCATOR COLLEAGUES: AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

ABSTRACT

This action research study developed the use of peer reflective supervision (PRS) amongst eight nurse educators contributing to an undergraduate Adult Nursing programme at a UK University.

During the academic year (2013-14), nurse educator co-researchers met for an introductory workshop and then met regularly in pairs to facilitate each other's reflection. This provided an opportunity for nurse educators to reflect on identified issues linked to their role with a facilitative peer. Educators met three additional times in a Reflexive Learning Group (RLG), to gather data on their use of PRS. Audio-recordings from the RLGs were transcribed and analysed using Norton's (2009) thematic analysis framework. Co-researchers iteratively validated the data and an external validation group critically viewed the evidence.

Overall, seven themes were generated from the three research cycles. These were: PRS as a Valuable Affirming Experience; Time Issues; Facilitation- Support, Trust and Challenge; Developing a Flexible 'Toolbox'; To Write or Not to Write; Drawing on Literature; and Requirement for Action.

Findings add new evidence regarding use of a flexible toolbox of resources to develop reflection and offer practical guidance on the development of PRS. Nurse educators often experienced similar concerns, and a facilitative supervision structure allowed co-researchers to positively explore these. Recognition of work pressures and requirement for time and space for reflection was highlighted, particularly regarding writing, and exploring the literature, to develop critical analysis of experiences. The importance of action as part of the reflective process was emphasised. Co-researchers reported positive personal change as well as the opportunity to highlight issues through their reflection for further action within the organisation.

The study adds constructive evidence for the use of reflection to explore professional work, make sense of experiences and develop positive action. It has transferability to a wider international audience interested in the development of reflection amongst colleagues and the use of insider research techniques to challenge and develop practice.

KEYWORDS

Reflection; Faculty Nursing; Action Research in Education; Supervision in Education; Nurse Educator Role

BACKGROUND

Considerable importance is given to both reflection and clinical supervision within the nursing profession (Care Quality Commission 2015, Nursing and Midwifery Council 2011, Brunero and Stein-Parnbury 2008). Reflection involves a process of searching for solutions to practice experiences, in order to make sense of them (Bulman et al. 2012). Through exploring experiences and making sense of them, learning can be achieved and changes made. This is connected with a professional motivation to 'move on' and 'do better' within practice in order to learn from experience and critically examine 'self' (Bulman et al. 2012,

Jasper 2006). Clinical supervision has been described as a practitioner reflecting on their own practice with support from a skilled supervisor within a practice-focused professional relationship (Winstanley and White 2003). The three main functions of clinical supervision are: normative-to enhance professional accountability, formative-to develop skills and knowledge and restorative-to facilitate collegial and supportive relationships (Proctor 1986). Brunero and Stein-Parnbury (2008) showed that clinical supervision provided peer support and stress relief, and promoted professional accountability, skill and knowledge development. They suggested the primary cognitive function of clinical supervision is reflection or thinking back in order to develop understanding of practice and to learn from experience.

This study involved combining these concepts of supervision and reflection in order that nurse educators could develop a way to facilitate each other to reflect on their roles. Whilst undergraduate nurse education at the University had always utilised and developed reflective education since the inception of its programmes (Bulman 2013), it had not harnessed the associated potential of PRS for nurse educators in order to help them to learn from their education practice. Importantly, if educators advocate and promote the use of reflection amongst student and practice colleagues, then it could be argued that they ought to be developing ways in which they can become more reflective themselves, and investigate how this can be used to enhance their roles (Minott 2010, Brookfield 2005, Jay and Johnson 2002). The study also fitted with the university strategy for enhancing the student experience. This advocates that all academic staff who support learning should engage with processes of evaluation, reflection and research into pedagogic practice. The assumption in this study was that because of their roles, educators were able to offer the skills of facilitation to each other and thus cultivate a more reciprocal reflective supervision, than traditionally advocated in clinical supervision. This meant that the process of PRS had the potential to develop educators' roles because it offered a route through which they could learn with, and from, each other.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study was to explore peer reflective supervision (PRS) amongst educator colleagues in order to determine its potential to inform their roles within undergraduate nurse education. The principal objectives were to:

- Explore how PRS could be used by nurse educators to critically consider their roles and develop as reflective practitioners.
- Develop a process of PRS with potential to contribute to improved teaching/facilitation.

