



Original research

Social justice, capabilities and learning support provided by lecturers: A phenomenological-hermeneutic study

Kris Deering*, Jo Williams

Mental Health Nursing Department, Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences, University of the West of England, Glenside Campus, Blackberry Hill, Stapleton, Bristol, BS16 1DD, UK

A B S T R A C T

Many student nurses require additional support to undertake university level education. Lecturers are well placed to deliver learning support, which may enrich attainment with assignments. Yet fairness in how support is offered, for example if it is accessible and enables learning abilities, may impact on its utility. This study examined these aspects, exploring capabilities of learning support provided by lecturers. Capabilities are a feature of a social justice theory and involve having opportunities that shape abilities, to achieve, or strive for outcomes people value. Hence, identifying capabilities of learning support may enlighten what develops equity in how students are able to utilise lecturers' support and develop their abilities to learn.

A phenomenological-hermeneutic research approach was adopted, employing focus groups to explore lived experiences of learning support provided by lecturers. Capabilities were located within the social contacts of students and lecturers, identified as themes; 'collaborative relationships', 'making space for learning', and 'modelling'. Findings were consolidated illustrating lecturers' interaction with students' enhanced capabilities in how students could utilise support, to progress learning abilities. It is hoped these insights develop understanding in what might have utility when lecturers aid learning and show a relevancy of social justice when students are assisted within university.

1. Background

Learning support plays a pivotal role at university, whereby intellectual and emotional aid enhances student learning abilities. Despite developments in offering support, markedly with e-learning and peer assisted learning (Edwards and Bone, 2012), attainment of assignments and attrition remain an international concern. Figures identify average attrition rates of up to 50% for student nurses (Harris et al., 2014), with difficulties of studying being a substantial reason to abandon nursing programmes (Wray et al., 2017). Although learning support can improve achievement (Ooms et al., 2013), studies exploring equity and attainment, lean towards predisposing factors, for example, secondary education of students and social class (Schneider and Preckel, 2017). This has illuminated inequalities but perhaps underexplores how university staff, are supportive in aiding learning; an important factor, owing to the diverse abilities and characteristics of students now entering nursing education (Loftin et al., 2013).

Weaver (2008) proposes an aim of learning support is to enhance learning abilities, so students grasp taught subjects. Hence support is conceivably diverse to accomplish, or work towards abilities that enables learning; for example, fostering critical thinking, besides growing technical knowledge on locating literature and writing assignments. Organisationally, this requires comprehensive systems so students understand what is available, how to access, and the purpose of support.

Warwick et al. (2017) add, entire faculties require being supportive when significant learning may occur, beyond formal lessons. In this context, learning support involves student socialisation; nursing principles, notably person centeredness, might be learnt, not merely by acquiring support, but via interpersonal interactions of faculty members in how assistance is offered and if support is tailored to student needs (Chen, 2015).

While universities have learning support units, comprising of extracurricular teaching and support programmes, lecturers are likely to be the first point of contact for learning support, owing to their frequent student interactions, beside pastoral and tutorial duties (Bailey, 2013). Moreover, learning support is a requisite of nurse educators (NMC, 2008), however possible indifference and dissonance towards student learning needs may render support inoperable. Students desire confidence to learn and lessened anxiety, implying supportive relationships are perhaps as important to support given (McCaig et al., 2014). Such relationships may reduce attrition (Gillen, 2012), but could possibly also be emancipatory, whereby lecturers' kindness aids problem-solving to achieve, or work towards learning abilities initially perceived unattainable by students (Bailey, 2013).

1.1. Social justice

Social justice derives from a kaleidoscope of contesting views;

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: Kris3.deering@uwe.ac.uk (K. Deering), Joanne8.Williams@uwe.ac.uk (J. Williams).

feasibly traced to Aristotelian philosophy, proposing equality with allocating sparse resources, but with landowners (Hope, 2013). Debate centres on fairness, how goods and services are distributed and accessed in society. Goods range from food to shelter, while services include healthcare and education. Social justice also pertains to fairness of the judiciary, ability to take up opportunities, exercise rights, and protect those disadvantaged (Ornstein, 2017). Groups who bear uneven burdens, for instance linked to socioeconomic factors and disabilities, need more aid; alternatively, onus can be on personal responsibility to support welfare (Preiss, 2017). Further complexity is how economic climates shape social justice; notably, relaxation of job security during economic recessions to increase employment, and enable more people the ability to purchase essential goods (Wilson, 2007).

