



Film as Support for Promoting Reflection and Learning in Caring Science

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Abstract

Caring science that has a foundation in 'lived experience' may be viewed as a 'patient science', in other words nursing has its starting point in the patient's perspective. To support in learning caring science, the learning situation has to embrace the students' lived experience in relation to the substance of caring science. One of the challenges in education involves making theoretical meanings vivid in the absence of actual patients. Written patient narratives and fiction like novels in combination with scientific literature are often used in order to obtain lived experiences as the foundation for teaching. Questions concerning how film can be used in this context to support the learning of caring science have recently emerged. The aim of this study is to describe how film as learning-support may boost reflection when learning caring science. The data was collected through audio-taped seminars, written reflections and group-interviews with students on basic, advanced, and doctoral levels. The analysis is based on the Reflective Lifeworld Research (RLR) approach which is founded in phenomenology. The results show how film as a learning-support enhances the understanding of the caring science theory, and provides a deeper understanding of the subject. Film can be very touching and provides support for the students' embodied reflections. Hence, it is important that the students are encouraged to watch films from a caring science perspective. This requires a structure for learning-support related to the film, such as having a focus and purpose for watching the film, as well as support for follow-ups. The film itself does not create such support and guidance; instead, it must be combined with well-considered pedagogic thoughts on what learning is and how learning can be supported. The results are highlighted with the help of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of 'the lived body', and 'the flesh of the world'.

Introduction

This study focuses on how the use of film can support students' reflection when learning caring science. In addition, the study investigates ways in which phenomenology can serve as a means to both deepen and expand the understanding in lifeworld-led learning.

The view of learning reflected in this study is based on a lifeworld theoretical foundation, with an

epistemological starting point in Husserl's work on lifeworld theory (1936) and the theory of intentionality (1929). Merleau-Ponty's (1945) further development of Husserl's lifeworld theory and theory of intentionality clarifies man's existence in the world as a lived body, and outlines the philosophy that has been described as 'the flesh of the world' (1964), both with epistemological and ontological significance. A lived body is understood as an integrated whole, where there are no dividing lines between body and soul or life and learning (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). From

this viewpoint, reflection is seen as a bodily activity that takes place in the present with temporal directions towards both the past and the future (Husserl, 1936, 1929; Merleau-Ponty, 1945, 1964). Merleau-Ponty (1948) argues that film is not a sum total of images but a temporal gestalt and an expressive force that makes us sense the coexistence and simultaneity of lives in the same world. He asks questions regarding what the film signifies. For Merleau-Ponty (1948), films tell stories and are “the closest possible reproduction of a drama which literature could evoke only in words and which the movie is lucky enough to be able to photograph” (p. 57).

In ‘the flesh of the world’ every thing is present both as visible and invisible. Both existences and matter are affected by the same world in reversibility; they are from the same ‘flesh’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). In the ‘natural attitude’ (Husserl, 1929) things are taken for granted but in learning there is a need for a reflective attitude. Learning must therefore be understood in relation to the individual’s unique experience, and the way in which the phenomenon in focus is present with its visibility. Learning must also be understood in relation to aspects that are not apparent ‘at first sight’ and the ways in which these aspects relate to one another.

Boosted and vibrant reflection could help the students acquire a more problematizing attitude and thus become more aware of themselves and their actions generally, but specifically in relation to nursing. This reflection also needs to be supported by the teacher’s openness and flexibility in relation to the person who is learning, in other words a learning relation that will help facilitate learning.

Ekebergh (2009a) argues that within the learning situation students need confirmation to help them approach the body of knowledge. Ekebergh (2001) shows that students experience loneliness when learning theory and that there is a gap between the theoretical abstract ideal and the concrete caring reality. This leads to a lack of confidence among the students, and occasionally causes repudiation of the theoretical knowledge of caring.

Symbolically, theoretical caring knowledge can, from a student perspective, be described as a big ‘lump of knowledge’ which is pushed aside in learning, since the students do not know how to handle or use the ‘lump’ (Ekebergh, 2001, p. 154).

Ekebergh (2009b) emphasizes the encounter between the student’s own lifeworld and scientific knowledge and clarifies that learning situations need to support and create conditions for a reflective lived process.

This strengthens the integration of the students’ lifeworld and their theoretical knowledge. Hence, in lifeworld-led learning the focus is on reflection and the learning encounter in relation to practice (Ekebergh, 2005, 2007).