DESIGN

The philosophical approach was that of social construction, whereby people are deemed to make sense of their experience through constructions of meaning (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). It was through this lens that an action research approach was taken where researchers brought their own prior knowledge, values and beliefs to the process of enquiry; it was this, plus the research data, that constructed the research outcomes (Day et al. 2002).

Action Research involves professionals carrying out research into their own practice. This embraces the notion of doing research 'for' and 'with' people rather than 'on' people, thus it has a different philosophical stance from more traditional research approaches. Accordingly, co-researchers became personally involved in the research, investigated issues relevant to their situation and generated findings that were implemented and owned by them (McNiff and Whitehead 2010).

Action research involves finding ways to improve practice but also to theorise about it (Friedman and Rogers 2009, McNiff and Whitehead 2006). The rationale behind the process of action research involves bringing about change towards maintainable and democratic outcomes and the promotion of social justice (McIntosh 2010, Hilsen 2006, Reason and Bradbury 2001). As such, data collection was an evolutionary process as co-researchers worked together to set agendas, collect data and control the use of the outcomes (McIntosh 2010).

SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

The setting was a UK university. The eight co-researchers were all experienced, qualified Senior Lecturers contributing to a pre-registration, Adult Nursing undergraduate degree programme within a Faculty. All were familiar with the concept and use of reflection, as it was fundamental to teaching and learning on the programme.

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The lead researcher for the project sought expressions of interest from colleagues to ascertain whether the project would attract co-researchers. Those interested were sent a detailed letter explaining the project. Written consent was sought and co-researchers met for a preparatory workshop. This enabled them to plan how PRS would be approached and to collaborate in organising data collection, analysis and validation.

Co-researchers aimed to meet regularly in pairs (2 or more times within each cycle), for up to 2 hours, for PRS sessions over the academic year. Co-researchers' experiences, working hours and skills were considered to achieve compatible matches between pairs. Each pair facilitated each other in providing reflective supervision, within the university setting. A 'toolbox' of resources was provided for everyone to try out, report back on, and develop over the course of the study; including ideas for ground rules (Figure 1) and suggestions for reflective frameworks and writing (Figure 2).

Researchers kept private diaries following their supervision sessions and selected what excerpts they would use from these to inform discussions in the 3 Reflexive Learning Groups (RLGs), (see Figure 3). This selection process was essential to allow co-researchers to keep aspects of their supervision private that they did not wish to share within the larger group. Within these RLGs, data collection took place regarding experiences and plans for action, as PRS progressed (See Figure 4 for key actions within each cycle). It was these experiences and plans that constituted the data. Co-researchers discussed and agreed ground rules for the conduct and recording of RLGs. Audio recordings from these sessions were transcribed.

The lead researcher generated an initial analysis of each of these RLGs, plus further more detailed thematic analysis. Norton's (2009) framework for thematic analysis within action

research was used for this. There was immersion in the data as transcripts were read and re-read, categories were generated, deleted or merged after each cycle.

Co-researchers contributed to and validated these analyses. This allowed them to critically respond to issues and discussion points for further action in line with action research. In all, three cycles of action and analysis took place. Finally, co-researchers met to discuss categories and themes and validate what had been learnt from the study overall. In conjunction with this, a validation group of two other faculty members educated to doctoral level was sought in order to critically view the final themes and evidence (McNiff and Whitehead 2010). The overall design provided a way for co-researchers to address the research aim and objectives.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical approval was obtained from the University Research Ethics Committee. All co-researchers signed a consent form and were free to leave the project at any time. Co-researchers were peers and none occupied a management position, thus there were no unequal power relationships between people. Co-researchers agreed to the use of pseudonyms for quotes from the data within published findings.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Credibility – The validation group was used to critically view the evidence. The lead researcher met with a ‘critical friend’, experienced in action research, to discuss the project plans regarding appropriate methodology and practical organisation (McNiff and Whitehead 2010). All co-researchers were actively reflexive regarding the development of the research and fed back via the RLG meetings.

Transferability - Detailed data were collected and underpinned by action research theory. Norton’s (2009) framework was used to thematically analyse the data.

Dependability - peer validation of data was built in through the RLGs, reflexivity and the use of a validation group.

