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Patrick A. Crookes

University of Wollongong, pcrookes@uow.edu.au

Fabienne Else

University of Wollongong, fce292@uowmail.edu.au

Peter Lewis

University of Queensland

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Abstract

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Design: A systematic search of databases using key terms was utilised with a particular focus to papers emerging from nursing disciplines. **Data sources:** The databases MEDLINE, CINAHL, ERIC, Web of Science and Google Scholar were searched for literature from 2005 to 2018 inclusive.

Review methods:

An initial examination of titles and abstracts by the authors resulted in the retrieval of 45 papers and following the application of exclusion criteria, 25 papers were included. **Results and conclusions:**

Signature pedagogy literature is a developing area and scholars both in nursing disciplines and beyond, often fail to develop on Lee Shulman's framework in their identification of signature pedagogies, resulting in poorly adapted conceptions. Ways forward include closer linking with the original signature pedagogy framework in research, the development of robust evidence-based signature pedagogy identification processes in disciplines and a reconsideration of the esteem of scholars performing signature pedagogies within disciplines.

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Signature pedagogies: An integrative review of an emerging concept in nursing education

Patrick A. Crookes^{a,b,c,d}, Fabienne C. Else^e and Peter A. Lewis^f

^a School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Canberra, Australia

^b University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

^c University of Stavanger, Norway

^d University of Wollongong, Australia

^e School of Law, University of Wollongong, Australia

^f School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work, University of Queensland, Australia

Abstract

Objectives: The aim of this paper is to provide an integrative review of the literature associated with signature pedagogies and to discover what lessons have been learned about unearthing, articulating and applying signature pedagogies across a variety of disciplines, but particularly with respect to nursing. **Design:** A systematic search of databases using key terms was utilised with a particular focus to papers emerging from nursing disciplines. **Data Sources:** The databases MEDLINE, CINAHL, ERIC, Web of Science and Google Scholar were searched for literature from 2005-2018 inclusive. **Review Methods:** An initial examination of titles and abstracts by the authors resulted in the retrieval of 45 papers and following the application of exclusion criteria, 25 papers were included. **Results and conclusions:** Signature pedagogy literature is a developing area and scholars both in nursing disciplines and beyond, often fail to develop on Lee Shulman's framework in their identification of signature pedagogies, resulting in poorly adapted conceptions. Ways forward include closer linking with the original signature pedagogy framework in research, the development of robust evidence-based signature pedagogy identification processes in disciplines and a reconsideration of the esteem of scholars performing signature pedagogies within disciplines.

Keywords: Signature pedagogies, nursing education, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, nursing literature

Introduction

For most professions there are characteristic approaches to teaching and learning which tend to predominate the student's preparation for their professional practice – Shulman identifies these as signature pedagogies (Shulman, 2005a, 52). It should be recognised, however, that signature pedagogies are more than the common teaching practices used to educate a profession or discipline. Signature pedagogies are the key teaching and learning experiences which have facilitated students to think and act in the same manner as the experts in their area of future practice. Signature pedagogies “implicitly define what counts as knowledge in a field and how things become known. They define how knowledge is analyzed, criticized, accepted or discarded. They define the functions of expertise in a field, the locus of authority, and the privileges of rank and standing” (Shulman, 2005a, 54). If the signature pedagogies for a discipline are well understood, they would provide both an understanding of the means by

which learning takes place for the discipline and also assist with future curricula development and the formulation of appropriate learning outcomes and assessment strategies best suited to that discipline.

A focal concern for nursing scholars involved in SOTL (Crookes et al., 2013) and among practicing nurses (Brown and Crookes, 2016) has been the preparation of undergraduate nursing students for their future professional practice. To further enhance undergraduate instruction, nursing education may benefit from consideration and recognition of signature pedagogies associated with the discipline. An understanding of nursing signature pedagogies would likely assist development of future curricula as well as the formulation of appropriate learning outcomes and assessment strategies best suited to nursing. The primary aim of this paper therefore, is to provide an integrative review of the literature associated with the term 'signature pedagogies' and to discover what lessons have been learned about unearthing, articulating and applying signature pedagogies across a variety of disciplines, but particularly with respect to nursing.

Signature pedagogy defined

The term 'signature pedagogies' was first used by Lee Shulman in his paper *Signature Pedagogies in Professions* (Shulman, 2005a). He wrote:

These are types of teaching that organize the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions. In these signature pedagogies, the novices are instructed in critical aspects of the three fundamental dimensions of professional work – to *think*, to *perform*, and to *act with integrity* (Shulman, 2005a, 52).

