

## International Practice Development Journal

Online journal of FoNS in association with the IPDC (ISSN 2046-9292)



### IDEAS AND INFLUENCES

#### Loretta Bellman

Independent Consultant. Email: [loretta.bellman@btinternet.com](mailto:loretta.bellman@btinternet.com)

Submitted for publication: 4<sup>th</sup> April 2011

Accepted for publication: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2011

**Keywords:** cultural change, action research, practice research, empowerment, practice development

**Annette Street (1995) *Nursing Replay: Researching Nursing Culture Together*. Melbourne: Churchill Livingstone**

The first words I saw on opening a slim paperback about nursing research in practice were: 'We all made mistakes' (p.viii). Turning to the back pages I didn't think twice about purchasing it after reading: 'The crisis of confidence is part of the pain of genuine development' (p.186). The insights of an experienced social scientist, enabled me, as a novice researcher in the midst of a crisis of confidence, to continue with my doctoral clinical action research project, in spite of initial setbacks. I had found a gem, a rare gift in the international nursing literature that engages the reader from the first chapter and that I could relate to on many levels, as practitioner, educator and researcher.

Annette Street, at that time, was Consultant for Clinical Research Development at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, Australia, and Senior Lecturer at the Department of Nursing, La Trobe University (now Professor). Her book explores the power of nursing myths in action, examines the value of participatory research to better understand and bring about changes in nursing, and discusses the lessons learnt from establishing interactive participatory research designs in nursing practice. This small book is also a tribute to the power of research partnerships and acknowledgement of the fact that: 'The experiences of my colleagues (nursing staff) and I have propelled us on to the biggest learning curve of our lives' (p.viii).

The text, with its critical analysis of the traditional nurse and nursing practice, underpinned by critical theory, feminist theory and post-modernist thinking, and the pragmatic account of enabling nurses to change practice, motivated and inspired me. Each of the nine chapter titles intrigued me: Noticing the unnoticed in clinical nursing practice; Being caring: getting beyond the tyranny of niceness; Workloads, power and privacy; Establishing a participatory action research group; Building a research culture; Reflection and the research report; Behind the research scene; Journaling; and Living with the research experience. The chapters validated my personal views, provided differing perspectives of nurses and nursing, and the new knowledge enabled me to progress more confidently with my participatory research project.

Much of the book still continues to influence my thinking, my actions, and impact on my practice. Some examples of this include:

- Ongoing recognition of the need for joined-up policy and practice. Nurses' job descriptions contain a requirement to use research evidence/engage in research but they are rarely provided with the infrastructure, time or skilled support needed to enable them to do this (p.xviii)
- The importance of practitioners' voices having equal weight with their nursing scholars in participatory research approaches (p.xx)
- The drivers and barriers to change and development in healthcare settings may be well documented in the literature but each organisation needs to explore their own culture to enable stakeholder (bottom up and top down) recognition of the need for change, local ownership of the change process, and a greater likelihood of achieving successful outcomes. Whenever possible multiple data sources are needed to provide a complete picture (p.xxiv)
- Many nurses continue to act as data collectors for medical research to the exclusion of undertaking their own research (p.15)
- Recognising that we constantly need to examine our values in action and uncover the ways in which our practices are entrenched in culturally created, habitual attitudes and disempowering language (p.18)
- Continuing awareness of the behaviour of oppression in nursing, recognising 'horizontal violence' (p.21), and the need for genuine support for one another
- Participatory research can undo the myth that the modern nurse has no time for writing, talking, researching, or reflecting on clinical practice (p.24)
- Caring includes addressing the social, economic and political forces at work which create dehumanising conditions (p.29)
- The 'gaze' of the nurse encompasses many discreet and different things about the person, their condition and immediate surroundings. The carer's 'gaze' is equally important (p.47)
- Nurses often underestimate their own experience as a resource (p.69)
- The nursing literature is replete with pleas for the development of clinical nursing research. Many speak about it, teach about it, write about it and encourage others to do it, but few people actually do it (p.173)

When the book was first published it was described as 'indispensable and compelling reading' (Greenwood, 1996). It continues to significantly contribute to the literature that focuses on nursing culture and change within individual healthcare organisations. A recent Royal College of Nursing (2009) survey found it to be one of the most influential pieces of nursing research over the past 50 years. Thank you Annette.

Greenwood J. (1996) Book Review. *Nursing Replay: researching nursing culture together*. Annette Street. ISBN: 0 443 04761 8; 1995; 187 pages; Churchill Livingstone Melbourne. *Contemporary Nurse*. Retrieved from: <http://www.contemporarynurse.com/archives/vol5/issue/1/review/1088/nursing-replay-researching-nursing-culture> (Accessed March 2011).

Royal College of Nursing (2009) RCN Research Society and Nursing Research's Top 50. Retrieved from: [www.rcn.org.uk](http://www.rcn.org.uk) (Accessed March 2011).

**Loretta Bellman** (PhD, BSc Hons, RGN, RCNT, RNT, Cert Ed), Independent Consultant, Nursing and Healthcare.