Confirmability – A clear description of the study shows the decisions made, and findings derive from the research data. (Guba and Lincoln 1981)

LIMITATIONS

Co-researchers were actively reflexive but they were also self-selected into the study; the influence on transferability should be considered. Further use of a critical friend throughout the project may have further contributed to credibility. Unavoidable personal issues impacted on one person’s ability to contribute to paired supervision for some weeks-thus the creation of a triad. In addition, another co-researcher was unable to contribute to final data validation due to maternity leave.

FINDINGS

Overall, seven themes are presented that reflect key findings. Quotes from the data illuminate these findings.

Peer Reflective Supervision as a valuable affirming experience

Whilst it must be emphasised that the team were self-selected and presumably were already motivated to use reflection to explore professional work, co-researchers found PRS to be a valuable, affirming experience. The enthusiasm for this approach was maintained throughout the study and was greater than initially expected:

Memo from Bea: ... maybe because it's a setting where you can be really honest about how you're experiencing your work and say how you feel you're really doing (there are) very few settings where this can occur at work, so that is part of the real strength of the process.

Dee: I did find it really empowering and, you know, I can't wait to do another session really.

Co-researchers highlighted an element of offloading that took place during reflection that had a positive impact on their experiences. They commented how they felt more positive after their supervision session having talked through their issue in a facilitative environment. Pairs worked well together and developed trust, openness and honesty. They were able to learn from their experiences and most significantly the study provided a chance to consider practice within a very demanding, sometimes isolating work environment:

Jo: The potential for more learning is phenomenal.

Susie: Yes, I agree.

Jo: Huge, enormous opportunity... it's like an island within a very turbulent sea

Susie: A sea of crocodiles! (Laughter)

Jo: With people snapping at your heels...

The study highlighted that people brought their own experiences and perceptions to supervision, and developed specific relationships between themselves which influenced this. Through this experience co-researchers gained confidence to discuss potentially changing partners in the future in order to gain something different from supervision:

Susie...I almost would quite like to try with someone else as well. Not because of not being happy with the way it's going, but because actually, you may get something different out of doing it with someone else and using some different expertise...

Hence, the experience highlighted that it may be useful to consider changing pairs after a length of time. Positive relationships were developed, but there was recognition that the organisation of pairs required sensitive handling and is something to consider carefully when setting up this approach. Thus, having dynamic ground rules for supervision was emphasised as valuable, as the study progressed; this was especially important to support co-researchers' courage and commitment towards reflecting in this way.

Due to personal circumstances one co-researcher was not available for a short period of time. This was addressed by temporarily creating a triad. This was a useful learning exercise, since although supervision took up more time it was still felt to be supportive and safe:

Jen: So we met as a triad because of Eve's temporary absence. And it did take more time... but it was positively seen by everybody. For instance, we decided we got two lots of feedback and challenges from different people instead of one, so we saw that as positive...we still felt we were safe, we had confidentiality, there was an intimacy within the three...

The purpose of meeting in the RLGs was to collect data as the cycles of the study progressed. This was achieved through gaining insights from listening to others' experiences and informing each other of what we found helpful that linked to the reflective process. It also allowed co-researchers to share selected reflections more widely. This uncovered common experiences and co-researchers felt reassured because others seemed to have similar challenges. As the research cycles progressed, there was enthusiastic agreement that meeting in a larger group as well as pairs would be beneficial to recommend to others as part of the process of PRS.

Facilitation - support, trust and challenge

The assumption at the beginning of the study was that educators could facilitate each other within reflective supervision pairs. This was found to be the case and co-researchers were able to support and challenge each other. The development of trust was essential to this and the process of being listened to particularly highly valued:

Susie: ...we actually developed trust and ability to reveal more as we developed.... if supported we feel better afterwards. Having someone listen to us is unusual and important, and we thought that was quite significant.

Several Voices: Wow, OK!

Co-researchers were able to challenge each other and open up ideas:

Amy: ...I think it's just helped me to experiment and do something different, that had we not met and talked about it, I probably wouldn't have had the confidence to do.

They reflected on current issues in more depth and found space to take time out from daily work to do this. Many reflections centred on using themselves and working with people within their roles (see Figure 3). They were able to listen to and share experiences and had opportunities to explore feelings. This enabled a process of affirmation, allowing people to confirm feelings around uncertainty and doubt and to explore vulnerabilities:

Dee: And that affirmation was fantastic, 'no you're not a crap teacher'...it gave me strategies to look at how to deal with it. And it really made me think; actually I didn't do a bad job!