Despite extensive debate, seminal theories of social justice do exist. Utilitarianism proposed justice in society depends on the most people experiencing happiness (Mill, 2014), yet a consequence might be, minority groups encounter disproportionate suffering (Rawls, 1999). Rawls (1999) based social justice on need, particularly people disadvantaged who lack opportunity and focused on redistribution to those deprived. Whereas Nozick (1974) and Miller (1999), draw on entitlement and economic markets; significantly, possession of goods is a right, while entrepreneurship raises wealth, enhancing capacity to purchase goods and services.

1.2. Capabilities approach

Rather than gauging social justice on acquiring commodities alone, it can involve freedom to make choices and develop abilities perceived essential for quality of life (Sen, 2003). Although literature by Amartya Sen is diverse, a central argument is the capabilities approach whereby quality of life arises from achieving or striving towards functionings people value; “doing and being” (Sen, 2003, p 43). This is dependent on how resources are utilised and means people have, to achieve abilities. For example, owning a bicycle helps being mobile, in so far, people have, or can acquire, abilities to ride. Freedom therefore, is pivotal to bring about achievements which one attempts to produce, and may require tackling obstacles that impact on peoples’ agency (Sen, 2009). It is these freedoms, enabling a person to do and be, which shape capabilities, signifying fairness in having opportunities to attain, or develop abilities; to flourish valuable aspects of human life such as being able to learn (Sen, 1999a).

Sen (2003) illustrates that several low-income countries have superior wellbeing rankings over and above high-income populations, indicating opportunities to make use of resources, including personal attributes, improves quality of life. Feasibly then, social justice is not always contingent on fixed principles of distribution for those deprived, but is also an adaptive process to alleviate fixable injustices, varying between people, achieving what is possible, in given circumstances (Sen, 2009). This is relevant to learning support, when opportunities optimising use of university resources and student attributes might enrich learning abilities (Ooms et al., 2013). Flores-Crespo (2007) suggests support is reliant on lecturers and students exploring learning functionings, to develop abilities, which improve learning. Hence, learning support may conceivably be a collection of capabilities; the equity of which might be evaluated in how opportunities are shaped to have support, and the opportunities generated from support itself, to cultivate student learning abilities (Hart, 2012).

2. Study aim

Despite capabilities potential to aid students, it is underexplored with learning support and nursing education generally. Capabilities have been developed in the literature, notably by Nussbaum (2012), yet the diversity in how capabilities may help people, has meant there is still debate on what they entail (Entwistle and Watt, 2013). Capabilities may have different subjective connotations, meaning what capabilities

involve can be investigated, according to whom it concerns and context (Sen, 1999a, 1999b). This is to understand what has utility; when developing abilities, to reach, or advance a valuable functioning, is reliant on generating opportunities (Sen, 1999b). Sen (1999a) adds, such knowledge has significance, for it can inform practical incremental improvements denoting minor adjustments to existing processes. Therefore, the study aimed to explore what enhanced capabilities of learning support, investigating student and lecturers lived experiences; this was to detect what capabilities might involve, and explore their impact in how students were able to utilise support provided by lecturers to progress learning abilities.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Phenomenological-Hermeneutics

A phenomenological-hermeneutic method, inspired by Ricoeur (1991; revised by Lindseth and Norberg, 2004), was adopted to unveil capabilities from lived experiences. Phenomenology explores how participants ascribe personal meanings to an explored phenomenon; illuminated in how interpretations of lived experiences, shape narrations (Geanellos, 2000). Hermeneutic adds interpretation; people are enmeshed in the world they live, whereby evaluations of the world depend on what is meaningful (Geanellos, 2000). Structure of text can convey what has meaning, thus an approach is to analyse interview transcripts, to extract text figurative to the world participants inhabit (Geanellos, 2000). This evolves interpretation, moving beyond narrated meanings, to explicate the phenomenon by what transcript text might represent (Wiklund et al., 2002). Interpretations are then consolidated, sometimes guided by relevant literature, to form a richer understanding in how participants experience the phenomenon, in their world (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004).

