

07.7.2025

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Title

Images of a new sub-culture in the Australian university : perceptions of non-nurse academics of the discipline of nursing

Publication year

2002

Source/Footnote

In: Higher education. - 43 (2002) 2, S. 1, S. 157 - 172

Inventory number

14066

Keywords

Ausland : Australien : Studenten, Studium, Lehre ; Prüfungsordnungen : Gesundheitswesen

Abstract

It is crucial to the development and credibility of the nursing profession that its knowledge base be recognised as legitimate scholarly endeavour by established members of academia. For that reason, this report concerns examination of the attitudes and values of a group of non-nurse academics employed in universities in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia and the degree to which they view nursing as an epistemic entity. Perceptions are considered within the dual contexts of recent major changes in nursing education and in academia. Naturalistic Inquiry, informed by a hermeneutic attitude, is employed as a heuristic to examine the sub-culture of nursing within the broad culture of academia. Analysis of extensive interview data provided by the contemplation of study participants provides emergent themes. Several metaphors are chosen to explicate the findings that nursing is largely perceived to be nebulous, atheoretical, and subservient to the medical profession. Implications are discussed and recommendations are made with the view to encourage modernisation of the university through improving internal communication and challenging traditional models of operations within

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