Co-researchers challenged each other with sophistication and sensitivity:

Bea...I think there was an element of challenge between Jem and I, but it wasn't...well you would hope it wouldn't be forcefully done. I think challenge can be done in quite a subtle way, but actually, be as effective, well possibly more effective, than really quite overt challenge. So a carefully worded question that gets the other to think more carefully can actually be a very effective challenge...

Pairs were able to develop the way they approached PRS in a way that suited them. All were experienced teachers and reflectors and therefore felt confident with developing flexible

negotiated roles as supervision progressed. PRS was seen as an investment in time and energy and so co-researchers needed to be sure that facilitation was working well for them. Again, this highlighted the importance of thoughtful pairing and critical monitoring of the process.

Time Issues

Finding time to prepare and meet for PRS was not easy. The organisation was perceived as greedy for educators' time. Everyone had busy workloads and struggled to prioritise space and time for reflection. Time issues were not only frustrating but it was clear that busyness affected people's thinking coherence, leaving little space and energy for contemplating practice:

Bea: we were just talking about what is it that goes on in your head and... when it's that busy that it's almost as if something slightly interrupts the processing that's needed when you're going to reflect effectively.

As a result, co-researchers learnt that it was crucial to prioritise and value time to meet. There was a realisation that otherwise reflection itself can become a task orientated process, thus rather defeating the object of the study. Despite these issues this type of paired supervision seemed to have the capacity to create more resilient staff and develop a sense of well-being. Thus, we learnt that creating space to reflect in this way may help to alleviate the stress involved within a time poor work situation.

In addition, having someone lead the project was helpful in keeping everyone organized and motivated to find the time and energy to reflect. Thus, it was apparent that a lead person would be essential to the creation of PRS, outside of a study.

Developing a Flexible 'Toolbox'

A single reflective framework was deemed too restrictive by all co-researchers at the beginning of the study. A 'toolbox' of reflective resources was established and individual co-researchers were able to choose from a number of reflective frameworks and experiment with these. Flexibility in the use of these frameworks was seen as positive and co-researchers had their preferences regarding which ones they found helpful:

Eve: ...Gibb's Cycle was used because it helped me to explore the issues more thoroughly...In particular, to see other perspectives and to think about what I would do differently. This has resulted in positive action plans already, which I've incorporated into my work.

Some co-researchers also experimented with the idea of free writing as proposed by Bolton (2005), this was useful for developing vivid description, but the tendency seemed to be for the use of frameworks to prompt thinking. As the cycles of the study progressed, co-researchers experimented with other methods to encourage reflection. It was found that the use of Mind Maps, Venn diagrams; plus, drawing on metaphors and using pictures helped with presenting thinking and viewing experiences in a different way:

Jen and Jo: We used Mind Maps to give each other feedback and Jo used a Venn diagram as well to capture the essence of her reflection, so to show each other, and it was really quite useful, pictorial stuff...

As a result, co-researchers agreed the need for flexibility and creativity in the use of tools for future supervision, rather than a standard approach which might hamper individual approaches.

To Write or Not to Write

Writing reflection in order to prepare for supervision sessions was a prominent issue because it was clear as the study continued that it was useful for deeper analysis and action planning. For some, it was a way of creating greater authenticity; as a clearer way to express experience rather than purely verbally. Writing was viewed as a way to stimulate thinking. Plus, it was considered to be a way of developing quality as well as accuracy in one's thinking. It provided a way to check co-researchers had expressed what they really meant, as well as helping them to recall an experience and develop action planning. Taking writing along to supervision helped partners to ask questions. Therefore, as the project continued co-researchers encouraged each other to write and to find ways to negotiate time to do so. However, writing took time:

Susie ... I definitely thought in my own heart that the benefit would be better if I wrote but wasn't strong enough to follow it through.

This was overcome in some ways by using other tools mentioned above in order to help the reflective process. For instance, the use of pictures or Mind Maps when there was little time to write. In addition, not everyone wrote or wrote all the time as they preferred to use verbal reflection:

Bea...I saw this as an opportunity being handed to me to enjoy and benefit from talking things through with a colleague, who you get on well with and you can identify with each other's issues. So it's as if it became more sort of 'worky' to have to then write it down and part of me slightly resisted that you see.

