



Learning communities of practice in care, a study into contributing factors of success for professional learning in daily practice

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ABSTRACT

Lifelong learning is necessary for nurses and caregivers to provide good, person-centred care. To facilitate such learning and embed it into regular working processes, learning communities of practice are considered promising. However, there is little insight into how learning networks contribute to learning exactly and what factors of success can be found. The study is part of a ZonMw-funded research project 'LeerSaam Noord' in the Netherlands, which aims to strengthen the professionalization of the nursing workforce and promote person-centred care. We describe what learning in learning communities looks like in four different healthcare contexts during the start-up phase of the research project. A thematic analysis of eleven patient case-discussions in these learning communities took place. In addition, quantitative measurements on learning climate, reciprocity behavior, and perceptions of professional attitude and autonomy, were used to underpin findings. Reflective questioning and discussing professional dilemma's i.e. patient cases in which conflicting interests between the patient and the professional emerge, are of importance for successful learning. Strikingly, there seems to be an inner conflict on the part of the professional between what is seen as the patients' self management and their own professional responsibility.

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Figures and tables



Fig. 1. The four phases of learning (after Maslow).

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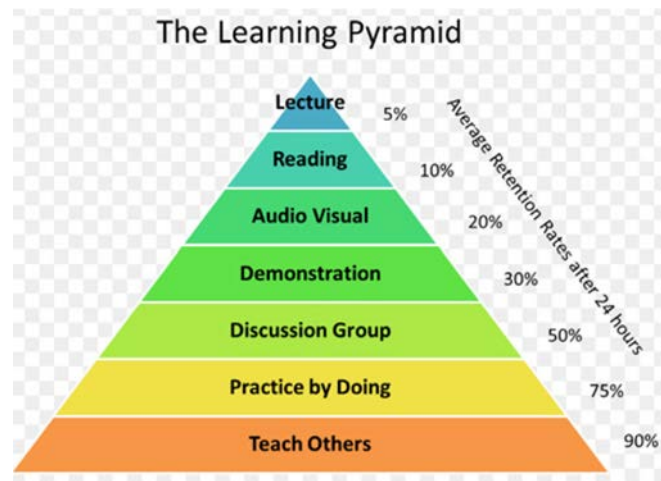


Fig. 2. The learning pyramid (National Training Laboratories, Bethel Maine).



Fig. 3. Support/safety versus challenge.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Margreet van der Cingel: Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Funding acquisition. **Heleen Reinders-Messelink:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing – review & editing, Supervision. **Gonda Stallinga:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Funding acquisition.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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Declaration of interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Further reading

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Dr. Margreet van der Cingel is Professor of Nursing Leadership & Research at the University of applied sciences NHL Stenden in the Netherlands. She is a registered nurse, nurse scientist (MscN) and holds a PhD in philosophy on compassion in nursing practice, a guiding principle in quality of care. She started her career as cardiac care nurse. During and after her master study she had various jobs in nursing staff and management positions. She made a career move to teaching as a college professor and worked as a senior researcher and associate professor at several research groups, contributed to the national curriculum for nursing and supervised a research programme on person-centred care. During her career she has built up expertise in qualitative and design research; participatory action research; person centred care, care ethics and compassion, and professional nursing leadership. Since February 2018, she runs her own research programme. The professorship is a jointed collaboration with a regional top clinical hospital. The research focus is on the empowerment of nursing, nursing leadership related to person-centred care and patient outcomes, learning communities of practice of nurses and compassion as a motivational factor within the nursing identity. She is particularly interested in care ethics and moral aspects of nursing leadership and its effects on professional care relationships. She is also President of the Dutch Rho Chi at-Large Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International since 2018.



Dr. Heleen Reinders-Messelink is a human movement scientist (PhD graduated in 2000), at work as senior researcher at Rehabilitation Center 'Revalidatie Friesland' in the Netherlands. She has a broad interest in biopsychosocial functioning of patients and is committed to improve quality of care by performing research. She works as a senior researcher at the subsidized ZonMw research project 'LeerSaam Noord' at NHL Stenden Applied university since 2019. This action research project aims to improve Person-Centred Care and functioning of patients by nurses in communities of practice using the action learning method.



Dr. Gonda Stallinga is a nurse and health scientist, working as a senior researcher in the University Medical Centre Groningen, department of Health Sciences, section Nursing Science. She is an expert in using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) and member of the WHO-Family of International Classifications Collaborating Center (WHO-FIC-CC) in the Netherlands (RIVM). She is involved in an international partnership of the WHO-FIC, which aims to develop a mobile application for using the ICF and chair of the PPP (Public Private Partnership) Health & Wellbeing. She works more than 25 years as a researcher and trainer in health care change projects particularly on the paradigm shift from a disease-based, biomedical focus towards a broader biopsychosocial focus using the concept of functioning as central theme.

She can call herself a driven nursing researcher who strives to improve both health care and nursing by making 'functioning' (defined in the ICF) as a focus of health care and the identity of the nursing profession.