In caring science, the meaning of health and well-being is paramount. A caring science with a foundation in ‘the lived experience’ may be viewed as a ‘patient science’, that is, the patients’ perspective is the starting point for nursing. This may include the lived experience of being cared for or living with a certain disease, as well as the illness experience and how health is lived. In order to nurse and to offer a truly ‘caring care’ that is able to meet the patient’s needs, the carer must try to understand the patient’s lifeworld (Dahlberg & Segesten, 2010). Dahlberg, Todres and Galvin (2009) argue that lifeworld-led care is a prerequisite for a caring health-care that focuses on existential conditions, health and well-being. Todres and Galvin (2010) show that well-being is both a way of being in the world, as well as a felt sense. They describe the deepest existential well-being as ‘dwelling-mobility’.

Studies show that there is a gap between theory and practice in nursing education and that this results in students occasionally experiencing difficulties in assimilating theoretical knowledge and understanding the usefulness of the knowledge in practice (Ekebergh, 2007; Ekebergh, Lepp & Dahlberg, 2004; Landers, 2000). The theoretical courses have a tendency to become too theoretical, while the theoretical element is sometimes absent from the practical courses.

Reflection is a lived process and should not be understood as a purely cognitive process; instead it includes the whole person in a context (Dahlberg & Segesten, 2010; Ekebergh, 2001). Further, Galvin (2010) argues that caring care is an integration of head, hand and heart that are interlaced and lived in relation to earlier knowledge, experiences, ethics and actions. This idea is supported by Ekebergh (2009a). The argument could be related to learning situations that are designed to support the learning process and the understanding of reflection as a lived and embodied process. Within this perspective the use of seminars and examination tasks such as written accounts by patients and fictional books is preferred in teaching situations in order to illustrate ‘the lived experience’. These approaches are used in combination with scientific literature and research. Landers (2000) argues that teachers must identify methods by which they can integrate theory and practice to promote a learning culture. In lifeworld-led learning there is a need for a variety of didactic tools to both deepen and expand the understanding to the point where the lived body is taken seriously.

Questions have been raised regarding whether this approach can be used to emphasize a lifeworld perspective in learning contexts. The use of film is one possible vehicle that can be used to promote reflection and learning in relation to the subject. This raises questions regarding the significance of film as a support for students' learning. How may film enhance and support the students' learning and the possibilities of integrating the theoretical knowledge with practice? In what ways may film contribute to a deepened understanding of caring science?

Review of the literature

A review of research in the area renders a small number of scientific articles relating to the use of film in nursing education (Carpenter, Stevenson & Carson, 2008; Fleming, Piedmont & Hiam, 1990; Wall & Rossen, 2004; Masters, 2005; Plowfield, Raymond, & Hayes, 2006; Raingruber, 2003). There are also examples in the literature that show how films are used in teaching (Farina, 2009; Higgins & Lantz, 1997; McGarry & Simpson, 2007; Northington, Wilkerson, Fisher & Schenk, 2005). McConville and Lane (2006) used on-line video clips to direct nursing students towards dealing with difficult situations, and the results indicated that the students' self-efficacy increased significantly. Jensen and Curtis (2008) explored the learning experiences of students in a psychosocial nursing class that was infused with art, music, literature and film in an attempt to enhance the students' learning about mental illness. The results show that the students enjoyed and engaged with the different ways of presenting the material. The students also experienced a deeper level of understanding. Film has the potential to develop empathy and self-understanding as well as providing increased cultural awareness. A phenomenological investigation by Raingruber (2003) explored the advantages and disadvantages of using film in teaching from the students' perspective. Films are useful in promoting reflection and enhancing empathy. Moreover, films can portray emotional issues, they are engaging, and can also facilitate the introduction of ethical dilemmas. However, disadvantages of using films as part of learning include the fact that films are time-consuming to watch, as well as the fact that they are often more dramatic than real-life situations. The reviewed studies show that films are used to illuminate and spark critical reflections on different groups' living conditions, like the elderly and people suffering from psychiatric disorders (McGarry & Simpson, 2007; Plowfield et al., 2006). Films can also be used to elucidate symptoms of illnesses and several articles highlight the use of motion pictures within the area of mental illness in order to promote the understanding of symptoms of psychiatric conditions as well as views on mental illness, stigmatization, values and

ethical dilemmas (Fleming et al, 1990; Jensen & Curtis, 2008; Wall & Rossen, 2004; Raingruber, 2003).