Thus, time and space to write as well as personal motivation and preference were all found to be influential.

Drawing on literature

Co-researchers were already aware that drawing on literature to help make sense of an experience can be useful during the analysis phase of reflection. However, they struggled to find time and energy to do this. Yet when they did draw on literature it was helpful:

Jen: ... I reflected before on the positive aspects of being a personal tutor. And then went to the literature and actually it's a bit of a no brainer, it did prove to me that it was very useful to go back to the literature to develop your critical analysis.

Therefore, drawing on literature helped to develop analysis of an experience, plus enabled the sharing of literature that was of interest to others. For instance, we shared literature around developing resilience in our students, which without this supervision process would not have happened.

Need for Action

As the study progressed, the requirement for reflection to lead to change or action was reiterated. Issues that arose from co-researchers' reflections were fed back into actions within the programme. For instance, at the time we were also developing a new curriculum for

validation and we were able to feedback ideas around developing assertiveness skills and resilience in students that arose from reflections and shared reading. PRS also raised the need for our students to be more politically aware and these ideas were also taken to curriculum development meetings:

Jen: ... this idea that if they are graduates, they ought to have some sense of politicisation, they should be thinking critically about the world. And the effect of the world on them and them on the world, the point of view of being a critical being. So that's where that came from.

Improvements were also made in the use of associate lecturers within the programme:
*Susie: I think that moving our reflection to action was quite important for both of us. ...I'm **now** appointing associate lecturers and I'm asking them, have you been observed and have you had feedback, before I employ them...So there's a few things where change has occurred because of it...*

As well as these more observable practical actions, co-researchers felt they had seen changes in their own development, self-awareness and their ability to test out assumptions:

Amy: ... we had the seminars on professional issues that came up quite soon after I'd had the meeting with Eve. And I decided I was just going to try something a bit different!

Thus the study demonstrated that PRS was able to lead to change in different guises, whether that be more discernible actions taken within the programme or more personal changes and developments.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to explore the development of PRS amongst nurse educator colleagues. Through this study we were able to learn more about its potential to inform educator roles within undergraduate nurse education. We learnt how we could use PRS to critically consider our roles and develop as reflective practitioners. We were also able to develop a practical process of PRS with the potential to contribute to improved teaching/facilitation because the process lead to practical, observable changes as well as self-development. Hilsen (2006) has pointed out that at the beginning of an action research study one cannot know whether the study will benefit those involved. In this case, we did find benefits in the use of PRS and suggest that it has accessibility and relevance to other educators and their everyday work.

How PRS was used by nurse educators to critically consider their roles and develop as reflective practitioners

Findings suggested that PRS enabled educators to be listened to and to explore vulnerabilities. Conducted in pairs/a triad, this allowed co-researchers to develop trust, openness and honesty. Co-researchers were able to develop ideas and confidence to explore their feelings. Claveirole and Mathers (2002) also developed peer supervision amongst mental health nursing lecturers. They reported that supervision was seen as both a sounding board as well as an emotional safety valve, plus it provided an opportunity for problem clarification and problem solving. Similarly, Buus et al (2011), drawing on their clinical supervision work in mental health settings, suggested that supervision helped their study participants to view new perspectives on practice issues and concerns. In addition, they also benefited from increased insight and emotional relief when others listened to and acknowledged their problems. They described clinical supervision as a breathing space vital in stressful hospital work. This resonates strongly with awareness of

the importance of being listened to in our study and the representation of PRS as an 'island in a turbulent sea' of work.

Study findings also suggested that PRS was useful for promoting resilience and well-being. In line with Proctor (1986) this advocates the strong restorative nature of supervision within the study. As with our study, Brunero and Stein-Parnbury (2008) have suggested that through sharing understanding it is possible to realise that you are not alone in feelings and perceptions and this can lead to reassurance and validation. Interestingly, Bedward and Daniels (2005) make the point that those in the teaching and nursing professions experience professional isolation. This isolation may not be due to poor relationships but to workloads, routines and pressures that do not allow space to address difficult issues. They proposed that professional isolation is a barrier to professional development, the promotion of change and developing shared goals. This has clear links with findings in our study where PRS seemed to be useful in reducing professional isolation, and promoting validation, leading to greater confidence in using different practice strategies.