Examining how different professions develop as they do, Shulman argued that one must observe the nurseries of such professions (Shulman, 2005a, 52), which in many cases are university courses. According to Shulman, signature pedagogies have three dimensions: a surface structure, a deep structure and an implicit structure. The surface structure 'consists of concrete, operational acts of teaching and learning, of showing and demonstrating, of questioning and answering, of interacting and withholding, of approaching and withdrawing' (Shulman, 2005a, 54). Beyond this surface structure, exists the deep structure which is 'a set of assumptions about how best to impart a certain body of knowledge and know how' (Shulman, 2005a, 55). Finally, signature pedagogies contain an implicit structure which is 'a moral dimension that comprises a set of beliefs about professional attitudes, values and dispositions' (Shulman, 2005a, 55). Furthermore, the key aspect of the signature pedagogy relates to its pervasiveness. A pedagogy can be recognised as the 'signature' pedagogy of a profession not because it is unique to individual institutions, but because it can be found in almost every institution in which that profession is taught. Signature pedagogies define what counts as knowledge and the processes by which knowledge is 'analyzed, criticized, accepted or discarded' (Shulman, 2005a, 54). Signature pedagogies are routine and simplify the process of professional learning because once they are 'learned and internalized, we don't have to think about them; we can think with them' (Shulman, 2005a, 56).

Signature pedagogy genesis

In *Signature pedagogies in professions* (2005a), Shulman primarily focused on three professions: law, medicine and the clergy. He argued that people intuitively know what signature pedagogies are, even if they do not term them as such. He gives the example of the ‘quasi-Socratic’ method often portrayed as a teaching approach in law, and the phenomenon of bedside teaching in relation to the teaching of medicine (Shulman, 2005a, 52). In examining why these signature pedagogies tend to emerge more specifically in relation to professions, Shulman expressed a belief that this derives from the challenge that professional schools face – ‘their pedagogies must measure up to the standards not just of the academy, but also of the particular profession’ (Shulman, 2005a, 53).

In his article *Pedagogies of Uncertainty* (2005b), Shulman extended upon the notion of signature pedagogies, talking more explicitly about the emergence of this concept from a Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching research program on professional education. The Carnegie Foundation conducted a ten-year research project on how lawyers, engineers, clergy, school teachers, nurses and physicians were taught and how they learn (Shulman, 2005b, 19). Shulman visited schools and teaching sites in order to observe how this happened for professionals in these disciplines. In observing clinical rounds at a teaching hospital, for example, he noted that there was an element of uncertainty in the inherent pedagogical style of the rounds, for teachers and students. He wrote:

The content of instruction is uncertain. Because the teacher doesn’t always know what the students will report until she hears them, she has to deal with substantive uncertainty even though the learning protocol is fixed in ritual. This is an important point: it’s routine, yet never the same; it’s habitual, but pervaded by uncertainty (Shulman, 2005b, 20).

In *Pedagogies of Uncertainty*, Shulman claims that another universal feature of signature pedagogies is the way they are able to make students feel deeply engaged, visible and even vulnerable (2005b). Unlike other forms of learning that may allow students a degree of ‘invisibility’, signature pedagogies force students to be interactive and therefore accountable, both to the teacher and to their fellow students (Shulman, 2005b, 22). Shulman believes this process breeds a much higher affective level in class as students are more anxious through their engagement given this accountable style of pedagogy.

In later publications Shulman noted how signature pedagogies appear within professional education at different institutions. When discussing a site visit to The City College of New York Law School and the New York University Law School, Shulman stated that ‘despite their differences, to learn to think like a lawyer meant the same thing in both places. Potential lawyers in the two different places may have wanted to practice in different settings for different purposes, but learning to think like a lawyer was the same’ (Falk, 2006, 79). This reiterates again the nature of Shulman’s conception of signature pedagogies – they are the ‘signature’ of the disciplines educational process and they remain the same across different institutions given they exist purposefully to help individuals think, perform and act with integrity in their discipline. Further, it also reinforces that signature pedagogies are not so much teaching and learning practices, but rather a teaching and/or learning experience which acquaints a student with the virtues and expectancies particular to their future discipline.