The literature shows that film and motion-pictures can contribute to the traditional aspects of education, and also give students an opportunity to better understand 'lived experience'. However, the literature review revealed that there are currently no studies that focused specifically on the meanings of film as learning-support in order to promote reflection and to assist in the learning of caring science. In this study we aim to describe how using films as learning-support may boost reflection and assist in learning caring science. Our research questions were: How does film as learning-support enable reflection to facilitate the learning of caring science? How may film as learning-support contribute to a deepened understanding of caring science?

Method and implementation

Participants and data collection

To obtain variation in relation to the phenomenon, data was collected from basic, advanced, and doctoral students in different ways. Initially, a seminar with four PhD students was audio-taped. Then, a seminar was held with eleven master- and PhD-students in a course on lifeworld based learning. During this seminar, written accounts were collected. In an additional course at doctoral level, oral and written reflections were collected from ten PhD students. At the basic level, written reflections were collected from 65 nursing students, where film was used in the first lectures in caring science. Finally, a mixed-group interview was carried out with three nursing students who were in the second year of their nursing education. The data collection occurred during 2008-2009. The study made use of four films: The French film *Blue* by Krzysztof Kieslowski (1993); the Danish film *Open Hearts* by Susanne Bier (2002); the Spanish film *Sea Inside* by Alejandro Amenábar (2004); and the Swedish film *The New Man* by Klaus Härö (2007).

The films were chosen based on the aims of the courses taken by the students. In addition, the films all illustrate existential human conditions, health and suffering and can all be understood in relation to caring. The seminars aimed to enhance the students' learning, and were not a part of an assessment. However, they were an aspect of the caring science curriculum and supported its learning aims.

The film *Blue* was chosen for the PhD programme in caring science, in order to enhance the students' ability to problematize the meaning of the patient-perspective. Its inherent complexity from a lifeworld

perspective also aims at helping students understand the existential dimensions in life and in caring. The film shows how a woman experiences loss. Her husband and daughter are killed in a car accident and she has to live with her grief, and attempt to understand and continue living.

The film *Open hearts* was selected for the students in the basic nursing programme as it was felt that it offered possibilities for helping them to understand the meaning of concepts from caring science. The students were confronted by the film, its meanings and the variations of suffering that it portrays, which include guilt, shame, uncertainty, and a sense of powerlessness. The film portrays a young couple and shows how their life is destroyed by a car accident in which the young man is injured and paralyzed. The story is about their struggle with life.

The film *The Sea Inside* is the story of a man who is tired of his life; he is unable to move because of paralysis and he begs for euthanasia. The decision to show this film to Masters and PhD students was based on the same logic as the decision to show them the film *Blue*.

The film *The New Man* was chosen for first-year students in the nursing programme who took a course focusing on the history of ideas in caring. The film presents society's view of humans in institutions and highlights their duty to conform to societal expectations and institutional rules in Sweden after the second world-war. Disobedient persons are punished, for example with sterilization.

The different film seminars had different foci and purposes and were carried out in various ways. Each seminar had its starting point in the students' lifeworlds and looked at how the film had moved them. In all of the seminars, the students were given opportunities to discuss and reflect on the films, both individually and in groups. The teacher who led the seminars tried to help the students link the films to theories by asking questions such as: How do you understand the situation? What caught your attention and why? How could this situation be understood in relation to health and suffering?

All together the data consisted of one 70 minute audio-taped session transcribed to text (11 pages of text, single line spacing) from the first seminar, written accounts (6 pages of text) by eleven Masters and PhD students, as well as by ten PhD students. We also obtained written accounts from 65 nursing students (10 pages of text) as well as a transcribed group interview with three nursing students (16 pages of text). Thus, the total data set consisted of 43 pages of text.

Analysis

The data was analyzed from a Reflective Lifeworld Research approach (RLR) founded on phenomenological tradition (Dahlberg, 2006a; 2006b; Dahlberg, Dahlberg & Nyström, 2008). Data analysis consisted of the identification of meanings in relation to the phenomenon under investigation (films as learning-support to promote reflection and learning of caring science). The following specific questions were asked in the analysis: How may film as a learning-support contribute to a deepened understanding of caring science? How does film facilitate reflection and learning?