3.2. Ethical consideration and approval

Ethical approval was obtained from the Education Research Ethics Committee at the researchers’ university. Informed consent was acquired, whereby participants understood the study aim and they could withdraw at any time, without reason. Participants were also informed that a colleague and teacher will conduct data collection. This was recognised as a study limitation, owing to the unavailability of neutral parties. Data was anonymised and retained on a university computer, with encrypted login, while all requests for recantations in the transcript would be accepted, within a week following data-collection, so not to impact on data-analysis.

3.3. Participants, setting and recruitment

A purposeful sample of 12 consented to the study. Mental health student nurses ($n = 6$), and lecturers ($n = 6$) were recruited from a university in the South West of the UK. The inclusion criterion were students in their final year, as they have had the most experiences of learning support, beside lecturers who taught the students and engaged in their tutorials, alongside pastoral care. The sample excluded other nurse disciplines, as the study aimed to inform lecturers’ practices, in the mental health nursing department.

A primary concern for recruitment was coercion; students feeling compelled to participate. This was because the researchers sometimes taught final year students, who may not feel empowered to refuse participation, fearing possible repercussions to their education. To lessen this impact, recruitment involved student representatives, who enquired on the researcher’s behalf, if any fellow students had interest in the study. Those who were interested gave verbal permission for the researchers to email a study information leaflet and consent form; this included an offer to discuss the study, if requested. Lecturers were notified by the researchers sending an email of the information leaflet

and consent form, to all members of the mental health nursing department.

3.4. Narrative interviews

Participants were given an outline of capabilities and asked, ‘please describe what capabilities involve, when students can utilise learning support provided by lecturers that aids abilities to learn’. To give participants freedom and broaden identification of what was meaningful, an unstructured interview schedule was deployed. Moreover, because of the diversity in how and when learning support might occur, the researchers did not wish to limit narrations within set circumstances.

Focus groups were chosen as rich narratives detailing capabilities might emerge from participants, building on the perspectives of each other. Views might differ between students and lecturers however contrasting narratives may enhance understanding of what capabilities are. Lecturers and students were allocated to separate focus groups, as to feel more comfortable to discuss personal experiences of learning support. To assure authenticity, the expressions of participants were counter-checked to reduce misinterpretation, while narrations were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim to create familiarity with the data.

4. Interpretation

Lindseth and Norberg (2004) phenomenological-hermeneutic approach consists of three levels of interpretation drawing on the literature of Ricoeur (1991); naïve reading, structural analysis and comprehensive understanding. Naïve reading involves reading the transcripts several times, to sketch a preliminary grasp of the text. This surface understanding, guides deeper interpretation of structural analysis to unpick meaning units; denoted as textual threads that shape understanding of the texts’ meaning and may indicate to capabilities when support is useful. Structural analysis moves back and forth between the parts and the whole of the text, until deeper meaning is understood, alongside comparing with naïve reading to improve accuracy of interpretation (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004). The final stage consists of discussion, recapitulating naïve reading and structural analysis guided by related literature; this is to generate an evolved understanding in how capabilities influenced equality, enabling students to make use of learning support and develop their abilities to learn.

4.1. Naïve reading

Focus groups transcripts were read several times in their entirety, to develop an initial impression in what capabilities represented, when experiences of learning support were useful. Capabilities were symbolised when lecturers empowered students to find answers for themselves. This entailed diverse interpersonal approaches, including aid to understand relevancy of lessons and learning material, besides how to make sense of literature, to enhance critical thinking. Communication appeared to have significance to capabilities, in the way learning support was tailored, to convey comprehension, using different communication techniques, and everyday language (Table 1). This signified flexibility via lecturers sharing learning methods and how to conceptualise ideas. Sincerity was also meaningful to capabilities imparting

Table 1
Example of narratives for naïve reading.

Student	Lecturer
Because there's already a dialogue there and exchange, you know when that dialogue is there and is present, people establish a rapport.	There are some things you should do differently when working. I want to work with them in the same way as I have worked with a service user, so being adaptive, available, being courteous, responding to them.

knowledge to promote relevancy, not exhibit academic prowess. Moreover, dignity and respect seemingly had bearing to capabilities, symbolised via lecturers being curious in what may help, while seeking student views and validating their progressions.

