

Narrative Focus

One reason for sharing stories about our own experience is to help us make sense of it. Such reflection is often easier to do with the support of another person (or people) who can ask questions, challenge and notice things we may be unaware of. In the context of professional development, Action Learning provides a formal structure to enable this process: a story is told, explored and the learning (and actions) extracted.

But of course, this kind of reflective process can also take place when the story is *written*. Winter et al (1999) assert the value of the creative imagination in professional education. We've probably all been brought up in an education system which encouraged the domination of the left side of our brain while inhibiting the expression of our emotional and creativity selves. This book shows how powerful reflective writing can be in enabling professionals to learn and share knowledge about their practice.

As part of a project we were doing with Care Home staff (Promoting Nutrition in Care Homes) we used creative writing as a way of exploring the experience of those involved. Look at the example of a poem written by a Care Home manager to describe the challenge of introducing protected mealtimes. This was the first time she had attempted a piece of creative writing since primary school.

So how about writing a story about your practice? What's important to you? How do you know it's important? The narrative can take whatever form you like, in whatever style you like (e.g. fairy story, metaphor, realism, poem, diary entry, dialogue). Include images if you like. Please share it with us here on the blog.

Ref: Richard Winter, Alyson Buck & Paula Sobiechowska (1999)
Professional Experience & The Investigative Imagination: the ART of reflective writing. Routledge, London.

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