Findings highlighted that busyness affected co-researchers' abilities to think about their practice. Burchell and Dyson (2005) have advocated the requirement to create reflective spaces to prompt a quality of engagement with one's practice. This emphasises the need for the right organisational culture so that people can find time for professional development and opportunities such as PRS. It also emphasises the obligation to actively make space for reflection, as co-researchers found in this study.

The assumption that co-researchers had the necessary skills to facilitate each other in PRS was proved to be correct. Co-researchers were all motivated, experienced teachers and reflectors and these influential factors would need to be considered when expanding the use of this approach with less experienced colleagues. It certainly indicates that this should be a voluntary process, for those interested in developing as reflective practitioners.

Whilst co-researchers worked within a largely supportive environment, the importance of being listened to was powerfully identified. Accordingly, the findings validate the potential importance of PRS in the creation of a democratic workplace and to consider issues of social justice, since it provides a space to speak out and be listened to, that may not be present in any other form. Findings suggested that PRS helped co-researchers come to understand their work and also highlighted how this was limited and changed by influences such as time, space and organisational support, in line with findings from Butterworth et al. (2008) and Cotterell (2002). Again, these issues need to be considered if this type of reflective supervision is to be successful.

Our study also emphasised writing reflection for deeper analysis, and varying preferences for writing. Using the literature to develop critical analysis and make sense of experiences was also seen as important, but co-researchers often struggled to develop this. This helped us to appreciate the difficulties that students might have when they are asked to write reflections on their practice, as suggested by Coleman and Willis (2015).

Findings demonstrated how co-researchers were able to develop practical knowledge and question their practice. This was in line with the functions of clinical supervision (Proctor 1986) and demonstrated that we were able to develop PRS to improve our practical knowledge that could then be used to improve our working lives, as highlighted by Lee (2009). This extended to feeding issues back into the organisation that arose from reflections and also self-development; improving self-awareness and the confidence to test out assumptions. Kelly (2011: 565), drawing

on Sennett's concept of the craftsman, has suggested that 'people's participation in complex, social practice is largely unconsidered, embodied, embedded and functional'. Whilst as Kelly has suggested embodiments are changed when they are put into words and may never fully capture the tacit or implicit, findings do suggest that it is useful to recognise the importance and challenge of interrogating everyday practice.

The development of a process of PRS with potential to contribute to improved teaching/facilitation.

We were able to develop a process of PRS that co-researchers found positive for their roles. Developing this process highlighted several factors that are useful to consider. Findings suggested that space and time issues must be taken into account when developing PRS. Burchell and Dyson (2005) have recommended that reflective space is not easily created and does not happen by chance. Therefore, peers need to proactively build this in to their work and the organisation also needs to recognise and value the process. We propose that PRS may even offer a useful framework for the development of educator reflection that could be used for professional nurse revalidation purposes. Our experience suggests that it can be promoted as important for resilience and stress management. Therefore, it could be integrated more overtly within human resource frameworks for staff support and development. Claveirole and Mathers (2002) experienced a fragile supervision scheme due to constant change and high workload, indicating the need for support and integration from the organisation. In addition, Buus et al (2011) cited the importance of organisational support for successful implementation and participation. They had similar issues in terms of finding time, space and energy for supervision. Also, Finlay (2008) has pointed out that reflective practice requires a supportive institutional context, otherwise busy, overstretched professionals are likely to find it challenging and this can lead to bland, mechanical routine.

Furthermore, the study offers practical suggestions for the process of PRS. These include the development of ground rules and the potential for having a 'toolbox' of reflective frameworks and other resources such as Mind Mapping or using pictures and metaphors to develop the impetus for reflection. Co-researchers' preferences were for the use of frameworks rather than freer styles of reflection; this may reflect the cultural preference within our organisation and may well be different for others. We were able to experiment with different frameworks and this was viewed as positive. This reiterates Finlay's (2008:10) point that reflective frameworks need to be applied 'selectively, purposefully, flexibly and judiciously'.