Everything in the text that related to the phenomenon was highlighted. The text was divided into smaller parts, labeled meaning units, and their meaning was described through the use of one or several words. These meanings were then combined to form clusters of meanings. The meanings that emerged from the analysis were then assembled based on similarities and differences. Thus, patterns of meanings were sought based on the relationships between various meanings. The essential meaning structure of the phenomenon was then sought in these patterns of meanings.

Openness and flexibility towards the phenomenon under investigation is a crucial part of any research study. This requires that a critical and reflective attitude be adopted in order to avoid understanding too quickly or being too 'uncontrolled' in the reflections. Thus, the process of understanding needs to be made to 'slow down' in order to allow the phenomenon to present itself so that it can be understood and described. This reflective attitude has been described by Dahlberg and colleagues as a bridling of the understanding process (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2003, Dahlberg, Dahlberg et al., 2008).

Ethical considerations

The investigation presented in this article conforms to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki, 2008). Informed consent was obtained from all individuals. The participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymous presentation of the results. We have also been careful in the translation from Swedish to English so as not to alter the original meaning.

Results

The results are initially presented in accordance with a structure of essential meanings. The phenomenon's constituents are then presented.

The phenomenon's essential meaning structure

Film as a means of expression creates an opportunity to understand caring science by actualizing the theoretical knowledge in such a way that it relates to a meaningful and more vivid context, which enables a deepened and expanded understanding. Actualizing caring science takes place when one becomes touched and moved in several senses. This enables learning, supported by reflection, to be vitalized, incorporated and related to one's own nursing. Touch is powerful and with the support of reflection, the prerequisites to learning caring science may be formed by creating a movement between theory and practice. Through using a 'caring science perspective', the knowledge of caring science may be given a meaningful 'space'.

The constituents that resulted from the analysis are presented in the text below and are illustrated with quotations from the data. The constituents are: (1) Vitalizes and gives coherency; (2) The meaning and power of being touched; (3) The significance of reflection; and (4) Enables a deepened knowledge of caring science.

1. Vitalizes and gives coherency

The results show that film vivifies and gives coherency and hence creates prerequisites for learning in caring science. Caring scientific concepts are clarified and this makes them easier for students to embrace as the film vitalizes the theory. An informant described it in the following manner:

The film helped to put what we have been discussing into context. Things that were previously abstract were concretized... //... one gets to 'experience' it. One gets to hear it and in that way it is easier to grasp.

Film as a basis for learning seems to add an element that goes beyond theoretical studies. Through vitalizing caring science it can be related to the student's own nursing:

Film is an excellent means of making caring science more vivid ... to get other words than from the books, you can see it with your own eyes ... and I think it can be a good transition to when you meet the patients ... that you become aware of the lifeworld, the suffering and how I am really supposed to handle the caring relationship ...

2. The meaning and power of being touched

Film can affect people in a powerful way. One informant expressed this by saying "it [film] moves the whole of me". It also became clear that film

stimulates several senses and that it touches one as a human being. In this way, it is impossible to shield the self from what is taking place in the film.

When it is a story that is being told ... I think you get more intrigued by a story, and then it is easier to see the lifeworld ...//... it almost feels like you are in the movie yourself ... or that you can recognize, you can see ...//... it was easier to grasp that you saw it more with your eyes and heard what they were saying ...

The findings show that being touched plays a significant role in triggering reflections. When one is moved, reflections are evoked. One informant describes how "the power of film to move someone deeply, triggers reflections." The film awakens and stimulates emotions in a context and creates experiences that could later be reflected upon and discussed. In this way one's self-awareness is enhanced. At the same time, the students expressed concerns regarding the films' potential to touch them too deeply. For some of the students it may be hard to handle the emotions, as they are reminded of their own life and vulnerability. The film could be experienced as being penetrating and painful. One informant described this in the following way:

But I also think that there is a risk of it 'hurting' so much since you get too affected that I don't want to learn. Being moved takes over and makes me escape rather than being confronted with what is 'bad'. This may inhibit learning, but I still think that it is of importance to get the opportunity during the training to test yourself – to put yourself on the line, under ordered and non-threatening conditions with a teacher who may give support.

3. The significance of reflection

Reflection creates possibilities for the student to gain insight into the human lifeworld and the complexity that comes with being human and caring for others. The use of film allows for reflections to occur and students are given the opportunity to reflect upon and relate to their own nursing. One informant described it thus:

I got aha-experiences all the time – 'oh that's right!', 'right, it can actually be this way, you can actually feel like this'. You felt emotions of that it can really be like this ...