4.2. Structural analysis

Structural analysis draws on meaning units, rendered from interpreting semantic meanings of words and sentences, to illustrate how transcript text is referential to objects, or ideas, within the participants’ world (Wiklund et al., 2002). This evolves interpretation, aided by the researcher attempting to suspend presumptions on the texts’ significance (Wiklund et al., 2002). The text was divided into meaning units, relating to the phenomena being explored, the text was then condensed and labelled with codes. Thereafter the researchers discussed how these codes could be sorted into meaningful content as subthemes, whereby the subthemes with similar content were sorted into themes (Table 2) (Geanellos, 2000).

4.2.1. Theme 1: collaborative relationships

4.2.1.1. Subtheme: respectfulness. Students illustrated the importance of respect to build collaborative relationships, for example impacting on the approachability of lecturers; this was even when interactions were momentary owing to time-constraints;

Student: *I learn a lot from them not necessarily by the substance of what they're saying but more the manner that they say it in. The tone of voice, the level of interest that they have when they address you or they have, you know, eye contact and the respect that they offer you, and that's super-duper important.*

Student: *Often I've got loads of stuff going on haven't I, there's no point we wouldn't possibly have time for all of that so in formulating a simple question that's solvable by a quick interaction with lecturer.*

Support was beneficial when lecturers had awareness students were experiencing difficulties. Such interactions aided learning abilities, particularly with promoting independence. This appeared driven by lecturers respecting students and making attempts to utilise caring values employed in nursing, in learning support;

Lecturer: *And some of those other qualities, perhaps less academic ones, the care, the compassion and all those sorts of things we bang on about in nursing are equally if not more important.*

Lecturer: *Inherently we want to help people. Initially they need a bigger dollop of support and then you can start backing off once things calm down. Is that promoting social justice, is that promoting independence and capability? I would suggest it is because if nobody did the extra bit to begin with, that person is going nowhere cos they're not able to sort it out for themselves.*

Student: *I mean in terms of making people feel important, yea absolutely, I think by making people feel valued as individuals and being real and honest in that moment with that person is essential.*

4.2.1.2. Subtheme: curiosity. Collaboration was aided by lecturers being curious of the students’ background, and what enriched learning. This consisted of lecturers demonstrating interest in students as people, exploring they had understood what had been discussed, and checking to see how students were following support;

Lecturer: *We do ask open ended questions to find out the whole picture ... because of a sense of curiosity.*

Lecturer: *In our programme people come from diverse backgrounds. Students who come through other forms of secondary education, B tech and those sorts of things and they have different experiences of education. I think an expression of social justice tend to be those who belittle*

Table 2
Examples of the structural analysis: from meaning units to themes.

Meaning units	Condensed meaning units	Sub-theme	Theme
Student: <i>let's just say I lacked respect toward someone, based on their views on what they're teaching, you're less likely to approach them. However, yea conversely the lecturers I tend to approach more are the ones I have more respect for.</i>	Link between respect and lecturers' approachability.	Respectfulness.	Collaborative relationships.
Lecturer: <i>And some of those other qualities, perhaps less academic ones, the care, the compassion and all those sorts of things we bang on about in nursing are equally if not more important.</i>	Respecting students, via enacting caring values.		

their own achievements, don't see themselves as equals, and the biggest aspect I often find is giving them confidence.

Student: I sort of feel comfortable chatting to anybody, I wouldn't be more inclined to go to someone of similar social economic standing. But I know that some people that would be a crucial issue and I know for the individual who had a very positive experience, they were both women, they were both you know, similar standing socially in terms they weren't from vastly different backgrounds, it wasn't a barrier.

Student: The idea of following it up and still being thought about, otherwise I found lots of communication just disappeared into the black hole of something.

Lecturer: I'm not convinced they took all that information in and whether they understood it all and you start chasing it up, chasing them up and trying to advise them again so it's not just your initial actions that may count.

4.2.2. Theme 2: making space for learning

4.2.2.1. Subtheme: processing knowledge. Making space for learning involved various types of space, participants referred to these as "... time to think ..." and "... safe place ..." alongside support "... representing the needs for the time ...". Space was symbolised as time to think, challenging preconceptions, and sharing or relinquishing difficulties that hindered abilities to learn, while assisting students to be independent learners;

Student: They're one on one, safe environment whereby you can get your shit off your chest and move on, I can have that space where I can be a different person.

