Qualitative Research Article Critical Appraisal

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**Overview of the Paper**

An overview of the topic of the study is described. The study provided a detailed description of the background and the objectives of the study. There was good delineation of the significance of the study. It described the origination and the concepts for the basis of the study. I chose to critique this article as I found the concept interesting. In my current position, I work to create simulations like the one the article discusses. When iniating these events you always have set learning objectives, but during and after you recognize that there are hidden objectives that the students learn from as well. As an instructor it’s easy to see, but I was interested to see how the students felt about these concepts as well.

**Problem Statement**

There was no clear description of the problem of the study. There was no problem statement clearly stated. The study had a slight ideological perscpetive, as it brought forward topics and learned objectives that were not originally recognized or the main objective of these simulations. It gave a voice to these hidden curriculum and concepts that were learned by students that were not openly taught (Peterson, Brown, Wingo, & Watts, 2018).

**Purpose of the Study**

 The purpose of this study was to evaluate if students who performed a simulation left gaining more knowledge other then the learning objectives it set out to accomplish (Peterson, et. al., 2018). The purpose of this study was very clearly introduced and stated in the article.

**Research Questions**

 There was no research question specifically stated in the study, but the qualitative methodology was represented in the abstract. The qualitative data analysis brought forward two themes that were not specified in the learning objectives including: interprofessional role clarity and self-efficiency. Through the hidden curriculum, it brought forward students’ experiences of unstated normal and values throughout the simulation content.

**Support of Literature**

 In reviewing the literature, the initial goal of the study was to discover the learning, other than the predetermined learning objectives. The literature was able to support the need for this study by discovering three themes that emerged that were not part of the initial learning objectives. The purpose of the study was recognizing these unstated norms and values, this was accomplished as evidenced by the recognized results. The purpose of this study was congruent with the review of the literature and was supported by the validity of the study.

**Qualitative Research**

 Qualitative research is developed to focus on the understanding of the lived human experience, typically qualitative materials are obtained through careful collection and analysis that are narrative and subjective (Polit & Beck, 2017). A qualitative research methodology fits well with the overall purpose of conducting this study, as the purpose was to determine if students left with increased knowledge. The students were asked to provide information that they learned, which focuses on their experience in a narrative and subjective manner.

**Type of Qualitative Research Design**

 This research design consisted of data collected through anonymous surveys to create a qualitative data analysis to provide results. By pulling data from a qualitative data analysis the researcher was able to recognize the two themes that were not part of the predetermined learning objectives (Peterson, et. al., 2018). The research question for this study was to recognize other learning opportunities, by using qualitative data analysis the research design was facilitated to allow the researcher to answer these questions.

**Sample for the Study**

 After debriefing the simulations, the students were given anonymous surveys. These students consisted of undergraduate and professional programs from seven health care professions. The sampling strategy used for this study was to have all learners who completed a simulation event to complete the survey as part of their evaluation (Peterson, et. al., 2018). The evaluation was approved by the institutional review board. Students did have the opportunity to opt out, the researchers were not allowed to use this data. The eligibility encompassed the students who participated in the simulation event.

**Sampling Technique**

 The students were recruited based on their required activity for the students. The students that participated in this study consisted of nursing, clinical laboratory science (CLS), respiratory therapy, and nuclear medicine technology (NMT) (Peterson, et. al., 2018). These students had participated in the simulation based on their required activity for their program. The sample composition and size reflected the qualitative tradition of the study by pulling students from multiple disciplines. There was no indication that data saturation had been achieved.

**Key Characteristics of the Study**

 The key characteristics of this study population are that they all were either in undergraduate or graduate programs participating in a simulation. There was rich description of the participants describing which year and program they were associated with. The students consisted of second-year physician assistant students, second-year respiratory therapy students, first-year accelerated master's in nursing pathway students, fourth-year accelerated master's in nursing, fourth-year medical students and residents, second-year CLS students, second-year physical therapy students and second-year NMT students (Peterson, et al., 2018). The context provided about the participants did allow for an assessment of the transferability of the study’s findings.

**Data Collection Procedures**

 The description of the data collection provided enough information as it described when the surveys were given out, what students listed on the survey, what the students did with the surveys when they were done, and how the researchers collate and organized they surveys (Peterson, et al., 2018). This data collection procedure description was clear.

**Data Collection Instrument**

 The instrument used for this study was anonymous surveys. It was not completed with an interview but did have specific questions for the students. The questions included them to list their professions and two things that they had learned from the simulation. The questions were appropriate and comprehensive to the purpose of the study. The wording of the questions minimized the risk of biases to allow students to qualitatively answer the question of what they had learned. It also encouraged responses that encouraged them to reflect on their own learning experience vs multiple choices to limit their response. The open-ended questions allowed for rich and full responses.