Film can evoke many feelings and thoughts that may promote reflection. The film is lived through and provides opportunities for an expanded learning that transcends the film-seminars as the students may have

developed a more reflective attitude as a result of the seminars.

It becomes ... natural when you watch films generally ... in private ... that you are thinking in that way ... it triggers your thinking ...

Another informant described how his/her own caring is reflected:

I see other carers' actions and it makes me reflect upon my own and other carers' actions. It helps me look deeper and beyond.

The data also clearly illustrated that follow-ups are important. According to one informant, "[t]he most important phase of learning is the follow-up so that the reflecting dialogue and discussion can be made powerful". The results show that structure and direction should be used in the learning-situation to direct the students towards reflection.

Especially afterwards when questions about the concepts were raised and discussed it was made even clearer ... maybe I didn't exactly think about them while watching the movie, but when it had finished and you were supposed to think it over ... you could find all the concepts in the movie ... really ...

The film can stimulate understanding of the complexity of human existence; there are no easy answers to the questions that are raised by the films. The students are provided with an opportunity to become aware of different life-situations and they can try to understand how these situations can be lived through and what suffering can mean in situations never experienced before. In this way films can help students understand the importance of being open and reflective in the caring relationship.

If you understand this from a caring perspective the enormous complexity emerges in relation to how it is possible to understand her ... in this situation ... it is easy that we understand her as showing aggression ... she is trying to defend herself ... she is trying to escape from others and most from herself ... but we really do not know what she is experiencing and what is communicated ... here our understanding falls short and we could decide how this is to be understood without reflecting very much but I think it is very important to reflect on different possibilities ...

4. *Enables a deepened knowledge of caring science*

Providing students with the opportunity to reflect on something different and more alive than academic caring-science texts allows for the possibility of reaching caring scientific substance in-depth. The use of film can therefore contribute to the understanding of caring science as it allows students to acquire new nuances in addition to gaining more substantial knowledge. Thus, it forms part of a process where knowledge is both deepened and expanded.

I have now seen how it can be enacted and we have reflected upon it and tied it together, something that was harder to do before ... // you simply understand and can put your finger on what is what.

Film may thus provide an understanding of what caring science is about. One informant described it as:

To 'see' caring scientific concepts in action enables me to reflect upon them...

If the film affects the student it may also be incorporated and hence allow the knowledge to be embodied. One student expressed how the film had stayed with her:

The film is still there, you can still notice it after a month ... and still, it's so, when you talk about it, it comes back ... it's still there, I remember it ...

Another informant wrote about how the knowledge can be incorporated and gives a deeper understanding:

And then it is that you get an image with your own feelings ... with your own lifeworld so that you have everything gathered together, really...// It enables you to embrace the messages through different senses like sight and hearing. It is also easier to put caring science into a context and in that way get a bigger picture.

The theory thus can be made visible in the lived complex reality as a deepened understanding of the substance of caring science, and in this way knowledge of the subject can be obtained. This requires that the students receive help with respect to the caring science perspective. One informant stated that she had seen the film previously, but not been affected by it in the same way before: "today I had a 'caring science view' and reflected upon my own caring."

Reflections on the study

The basic premise of this study is that film can support reflection and learning of caring science by creating an opportunity to deepen knowledge and by helping students to understand caring science in a meaningful context. The findings show that film can illuminate the needs of openness and immediacy in a caring relationship in order to meet the patient's needs. This enhances the integration of theory and practice. In the discussion below, Merleau-Ponty's work is used to highlight the findings of this study.

The findings of this study stress the need for a learning-relation that gives the students (who are seen as complex beings and lived bodies) an opportunity to be understood in their learning. The students need to be provided with an opportunity to be able to transform rigid theoretical knowledge into lived experience that can transcend the learning situation.

Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* helps us understand the importance of approaching the students from a lifeworld perspective as lived bodies. According to Merleau-Ponty (1945):

The body is the vehicle of being in the world, and having a body is, for a living creature, to be involved in a definite environment, to identify oneself with certain projects and be continually committed to them. (p. 94)

Further, the results also show that the students incorporate the meaning of the film into their bodies as embodied knowledge. This illustrates how knowledge can be understood as the topography in a landscape, where some aspects become more visible in relation to aspects. Learning generally takes place in the world together with others where things are more or less familiar (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). As seen in this study, watching film can be understood as an adventure in relation to earlier experiences and knowledge. On this 'voyage', the students are moving back and forth as part of a constant movement in their understanding. The challenge is to provoke their understanding while at the same time supporting them in reflecting upon the human condition. The challenge is to really try to expand their thinking in new ways, into a "new organization of the whole" (Merleau-Ponty, 1948, p. 49), like the one Merleau-Ponty (1948) is describing in the example with the rabbit, the hunter and the forest. With the support of the group and the teacher, the students are helped to avoid becoming lost in this adventure.

Our findings show that films can illuminate people's suffering and vulnerability and that this affects the students. Through this process, the students come to face their own vulnerability, which can be understood

as a necessity in professional care. This can be related to Healey-Ogden and Austin's (2010) research, which states that the nursing role has to involve supporting people in learning how to come to know themselves and subsequently embrace their own vulnerability. Nurses' professional responsibilities also include paying particular attention to supporting people on their well-being journeys.

The later philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, described as 'the flesh of the world', can assist in understanding how the students are interlaced with the film and the teachers' and the other students' perspectives. In this context, personal experience stands out in relation to others and some meanings share more generality than others. In this situation, the students have an opportunity to both see themselves and others, as well as the opportunity to be seen. Students are thus seen (and see) in relation to both generality and particularity, in relation to space and time. This could be understood in relation to Merleau-Ponty's (1964) concept of the 'flesh of the world' and the chiasm, which are illustrated in the following quotation:

Yet this flesh that one sees and touches is not all there is to flesh, nor this massive corporeity all there is to the body. The reversibility that defines the flesh exists in other fields; it is even incomparably more agile there and capable of weaving relations between bodies that this time will not only enlarge, but will pass definitively beyond the circle of the visible. (p. 144).

According to this quotation, seeing a film evokes a lived body (Merleau-Ponty, 1948), which is illuminated in our study, i. e., the students are evoked as lived bodies by the film and the learning context. Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty (1948) clarifies that "... I perceive in a total way with my whole being; I grasp a unique structure of the thing, a unique way of being, which speaks to all my senses at once ..." (p. 50). The film could speak to the students in a different way than, for example, literature. This leads us to think of the need to use all possible ways to explore and understand caring science and the students' lifeworlds.

A film and a follow-up seminar can illuminate the complexity of human existence and can thus help the students to understand other peoples' living-conditions, including contexts like culture and nursing structures and the associated risks and possibilities, in relation to caring. The students can become aware of how they are intertwined in this complexity. This is important as the findings show that students are frustrated by their inability to find easily understood rules concerning how to approach and help the patients. Students often ask for a certain structure or

guidelines regarding 'what to do and what not to do'. We believe that viewing film can support a more reflecting attitude towards the caring science, and to understand that when working from a lifeworld perspective these rules do not exist. They have to start from the unique person and situation. Although the use of nursing guidelines can give the impression of high-quality nursing, from our perspective we wonder how quality is understood and how caring *per se* is comprehended.

Galvin and Todres (2007) argue for the importance in caring of a nurturing space for being-possibilities. They argue that this should apply to a kind of scholarship that is a seamless movement between head, hand and heart. This could mean that the ongoing learning and opportunities within our professional and personal lives would be allowed to 'settle' down. It is possible to argue that a learning-situation like the one described in this study may well evoke the students' lived bodies, with 'head, hand and heart' intertwined. This will allow them to experience how human suffering can be shown and understood in a way that relates to how this could be met in a complex world. The film illustrates lived experiences in 'the teaching arena', and this can serve as a variation to the face-to-face encounter with patients, as well as other pedagogical strategies.

While watching the films the students' do not have the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers as in a conversation, instead they have to turn to their own understanding. This explains why the lifeworld-led learning context is of such a great value in helping them in their search for answers. It is also important that they come to understand that there are sometimes no answers and that this must be dealt with. The work of Merleau-Ponty (1969) helps in the understanding of this intersubjectivity and the possibility of understanding others. Merleau-Ponty (1969) writes of how we observe others when we meet them, and how we see and recognize their behaviour. When we recognize the behaviour of others as being similar to our own then it is also possible to assume that their behaviour is motivated by intentions that are similar to ours. Understanding of others is therefore grounded in their understanding of themselves, and vice versa, and as embodied and lived others (Merleau-Ponty, 1969). This provides an understanding of how we, with the help of a film, can develop a caring attitude through communication that is different from conversation.