Methodology

A literature search was conducted using databases MEDLINE, CINAHL, ERIC, Web of Science and Google Scholar from 2005-2018 inclusive. Keywords, 'signature pedagogies' and truncated terms 'signature pedagog*' were utilised. Articles were also identified from reference lists of articles accessed through the databases to provide greater coverage. The initial search identified 45 articles. As this paper aimed to examine discipline approaches to signature pedagogies, with an emphasis on the nursing discipline, articles were excluded on the basis of failing to develop as a field (that is, only one paper was available in the field which was evidenced in Latin studies, social studies, public administration and engineering). After careful reading the 45 articles were reduced to 25 discipline specific articles and three foundational texts (related to Schulman's signature pedagogy theory). These 25 papers were examined in detail with a focus on how they identified and applied signature pedagogies within their own fields.

Findings: Signature Pedagogies within Disciplines

Signature Pedagogies in Doctoral Education

Doctoral education was the first field to clearly identify a signature pedagogy after Shulman had introduced the term to the academic literature. While some scholars had already made early attempts at examining signature pedagogies in the fields of nursing (Ironsides, 2006) and clinical laboratory science education (Woeste and Barham, 2006), Chris Golde was the first to comprehensively examine signature pedagogies in a field in the article *Signature Pedagogies in Doctoral Education: Are They Adaptable for the Preparation of education Researchers?* (Golde, 2007). Golde described two practices he believed could be considered signature pedagogies of doctoral education: one in neuroscience (the Journal Club) and one in English studies (the List which is the group of works or texts which form the basis of the comprehensive or qualifying examination for the English studies doctoral student) (Golde, 2007). Golde claimed that these styles of teaching are routinely found in these doctoral fields and neighbouring disciplines but they are not found in other fields. Golde notes that their identification methods were largely observational, in that they and their colleagues 'heard faculty and students make passing reference to practices in their doctoral programs that all others from the field immediately understood; but these were practices with which the CID team was unfamiliar' (Golde, 2007, 345).

When discussing how the 'Journal Club' and 'the List' signature pedagogies might be adapted into the field of education, Golde warned that wholesale adoption would likely end poorly if the practices were not firstly modified for the field. For example, unlike neuroscience, education is not considered to be an area of "fast science", therefore a 'Journal Club' in education might be better suited to focussing on 'key debates in a narrowly defined area, classical works in education, or provocative articles from other disciplines' (Golde, 2007, 349). The signature pedagogy of 'The List' would also require adaption, as this process often isolates researchers, which would be detrimental to education researchers who often co-author articles (Golde, 2007, 349). These issues illustrate that people in one field need to be cautious when suggesting adopting or adapting signature pedagogies in another.

After Golde's article, authors in the fields of doctoral education and educational leadership continued to pick up the concept of signature pedagogies. Black and Murtadha (2007) for example, took a more complex approach to signature pedagogies in discussing educational leadership. Instead of discussing what the signature pedagogy of educational leadership is, Black and Murtadha questioned whether there *should* be a signature pedagogy for educational leadership, and, if so, what values such a pedagogy should embrace? Ultimately, they proposed a signature pedagogy model for this field, which includes ongoing critical reflective enquiry, collaborative inquiry internships, complex case studies, institutes for valued public scholarship, continuous assessment, structuring preparation over time, licensure, developing public intellectuality and advancing human care systems. While this might be seen as an appropriate model for educational leadership, it is ill-suited to the term 'signature pedagogy', as it appears to fall more generally under the category of 'pedagogy'(ies) and the authors have arguably lost the 'signature' aspect of Shulman's concept, being that it is an aspect of pedagogy that should be intuitive to that profession as the most appropriate way to educate in their particular field, and further, that it should be ubiquitous. While this model stands as a possibility for underpinning the development of educational leaders, its complexity and broad nature make it difficult to accept as a signature pedagogy. This signature pedagogy model is perhaps best described in the author's own terms 'as a set of relationships that link relevant features of leadership preparation and represent events and contextual interactions in an illustrative way' (Black and Murtadha, 2007, 21).