Lecturer: It's about a sense of achievement that they could do it. Do it on their own two feet ... I think that's quite important to have that sense of independence and that they have done it on their own merit.

4.2.2.2. Subtheme: utilising the learning environment. Aiding students to navigate the university, to locate support when lecturers were unable to help, symbolised another means of making space to learn. This involved seizing opportunities in perhaps unusual spaces to aid students, for example the final narrative is of meaningful support that occurred in a university corridor;

Lecturer: University has these systems and policies in place to support but often whether students access them comes down to the lecturer. There's some choice whether those people are deserving or need these services, so lecturers make a judgement how we sign post and that comes down to understanding of our practice and understanding of the organisation. That can be limiting or beneficial for students.

Student: Came out of the corridor, the tutor said, oh hi how are you doing I had this interaction that was therapeutic ... eliciting ... what was going on I felt listened to, validated ... I went away ten feet tall all my problems have faded into the background ... I was purposeful.

4.2.3. Theme 3: modelling

4.2.3.1. Subtheme: embodying nursing values. Modelling consisted of

lecturers' enacting the nursing values they taught, consequently students appeared to identify more readily with such lecturers, to seek learning support;

Student: The things we model are the things we admire in relation to our own values so an example of what it might be like, have a lecturer who's punctual, gets back to you on time does their job properly and that might be somebody who you might be more inclined to model yourself upon.

4.2.3.2. Subtheme: therapeutic engagement. Also identified was the value in lecturers enacting principles of the therapeutic relationships, for example being non-judgemental, these enriched experiences of support, and aided learning via role modelling characteristics of professional nursing;

Lecturer: It's about the way we deliver it that encourages access so if we role model being mental health nurses ... open and fully into, to think clearly ... collaborative sort of valuing equality and co-producing things if you like and I think that is likely to enable some people who might come forward.

4.3. Comprehensive understanding

To further explicate understanding in how capabilities influenced equality, for students to utilise support and aid learning abilities, interpretations from naïve reading and structural analysis were consolidated, and re-examined employing related literature (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004). Although only one interpretation is depicted, several participants inspected this final step, to validate if findings evoked experiences of when learning support was useful. Capabilities were deeply embedded within lecturers' and students' interpersonal interactions when opportunities were harnessed, via planning, or spontaneously to cultivate learning abilities. Capabilities had resonance to moments in time when a simple gesture or reply, emitting warmth and genuineness, lessened student concerns. These actions symbolised invitations to converse and engage in support, enclosed with clarity to what could be achieved, or what might transpire over time. When assistance could not be accommodated, capabilities involved adaption and picturing alternative routes to help, utilising sign-posting or lecturers accompanying students to make acquaintances with service personnel, who could assist;

Student: I think that notion of when you have got the time, make it real, make it a real interaction. Don't be looking at the watch, don't be looking at the clock, the phone. Even if you haven't got a lot of time make it as meaningful as possible it's not always about sitting down, even if you don't get as much information covered, the knowledge sticks.

Student: Like a safety net, you don't want to use it, but you want to know it's there.

Capabilities involved lecturers articulating knowledge in ways to be understood, including exploring if what had been conveyed made sense and initiating deliberations, to illuminate different ways to grasp complex subjects. The identified capabilities seemingly inspired hope, empowering students to uncover personal strengths arising from

lecturers being attuned to the person behind the student nurse role;

Student: It sounded like they have been extremely supported and significant on that individual's life which influenced their academic progress as obviously everything's all intertwined, it's less what they've done when they've been speaking, and more the fall back of that relationship that has been the supportive mechanism, knowing that there is someone in the university who knows you're having a rough time.

Lecturer: It's because they see us more as nurses or if they've just gotten to know what's better at a personal level, the power just diminishes so they don't see you as, I don't know, the scary lecturer that's going to tell them off ... but they've got that relationship with you.