Through the study, we learnt the importance of sensitive handling when pairing up individuals. Pragmatically, we found it was important to think about people's work patterns and the opportunity to change pairs without prejudice in the future, because we learnt that different aspects may be gained from this. There are potential future benefits from pairing up with those outside of our programme in order to gain different insights, as also recommended by Buus et al (2011). Therefore, the inclusion of educators from different programmes is recommended by us in line with suggestions from Wackerhausen (2009). We are also able to endorse the use of a triad as well as paired supervision. This is recommended by Claveirole and Mathers (2002) who similarly found it took more time. Whilst meeting in pairs afforded important privacy and trust, we are able to recommend pairs coming together to meet regularly in a larger group in order to share experiences more widely and increase the potential to affirm similar challenges and take forward issues. Additionally, it became clear that outside of the research process, it would be important to have a lead person who can organise and motivate people to develop PRS.

CONCLUSIONS

This study adds further constructive evidence for the use of reflection to support, challenge and affirm professional work. It adds new evidence regarding the use of a flexible 'toolbox' of resources to develop reflection and offers guidance on the development of a practical process for RPS. The study highlights the positive opportunity to develop reflection within a facilitative structure. It shows that nurse educators often experience similar issues and that it was possible to develop a supportive and challenging supervision structure that allowed co-researchers to explore and share these. The requirement of sufficient time for reflection, particularly for writing and exploring literature to help develop critical analysis of experiences, emphasised the pressures involved. This study has transferability to a wider international audience interested in the development of reflection amongst colleagues and the use of insider research techniques to challenge and develop practice.

Figure 1: Suggestions for Ground Rules for Peer Reflective Supervision

We will:

- Decide what we do not wish to share more widely with the Reflexive Learning Group.
- Have regular tea breaks.
- Arrange dates and room bookings for our reflective sessions well in advance.
- Alternate who presents their reflection first and work at parity of time between us.
- Be sensitive and support each other in our reflections, but not be frightened to challenge each other.
- Try to 'see outside the box' and endeavour to see the extraordinary in the ordinary when we are responding to each other's reflections.
- Present the writing that we bring along to each other and judge whether it feels appropriate to ask questions during the presentation of this writing or after.
- Acknowledge and manage the emotions generated by our reflections.
- Regularly review these ground rules.

Figure 2: Frameworks and Writing Guidance for 'Toolbox' of Resources

Gibb's Reflective Cycle (1989) Adapted by Bulman (2013). In: Bulman, C. (2013) Chapter 9: Getting Started on a Journey with Reflection. Bulman, C. and Schutz, S. (2013). (Eds) *Reflective Practice in Nursing* (5th Ed.) Blackwell Wiley: Oxford

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Figure 3: Some Examples of Issues Reflected on in Peer Reflective Supervision

- Student reluctance to give an oral presentation and a lecturer's response
- Responding to an associate lecturer's ability to handle a teaching session
- Assessment and facilitative approaches to engage students
- A dissertation student who never came for supervision
- Preparing students for practice-including time issues, quality of mentoring, developing coping, resilience and assertiveness in students
- Response to a tricky situation with a colleague regarding the quality of module teaching
- Difficult clinical placement issues and dealing with cross -organisational teams

Cycle	Action
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory Workshop organised • Reflective Pairs organised and agreed. • Agreed to keep private diaries. • Agreed on trying out toolbox of reflective frameworks to help with reflection. • Set up ground rules for the conduct of the Reflexive Learning Groups.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared supervision ground rules and useful practicalities for setting up and timing supervision. • Shared selected experiences from supervision and agreed to continue with this format in RLGs. • Took issues that emerged back to the Programme in a way that did not breach confidentiality – e.g. associate lecturer issue, student assertiveness and political awareness issues for new curriculum development. • Agreed on formation of a triad and monitoring of this, as a co-researcher was not available for next cycle. • Shared new ways of scaffolding reflection e.g. use of pictures, Mind Maps, Venn diagrams, metaphors, so that others could try them. • Continued to experiment with different reflective frameworks. • Agreed to develop writing and use of literature to enhance reflection

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewed use of triad.• Reviewed further development of reflective writing and use of literature.• Reviewed use of reflective frameworks.• Brought together findings from the data collected at each stage of the project and discussed and agreed overall findings.• Liaised with validation group.• Agreed on publication and conference dissemination plans.• Took findings back to programme and made plans for the development of peer supervision after the study.
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Figure 4: Key Actions within each cycle of the study

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