Signature Pedagogies in Social Work

The next discipline to explore the concept of signature pedagogies in any unified way was social work education. In 2008 the United States Council of Social Work Education identified field work as the signature pedagogy of social work education in its Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (Council of Social Work Education, 2008). In their 2010 article *Field education as the signature pedagogy of social work education*, Wayne et al (Wayne et al., 2010) argue that despite applying Shulman's criteria to field work in social work education and identifying areas that fit within the definition (such as its pervasiveness and routine), the pedagogy held few components of a signature pedagogy beyond that (such as the fostering of social work habits and rituals, high student visibility and student-to-student accountability) (Wayne et al., 2010, 333). However, the authors were not opposed to the introduction of signature pedagogy within professional standards, writing 'The introduction of signature pedagogy into the social work education lexicon can serve as a stimulus and guide for change that would help the profession meet the challenges it faces' (Wayne et al., 2010, 334). Others however, have since supported the notion of field work as the signature pedagogy in social work (Boitel and Fromm, 2014; Lyter, 2012; Poole et al., 2013), with some going so far as to outline potential implementation strategies for operationalizing this signature pedagogy into the curriculum (Holosko and Skinner, 2015). Others remain unconvinced and question the evidence that field work is the signature pedagogy of social work (Holden et al., 2011) and question the validity of defining the signature pedagogy in such exclusive terms (Earls Larrison and Korr, 2013).

In 2013, Earls et al argued against the United States Council of Social Work Education's stand on field work as the signature pedagogy of social work in their article *Does Social Work Have a Signature Pedagogy?* (Earls Larrison and Korr, 2013). In lieu of this pedagogy, Earls' group articulated a complex framework of social work education. However, their framework is recognised as confusing as they support Wayne et al's (Wayne et al., 2010) argument that educators frequently utilise more than a single pedagogical method or philosophical approach (Earls Larrison and Korr, 2013, 201). Earls et al ultimately argue that field education, although necessary to social work education, is not a sufficient signature pedagogy, and that instead the signature pedagogy lies in 'all learning exchanges in our implicit and explicit curricula, and in both the classroom and the field' (Earls Larrison and Korr, 2013, 204). Whilst this may well be true, such a view does seem to ignore somewhat, the nature and intent of signature pedagogies and action based upon them. The authors of the current paper strongly doubt that Shulman was arguing that signature pedagogies are the **only** pedagogies that are important in course delivery in professional preparation programs. When addressing signature pedagogies, Schulman appears intent on identifying the pedagogies which appear to be most crucial in developing the 'three fundamental dimensions of professional work – to *think*, to *perform*, and to *act with integrity*' (Shulman, 2005a, 52).

Considering the literature examined, social work signature pedagogies demonstrate the importance of field work – a pedagogy which is likely to resonate with a practice-based profession such as nursing. The literature around signature pedagogies in doctoral studies, however, clearly identifies that wholesale adoption of a signature pedagogy from another discipline would likely end poorly if the practices were not firstly modified for the new field. With nurse academics beginning to show an interest in the concept of signature pedagogies, the potential value they may hold for nursing curricula and nursing scholarship more broadly appears worth exploring.

Signature Pedagogy in Nursing

Beyond doctoral education and social work, signature pedagogies have seen only fragmented identification and use across other disciplines such as engineering (Lucas and Hanson, 2016), creative arts (Crowther, 2013), the humanities (Benmayor, 2008; Calder, 2006), public administration (Abel, 2009) and the sciences (Woeste and Barham, 2006). Similarly, there has been limited exploration of signature pedagogies in nursing. Signature pedagogies in nursing were mentioned as early as 2006 in a *Nursing Education Perspectives* article. Lillian Bargagliotti discussed developments that emerged from that year's National League for Nursing Education Summit, and took particular note of Dr Patricia Benner's presentation of her findings from the Carnegie Foundation's work on signature pedagogies for nursing (Bargagliotti, 2006). The following year Benner and Sutphen published an article entitled *Learning Across the Professions: The Clergy, a Case in Point* that explored the similarities and differences between the pedagogical approaches and goals of nursing and clergy student preparation (Benner and Sutphen, 2007). The authors outlined their research on signature pedagogies, noting they had visited nine schools of nursing in the US and conducted interviews with 'administrators, faculty, students, course coordinators, and clinical instructors' (Benner and Sutphen, 2007, 103). A primary resource that the authors used to compare their nursing

pedagogy findings to that of the clergy was a publication by Foster et al. entitled *Educating clergy: Teaching practices and pastoral imagination* (2005). Throughout the article, the authors argue that the four pedagogical domains outlined by Foster et al., (Pedagogies of Interpretation, Pedagogies of Formation, Pedagogies of Contextualization and Pedagogies of Performance) can be usefully adapted as a more 'interpretive, historical, and contextual approach to reasoning' (Benner and Sutphen, 2007, 103) within nursing student preparation. Despite this, they did not explicitly discuss Shulman's notions of the signature pedagogy, seeming to prefer a broader and less discernible outline of the concept. However, it should be recognised these ideas did engage with the original definition that Shulman had of signature pedagogies. Given that professional practice can be classified under the Pedagogy of Formation, it should be recognised the authors discussed the importance of thought processes in the pedagogy of interpretation, values and belief. These aspects are particularly important if, as the authors and others speculate, there is a current climate of crisis and breakdown in professions, with increased commercialism and a degradation of ethical behaviour becoming more apparent (Benner and Sutphen, 2007, 105; Sullivan, 2004).