Capabilities aided this unveiling of students as people, interwoven within a connectedness when lecturers let go, perhaps momentarily of their authority, also offering exposure of themselves, as a person. Kreber and Klampfleitner (2013) associated this authenticity with an attentiveness to engage, so students also revealed personal experiences, raising their self-awareness of thoughts and feelings to envisage potential solutions. Capabilities also shaped conviviality, symbolising a sense of belonging that enhanced student participation via lecturers acknowledging students as fellow affiliates of the nursing fraternity (Kern et al., 2014). This broadened reciprocity whereby acceptance was returned with student openness about abilities and challenges of learning (Farr-Wharton et al., 2018);

Student: If they open up they don't have to have all the answers to have wisdom.

Lecturer: You get a different sense of conversation, where there's an element of talking to you as a peer, and in terms of the Mental Health Nurse. You are still there in a role as lecturer, but I think perhaps there's a different connection.

Mutuality of values and familiarity with students as people resonated with the capabilities detected. Collaboration involved dialogue - a thoughtful curiosity of difference; not in its exoticness, but sincere interest to understand the world where students live. Making space for learning included raising self-awareness; students could imagine solutions based on individual strengths, expanding opportunities to develop learning abilities and student self-worth (Cano et al., 2017). Intertwined within these capabilities was modelling, which sculpted support to enact values, recognised by both student and lecturer. These mutual values which evoked care of another person were exhibited via lecturers' responsiveness and acceptance of the students' plight, beside how lecturers respectfully explored problems. Lizzio et al. (2007) suggest this congruence when lecturers embody the vocational values they teach, can assist students to identify more readily with lecturers, easing a willingness to collaborate and receptiveness to suggestions that might aid learning abilities (Farr-Wharton et al., 2018).

5. Discussion

Sen (2009) proposes a difficulty of social justice, is how some theories adopt the figurative social contract between people and institutions, whereby the latter, such as universities, are fully obligated to deliver a just society. Although they have a role, institutions being solely responsible perhaps eschews that people can generate socially just opportunities themselves, while debate remains what principles would optimise a just society (Sen, 1999b). However, rather than only striving for societal ideals that may conflict, capabilities evinces a caring awareness of peoples' authentic lives alongside prospects to achieve the best solutions with what is possible, at the time (Sen, 2009). Given social integration influences academic performance (Farr-Wharton et al., 2018), social relations may also impact on how capabilities are shaped within higher education (Hart, 2012). This was illustrated in the study when initiating opportunities to develop learning abilities emerged from the flourishing interpersonal relations, between

lecturers and students.

Nurturing connectedness appeared evident when lecturers eased trust and cooperation, enabling student feelings of community towards the nursing profession. This sense of belonging seemed to evolve mutual respect to have honest discussions of undertaking learning. Den Brok et al. (2010) add that when academic relationships enrich and not obstruct potential abilities, it endorses social justice for students become more active in their own education. This aligned with study findings whereby support raised awareness of the choices students had in how learning abilities could be developed by lecturers engaging students in different ways, and being amiable when addressing the students' needs and abilities (Sen, 1999a). Hence, although the study centred on equity of support and progressing learning abilities, to do so was seemingly aided in how the interactions of lecturers shaped other capabilities for functionings, valued by students; notably self-worth, hope and connectedness. Dunbar and Carter (2017) propose these components are essential for a sense of belonging to the faculty; without which, student nurses' engagement in their learning, may be impeded.

6. Practice implication

Universities offer a range of learning activities, yet for these to have utility they need to be accessible for students and inclusive of developing learning abilities. While literature illustrates the benefits of student forums to deliberate challenges in education, utilising Enquiry-Based Learning may be useful, as it fosters exploration of research and discussions pertaining to learning scenarios (Simpson et al., 2008). However, a shift in its application could be students sharing experiences of learning support, while discussing how capabilities might be enhanced to aid learning abilities. This process aligns with the study findings when abilities to learn derived from student-lecturer collaborations. Moreover, Sen (2005) advocates such democratic debate, exploring context specific capabilities in how to promote fairness of accessing opportunities. It may also challenge preconceptions, for example, that the use of learning opportunities available within a university is implicitly known (Student minds, 2017).