This leads to the question of how we can draw on phenomenology in teaching in general, and specifically in this kind of learning-situation. In this kind of learning-situation, different meanings can emerge without the risk of hurting a patient, and the students are given an opportunity to understand the

seamlessness of caring, as suggested by Galvin and Todres (2007). An open attitude and a problematizing approach as well as the willingness to dwell on the meanings that emerge in the situation is characteristic of lifeworld-led learning. This can be a demanding learning context for both teachers and students, but the importance of the opportunities to learn cannot be overemphasised. A further important aspect also needs to be noted. The students should not be driven to 'solve the problems', but instead should realize the complexity of understanding before there can be a possible solution.

The students are stimulated to see a landscape of meanings where they can be helped to focus on different aspects of a whole. They can be helped in this understanding by Merleau-Ponty's (1945) notion of figure and background, which enables them to see patterns of meanings like a woven fabric and not as mere causality and problem-solving. Merleau-Ponty (1964) clarifies that the meaning of a phenomenon cannot be revealed to us in any other way than as a totality and through its relationships with its particulars.

The results of this study show that film as a pedagogical aid in courses in caring science may enable a deepened knowledge and may make the understanding of caring science more vibrant and vivid. This relates to what has been described by Ekebergh (2001) as the transformation of 'a lump of knowledge'; through pulling out a few threads or through integrating knowledge and practical experiences students are provided with 'aha-experiences'.

This study has inspired the development of the course outlines in caring science in the nursing programme at Linnaeus University in Sweden. Each course intends to use film-seminars as a didactic tool to promote reflection and learning. This also provides an opportunity to understand more about how film-seminars can be used in learning caring science. In order to accomplish a deepened knowledge in caring science, a substantially incorporated scientific caring knowledge or a clear theoretical link to the seminar is required. This may be accomplished by the students reading fiction-literature or research in caring science prior to the seminar.

In order to gain a deepened knowledge in caring science, it is also vital that the teachers have the students' learning in focus. Teachers should ask questions to make the students more reflective. This is similar to the findings in previous studies, such as the study by Raingruber (2003), which is also based on lived experience. Thus, the lived experience in the film may contribute to a deepened knowledge of caring. Film is put forward as a way of enhancing

reflection and emphatic ability. The meaning of partaking in 'the lived experience' could be accentuated.

Methodological Considerations

In this reported study, we attempted to bridle our understanding, including our pre-understanding, and met the data in manner that was as unspecified and open possible (Dahlberg et al., 2008).

The informants selected for our study were PhD students, Master's students in caring science, and nursing students with diverse competences in caring science. This diversity of the sample may be considered a strength of this study as it allowed for many variations of the phenomenon to be in focus. In terms of implementation and innovation, the conditions in the learning situations have been changed in relation to an expanded understanding of learning, and the structure of the film seminars has been changed and developed as a result of this research.

The data was collected over a period of two years. During this time-period, approximately eight additional film-seminars were held where data was not collected. However, these seminars were always evaluated and may be seen as part of the development of the project. The data collected took different forms, which allowed for the generation of rich meanings. In addition, we (the authors) acted as chairs of the seminars and collected all the data, thus playing a double role. Although this could be seen as a limitation of the study, we argue that it has made it

possible to develop the seminars further as we drew on the experiences and evaluations for enhanced quality.

Conclusion

For optimal learning to take place we suggest that structures based on a lifeworld perspective are created. This includes developing focus and aims when watching the film in relation to caring science as well as support for follow-ups. The students are thus guided in their reflection and are given support in using 'a caring science perspective'. In addition, the students need to be provided with support to help them interlace theory and practice. The film by itself does not create such support and guidance, but must be combined with well-considered pedagogical thoughts regarding what learning is and how learning can be supported. It can be concluded that learning is an aspect of life and not a separated phenomenon. Film can be used to clarify aspects of the human condition such as health and suffering and the substance of caring science. In other words, under optimal learning conditions film may integrate theory and practice with the students' lifeworlds.

Additional studies are needed to expand and further deepen the knowledge of the phenomenon. However, this study clearly demonstrates the potential of film as a learning-support and could serve as a starting-point for discussions of pedagogy in higher education.

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