**Data Collection**

 The modality of data collection was appropriate for the qualitative research methodology, as it created a question that students had to answer after reflecting on their learning experience. By not presented multiple choices or ratings, it allowed students to openly express their opinions. It didn’t specifically explain timeframes for the researchers to complete the fieldwork or collect the research data.

**Recording of Data**

 The study was not completed via audio-recording or transcribed. The steps that were taken to ensure the accuracy of the data included collecting the surveys immediately following the debriefing. The student responses were sorted into an Excel spreadsheet and divided by data, profession, and group. Two researchers coded them and then the entire team met to compare codes and discuss the themes and subthemes. No other steps were taken to ensure the accuracy of the data.

**Observational Data and Field Notes**

 There was no additional observational data or field notes recorded or documented.

**Data Analysis**

 The data analysis as stated above was completed by the researchers taking the survey results and transcribing them into the Excel spreadsheets using the QSR NVivo 11 software ( ). The data was then coded by two and two of the researchers uploaded the comments and coded them.

The researchers transcribed the responses into an Excel spreadsheet to sort by date, profession, and group. The researchers uploaded comments and coded them into themes and subthemes to create a comparative method (Peterson, et al., 2018). These themes and subthemes were then compared amongst the participant groups.

 The report adequately described the process by which the actual analysis was performed. It allowed the entire research team to compare codes and discuss themes and subthemes, which were also compared across participant groups.

 The completeness and accuracy of the data were not stated in the study. The study also did not state how many people were involved in the analysis of the data. It only included that there were coders and researchers involved in the transcribing and coding.

**Specific Findings of the Study**

 From the qualitative data analysis, there were a total of three themes that were recognized that were not included in the original learning objectives. These three objectives included: IP role clarity, trust, and self-efficiency. These specific findings were presented in the study by these three subthemes.

 The data analysis did yield a meaningful and insightful picture of the phenomenon under the study. The objective of the original simulations was to determine if these students were able to recognize and manage the care of a deteriorating intensive care patient, as well as use team dynamics and communication. From that study emerged the three additional sub-themes and was presented in a clear manner of the importance of the objectives of the study that were not initially the objectives. The displayed the subthemes well and included specific examples.

 The category scheme for this study was described as themes that emerged from the learning objectives that were not included in the original simulation. From those themes, subthemes were also recognized. These were categorized to facilitate the analysis by the themes.

 The three large themes that emerged were role clarity, trust, and self-efficiency. The large theme that emerged from the analysis of data was that students specifically worked better if they understood their scope and had role clarity. They recognized that introduction and identification helped establish the role clarity. They also recognized that through the simulation activity they developed trust within each of their roles. The third theme was self-efficiency, where they recognized their own self-efficiency during their performances. From self-efficiency, two subthemes evolved including confidence and anxiety or stress.

 In the results, the researchers pulled excerpts from the data and placed them appropriately with each major theme. The themes capture the meaning of the narratives and were appropriately displayed to represent the results. These quotes fit the findings they intended to illustrate within each theme. The data is displayed in a manner that allows the reader to verify the researcher’s conclusions by showing the themes in each category along with quotes for each specific theme identified. There was no map, model, or diagram used to display the processes. The overall presentation of the findings was presented in a narrative form but was logical, consistent and easy to follow.

**Understanding of the Topic**

 The writing in the article effectively promoted understanding but stating the background, results, and discussion in the appropriate order with good flow. As a reader, I was drawn into the experience as the background presented information of the specific simulation and presented the hidden curriculum lead in to captivate my attention. The phenomenon was adequately described by introducing the predetermined learning objectives and to the goal of learning about the hidden curriculum. The study provided a clear picture of the students involved, the initial learning objectives and the themes that emerged that were not included in the initial learning objectives. It presented a clear understanding of the social world from describing the world clarity, the trust the students had and the self-efficacy that was recognized from their social and emotional perspectives.

**Implications for the Study**

The implications for the research was created due to the recognition of identified lack of studies that focus on hidden curriculum during simulations (Peterson, et al., 2018). The study has a lot of potential to contribute to the nursing profession, as education is extremely important within the practice. If additional education can be recognized within already developed education it’s only beneficial to nurses. The results of the study are relevant to all persons that may go through any simulation, whether similar or even different situations. The results can be applied to clinical practice, because there is always hidden curriculum in everything that nurses do. Nurses learn through context not directly given to them every day. The results of this study allow me to recognize that within all areas of where I work there are take always that may not be obvious, but remain very beneficial. Sometimes we must look for what we learned, and not just check off the boxes.

**References**

Peterson, D. T., Brown, M., Wingo, N., & Watts, P. (2018). Exploring Hidden Curricula in an

Interprofessional Intensive Care Unit Simulation. *Clinical Simulation in Nursing*, *22*, 22–25. https://doi-org.ezproxy.umary.edu/10.1016/j.ecns.2018.07.001

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