Doctoral education in nursing was also one of the first areas to significantly examine signature pedagogies in the field. In a 2006 article entitled *Reforming Doctoral Curricula in Nursing: Creating Multiparadigmatic, Multipedagogical Researchers*, Pamela Ironside briefly considered signature pedagogies and how they might be applied to doctoral nursing education. She makes reference to two signature pedagogies within nursing: writing 'Conventional pedagogy (outcomes-based or competency-based education) is a signature pedagogy in nursing' and then later stating 'in nursing, Narrative Pedagogy is a signature pedagogy, developed from nursing research for nursing education' (Ironside, 2006, 51). Interestingly this seems to accord with data from an earlier study undertaken by members of the author team for the current paper; that being self-reported data from nurse educators telling us that 'story-telling' is one of the main techniques they use to make their teaching meaningful and engaging for their students (Crookes et al., 2013). Ironside further argues that instead of trying to perpetuate a single pedagogy, scholars should instead utilise multiple pedagogies and paradigms that 'further develop signature pedagogies that reflect the complexity of nursing practice and education and that help teachers prepare students to respond to diverse, multifaceted, and evolving health care trends and issues' (Ironside, 2006, 51). Ironside's article does not explore how a complex multi-pedagogical approach could be incorporated into nursing education. This article also, again, reflects a perception that if one is to accept one or more approaches to pedagogy in a discipline as being 'signature', then *ipso facto*, other pedagogies become redundant. The authors of the current paper strongly refute that. The authors do agree, however, that research and subsequent discussion regarding signature pedagogies for particular disciplines, will surely lead to more thoughtfully, evidence-based curricula in those disciplines.

Benner, Sutphen and Leonard (Benner et al., 2009) in their book *Educating Nurses: A Call for Radical Transformation* identified 'situated coaching' as a signature pedagogy of nursing. They wrote:

Nursing educators excel at teaching by example and with situated coaching in the clinical area, or the coaching of students in particular clinical situations. Currently students' integrative learning occurs mostly through situated coaching and from learning through the experience of practice, where students learn from other practitioners, patients, and their families. Thus we identify situated coaching as a signature pedagogy in nursing education. (Benner et al., 2009, 30)

The authors suggest there are three broad apprenticeships in the professional development of nursing students: '(1) an apprenticeship to learn nursing knowledge and science, (2) a practical apprenticeship to learn skill know-how and clinical reasoning, and (3) an apprenticeship of ethical comportment and formation' (Benner et al., 2009, 25). These 'apprenticeships' appear to resound strongly with elements of Shulman's signature pedagogy theory, in that they teach nursing students, to think like nurses, to perform like nurses and to act with the integrity expected of the nursing profession. It could be argued these authors have made the most important contribution to the scholarship on nursing and signature pedagogies thus far, as they appear to fully comprehend the basis of Shulman's theory. Furthermore, they seem to be asserting that a/the signature pedagogy in nursing is well-supervised clinical practicum.

More recently, Long et al. (Long et al., 2012) identified a number of signature pedagogies they believed were identified in nursing. These include: teaching clinical science and professionalism by adapting liberal arts pedagogies, clinical practicums, clinical simulation, exploring cultural diversity through study-abroad experiences, and NCLEX-RN Preparation Pedagogies (Long et al., 2012, 182). In discussing these signature pedagogies, the authors outline a number of improvements that could be made in the ways they are taught. While the authors acknowledge 'Signature pedagogies for nursing education, therefore, have to teach health science knowledge, clinical practice skills, and critical thinking, while inculcating an ethos of compassionate and ethical behaviour' (Long et al., 2012, 172), they do not illustrate how these signature pedagogies meet Shulman's criteria, nor how they identified them within the field.

