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Opening the door to the student experience

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Opening the door to the student experience

Aim

This poster shares preliminary findings of evaluating this innovative method of opening up dialogue between personal tutors and personal students. This is part of a pilot study that is also aiming to learn about the student nurse experience by using emotional touchpoints and photoelicitation. Ethical approval has been granted for this project by the School of Health, Nursing and Midwifery Ethics Committee, UWS.

What is emotional touchpoints?

Emotional touchpoints is a way of interviewing that enables us to find out about the students' experience in a structured way (Dewar et al 2010). The 'touchpoints' refers to a particular point in the experience journey. Students were asked to select from a range of emotional words that sum up what an experience felt like, and then asked to explain/explore why they felt this way.

What is photoelicitation?

Photoelicitation uses photographs to stimulate dialogue (Dewar, 2012). The use of images can evoke emotion, and gain more or different types of information about the student experience (Hansen-Ketchum & Myrick, 2008). Students were asked to select an image (NHS Education for Scotland, 2012) that summed up their experience of using emotional touchpoints and discuss their choice.

Student Evaluations

Students were asked to select an image that summed up how they felt about the process of using emotional touchpoints. Open the door to find out what they said...



Student Evaluations



"It does really get you thinking, I really like it. It does make you feel quite emotional as well, thinking about everything; you normally just get on with things rather than think about it. It's good." (Year 3, student nurse)

"I know the picture looks complicated, but this process has helped me to focus my brain on a certain point. There is so much going on in there, but I think it's a good process because it helps me to just talk about that and not go off on a tangent." (Year 2, student nurse)



"Using the touchpoints has made me use my brain and think through reasons for thinking the way that I do about things. It was nice having such a wide selection of words to choose from; it did make me use my brain." (Year 2 student nurse)

"This is good because it makes you feel like you are supported and if you have got any worries you can talk it through with someone and it's quite relaxed and where you don't feel like you don't know what to say, so I think it's a good exercise." (Year 1, student nurse)

"... I felt like you really heard my real feelings. I think these are good; it gives you the opportunity to think. I would never have come in and said I felt privileged. I would have just said, yes it was good to do that. It was good to express my real emotions and you got to hear it and got a better understanding of it. It helped me say things I wouldn't have said. I would have just ignored them." (Year 1, student nurse)



"That was good to get things off my chest. The emotional touchpoints were really helpful; gets you talking about your emotions, how you are feeling, how it is going." (Year 2, student nurse)

"Good to get things off your chest and know that everybody else will probably feel the same, the pictures were good to use in class as it was good to see that everybody else was nervous about going to placement as well." (Year 1, student nurse)



"I found this [ET] really effective because I find it quite difficult to tell people how I feel about things and I tend to bottle things up. I found it easier with the words in front of me to pick them, rather than trying to think in my head what I'm trying to say." (Year 3, student nurse)

"I suppose it's a good platform to articulate what you want to say and get across. Sometimes you need direction and it allows you to voice your concerns or any negatives or positives you have. The [emotional] words are a good thing to be able to express yourself and having the words there allows you to, spark a feeling, a prompt, it's a good prompt." (Year 2, student nurse)

Lecturer Evaluations

Lecturers were asked to select an image that summed up how they felt about the process of using emotional touchpoints.

"This image really depicts how I feel about the process. It's completely enlightening and uplifting. I have been told by a number of students that they enjoy being part of this process because it really does make them think about their feelings. It's relationship building too. I enjoy the process and using touchpoints images too. It's just such a great technique to really get to know my students without having to probe too much. I very much value this process." (Lecturer)



"I could see the cogs working as you were talking so you would talk about something and it was like the different paths through the trees, you were reflecting on things as you went along and came up with all these solutions to things you were coming across." (Lecturer)



"This is what meetings with students were like beforehand. Now the focus is off me and onto them, allowing me to really listen. It was chaotic before but not now." (Lecturer)



"I found the touchpoints helpful to hear about your experience. You seemed to be very concise in summing your experiences. It was very clear how you felt about those experiences, where you've come from, starting the programme and how everything is coming together a bit. The touchpoints seemed to help you bring all that together and then how you are going to move forward. I can really see the joy in your face, how much you are enjoying this experience." (Lecturer)



Conclusions and next steps

Preliminary findings suggest that both students and lecturers perceive emotional touchpoints to be a valuable method in opening up dialogue between lecturers and students. It helps students to articulate their feelings in relation to an experience and students also stated they felt supported and listened to by their personal tutor. Lecturers explained how the process helped them have a meaningful conversation with students in a structured way and helped them connect with students. The project team's next aim is to analyse the data to explore the common themes that are important to individuals in relation to their experience of being a student nurse. It is envisioned that learning about what students value will enable lecturers and students to work together to ultimately enhance the student experience.

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