7. Study limitations

The small sample does restrict generalisability in how findings can be universally applied to nursing education; in addition, self-selection bias was likely owing to characteristics of participants. Students and lecturers either desired to develop learning abilities or deliver support to that affect, signifying a potential benefit of replicating the study, with students who struggle to capitalise on learning support. Another limitation was the interpretative methodology. Interpretation can be a value-laden endeavour, constraining impartiality to unearth unequivocal truths, as other realities can be discovered (Ricoeur, 1991). Hence the significance of employing participants to validate lived experiences from the findings, while accuracy of interpretation was enriched by two researchers independently conducting data-analysis and reaching consensus via discussion.

8. Conclusion

The study has revealed lecturers have a pertinent role in offering learning support; for example, exploring learning needs and navigating the learning environment. Moreover, the relationships of lecturers with students, appeared to have an impact on opportunities to attain, or work towards learning abilities. Conceivably then, a genuine curiosity of students can enlighten ways to develop learning, while perhaps limit stifling potential abilities. Although applying capabilities to learning support is a facet of social justice by illustrating how lecturers may enhance fairness with assistance, the outcome may also develop social justice by cultivating the students' participation in education. It is acknowledged the paper does not cover the full breadth of social justice

within nursing education, however the study has demonstrated a possibility of social justice being shaped via interpersonal means; to enrich opportunities that support students while at university.

Conflicts of interest

None.

Funding sources

None.

Ethical approval details

Obtained from the University of the West of England: Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education Research Ethics Committee in 2016.

Acknowledgements

None.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data related to this article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2018.08.014>.