Among other criteria, Shulman argues that a signature pedagogy contains an implicit structure which is a moral dimension that comprises a set of beliefs about professional attitudes, values and dispositions. Of the signature pedagogies discussed in nursing, those which fit Shulman's criteria are narrative pedagogy (Ironside, 2006, 51) and situated coaching or well supervised clinical practicum (Benner et al., 2009, 25). As a practice-based discipline it is not surprising that signature pedagogies which instruct the student as to what it is to be a nurse include narrative pedagogy and story-telling in theory, and well-facilitated practicum when knowledge is translated from theory into practice. Further, these identified nursing signature pedagogies exemplify Shulman's thinking as rather than focus on a teaching methodology which is a vehicle for content delivery, they embrace how it is that nursing students learn to be nurses.

Discussion

With only four papers examining signature pedagogies in nursing in any detail, this review has identified that signature pedagogies in the field of nursing appear largely unexplored. Although the concept of signature pedagogies has only been principally discussed across the past decade, the fact that nursing has so scarcely examined the potential for signature pedagogies highlights

the wider problem of the general lack of SoTL research that occurs in nursing education (Benner et al., 2009). All four papers in the nursing scholarship identified different approaches to signature pedagogies, with little correlation. Benner and Sutphen outlined a broad conception of signature pedagogies in their earlier work (Benner and Sutphen, 2007), before moving onto a more refined approach in later publications, latterly arguing for ‘situated coaching’ as the signature pedagogy of nursing (Benner et al., 2009). Ironside conversely argued that outcomes or competency-based education is the signature pedagogy of nursing, and that narrative pedagogy could also be considered as a ‘new’ signature pedagogy (Ironside, 2006). Meanwhile, in contrast to the general consensus of picking one or two signature pedagogies for a field such as nursing, Long et al, provided a wide list that included (among others) clinical practicums and clinical simulation (Long et al., 2012). Whilst this approach does not seem to be particularly helpful in identifying true signature pedagogies, it does however provide substrate for cogitation by the profession in terms of what is and what is not vital to the conduct of high-quality nurse preparation programs.

While little consensus can be drawn from nursing literature specific to signature pedagogy, it does raise several important issues. Firstly, the nursing literature (as well as the wider area literature), demonstrates a level of confusion around the concept of signature pedagogies. Authors often fail to articulate a clear link between the signature pedagogy they identify and the conceptual framework developed by Shulman, as noted throughout the review. One exception to this within the nursing literature is Benner and Sutphen (Benner et al., 2009), whose work shows alignment with Shulman’s concept. Secondly, throughout the nursing and wider literature, a rigorous methodology for the identification of signature pedagogies fails to emerge. Most articles articulate signature pedagogies with no discussion of how they were originally identified. Thirdly, there has been limited consideration of the role of those heavily engaged in teaching (and perhaps coordinating) signature pedagogies, with Lyter (Lyter, 2012), in the field of social work, being the only scholar who articulates a need to examine the esteem and resources provided to those who are arguably delivering the most important aspect of professional education. Research into these three areas appears warranted and future work on signature pedagogies in nursing should attempt to address this in an evidence-based manner.

To move signature pedagogies in nursing and other fields forward, it is necessary for scholars to start identifying signature pedagogies within their discipline(s). Future studies should aim to provide a reference point in this area to assist disciplines to identify their own signature pedagogies which will potentially have a significant impact on the development of curricula in the future. In order to provide greater clarity in relation to identifying signature pedagogies in nursing, the authors are currently conducting a series of interviews with university-based nurse educators in an attempt to identify a widely recognised signature pedagogy or pedagogies in the nursing discipline. In addition to identifying signature pedagogies for nursing, by engaging in a systematic data collection process such as this, the study aims to provide a well-articulated, credible process for the identification of signature pedagogies in nursing and beyond.

Conclusion

Little has been generated in the way of identifying signature pedagogies and perhaps unsurprisingly, incorporation of the concept has been ad-hoc, confused or convoluted. Whilst it might be argued more evidence exists specific to signature pedagogies, this has not been written about as 'signature pedagogies' and consequently does not contribute to the extant literature on this topic. There remains clear gaps within the literature around how signature pedagogies might best be identified, articulated and applied in an evidence-based and accountable process in almost every discipline. Given this, and specific to nursing scholarship, the concept of signature pedagogies appears to represent a potentially rewarding and useful focus and future research exploring what nurse academics believe the signature pedagogies in nursing to be, appears warranted.

The impact signature pedagogies may have on curricula development is likely significant through their potential to guide the development of meaningful learning outcomes and assessments for any nursing programme. By reviewing the signature pedagogy literature and identifying some of its current gaps, the authors hope to provide nursing scholars with a better platform for moving forward with the signature pedagogies concept in a scholarly way, with ensuing benefits for the recipients of nurse education.

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