References

- Bailey, R., 2013. Exploring the engagement of lecturers with learning and teaching agendas through a focus on their beliefs about, and experience with, student support. *Stud. High Educ.* 38 (1), 143–155.
- Cano, F., Martin, A.J., Ginns, P., Berbén, A., 2017. Students' self-worth protection and approaches to learning in higher education: predictors and consequences. Available at: <http://tarjomefa.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/TarjomeFa-F414-English.pdf>, Accessed date: 1 June 2018.
- Chen, R., 2015. Do as we say or do as we do? Examining the hidden curriculum in nursing education. *Can. J. Nurs. Res.* 47 (3), 7–17.
- den Brok, P., van Tartwijk, J., Wubbels, T., Veldman, I., 2010. The differential effect of the teacher-student interpersonal relationship on student outcomes for students with different ethnic backgrounds. *Br. J. Educ. Psychol.* 80 (2), 199–221.
- Dunbar, H., Carter, B., 2017. A sense of belonging: the importance of fostering student nurses' affective bonds. *J. Child Health Care* 21 (4), 367–369.
- Edwards, S., Bone, J., 2012. Integrating peer assisted learning and eLearning: using innovative pedagogies to support learning and teaching in higher education settings. *Aust. J. Teach. Educ.* 37 (5), 1–12 (Online).
- Entwistle, V.A., Watt, I.S., 2013. Treating patients as persons: a capabilities approach to support delivery of person-centered care. *Am. J. Bioeth.* 13 (8), 29–39.
- Farr-Wharton, B., Charles, M.B., Keast, R., Woolcott, G., Chamberlain, D., 2018. Why lecturers still matter: the impact of lecturer-student exchange on student engagement and intention to leave university prematurely. *High Educ.* 75 (1), 167–185.
- Flores-Crespo, P., 2007. Amartya sen's capability approach and social justice in education. In: Walker, M., Unterhalter, E. (Eds.), *Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Geanellos, R., 2000. Exploring Ricoeur's hermeneutic theory of interpretation as a method of analysing research texts. *Nurs. Inq.* 7 (2), 112–119.
- Gillen, S., 2012. Is enough being done to reduce undergraduate attrition rates? *Nurs. Stand.* 27 (8), 12–13.
- Harris, R.C., Rosenberg, L., Grace O'Rourke, M.E., 2014. Addressing the challenges of nursing student attrition. *J. Nurs. Educ.* 53 (1), 31–37.
- Hart, C.S., 2012. *Aspirations, Education & Social Justice—Applying Sen & Bourdieu*. Bloomsbury, London.
- Hope, S., 2013. Neo-aristotelian social justice: an unanswered question. *Res. Publica* 19 (2), 157–172.
- Kern, A., Montgomery, P., Mossey, S., Bailey, P., 2014. Undergraduate nursing students' belongingness in clinical learning environments: constructivist grounded theory. *J. Nurs. Educ. Pract.* 4 (3), 133–142.
- Kreber, C., Klampfleitner, M., 2013. Lecturers' and students' conceptions of authenticity in teaching and actual teacher actions and attributes students perceive as helpful. *High Educ.* 66 (4), 463–487.
- Lindseth, A., Norberg, A., 2004. A phenomenological hermeneutical method for researching lived experience. *Scand. J. Caring Sci.* 18 (2), 145–153.
- Lizzio, A., Wilson, K., Hadaway, V., 2007. University students' perceptions of a fair learning environment: a social justice perspective. *Assess. Eval. High Educ.* 32 (2), 195–213.
- Loftin, C., Newman, S.D., Gilden, G., Bond, M.L., Dumas, B.P., 2013. Moving toward greater diversity: a review of interventions to increase diversity in nursing education. *J. Transcult. Nurs.* 24 (4), 387–396.
- McCaig, M., McNay, L., Howatson, V., McCormack, J., McIntosh, G., Mathers, B., 2014. Do mental health nurse lecturers 'walk the talk', as well as 'talk the talk'? *Brit. J. Ment. Health Nurs.* 3 (5), 223–228.
- Mill, J.S., 2014. *Utilitarianism*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Miller, D., 1999. *Principles of Social Justice*. Harvard University Press, London.
- NMC, 2008. *Standards to support learning and assessment in practice*. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards-for-education-and-training/standards-to-support-learning-and-assessment-in-practice/>, Accessed date: 24 May 2018.
- Nozick, R., 1974. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. Blackwell Press, London.
- Nussbaum, M.C., 2012. *Creating Capabilities: the Human Development Approach*. Belknap, London.
- Ooms, A., Fergy, S., Marks-Maran, D., Burke, L., Sheehy, K., 2013. Providing learning support to nursing students: a study of two universities. *Nurse Educ. Pract.* 13 (2), 89–95.
- Ornstein, A.C., 2017. Social justice: history, purpose and meaning. *Society* 54 (6), 541–548.
- Preiss, J., 2017. Libertarian personal responsibility: on the ethics, practice, and American politics of personal responsibility. *Philos. Soc. Critic.* 43 (6), 621–645.
- Rawls, J., 1999. *A Theory of Justice/Revised Edition*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Ricoeur, P., 1991. Narrative identity. *Philos. Today* 35 (1), 73–81.
- Schneider, M., Preckel, F., 2017. Variables associated with achievement in higher education: a systematic review of meta-analyses. *Psychol. Bull.* 143 (6), 565–600.
- Sen, A., 2003. Development as capability expansion. In: Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko, Kumar, A.K. Shiva (Eds.), *Readings in Human Development*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Sen, A., 2005. Capabilities, lists and public reason: continuing the conversation. In: Agardwal, B., Humphries, J., Robeyns, I. (Eds.), *Amartya Sen's Work and Ideas – a Gender Perspective*. Routledge, London.
- Sen, A., 1999a. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Sen, A.K., 1999b. *Commodities and Capabilities*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Sen, A.K., 2009. *The Idea of Justice*. Allen Lane, London.
- Simpson, A., Reynolds, L., Light, I., Attenborough, J., 2008. Talking with the experts: evaluation of an online discussion forum involving mental health service users in the education of mental health nursing students. *Nurse Educ. Today* 28 (50), 633–640.
- Student minds, 2017. *Student voices*. Available at: http://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/170901_student_voices_report_final.pdf, Accessed date: 1 July 2018.
- Warwick, I., Husain, Y., Tharani, A., 2017. Learning environment and emotional well-being: a qualitative study of undergraduate nursing students. *Nurse Educ. Today* 59 (15), 82–87.
- Weaver, M., 2008. *Transformative Learning Support Models in Higher Education: Educating the Whole Student*. Facet, London.
- Wiklund, L., Lindholm, L., Lindström, U.Å., 2002. Hermeneutics and narration: a way to deal with qualitative data. *Nurs. Inq.* 9 (2), 114–125.
- Wilson, B.M., 2007. Social justice and neoliberal discourse. *SE. Geogr.* 47 (1), 97–100.
- Wray, J., Aspland, J., Barrett, D., Gardiner, E., 2017. Factors affecting the programme completion of pre-registration nursing students through a three year course: a retrospective cohort study. *Nurse Educ. Pract.* 24, 14–20.