

A Shared Perspective on Nurse Education between Malaysia and the UK

By : Lyn Karstadt

Welcome to this new journal. It will be my pleasure to write in association with a number of nurse educators from Malaysia. The column will appear in each issue and address contemporary topics in the same way that my own column does in the British Journal of Nursing which is published twice a month in the UK. Here in the Malaysian Journal of Nursing we will adopt the same format for the column and share with you some of the concerns that are presently challenging colleagues who work predominantly in, or in association with, nursing and healthcare education. We will endeavour to bring to the fore such concerns in the hope that you and your colleagues will continue to discuss and debate them long after you have put the journal down and returned to whichever context you practice in. We also work on the premise that knowledge is power and as practitioners every little bit of power is indeed very valuable!

Over the past decade Nursing has grown and matured both in Malaysia and in the UK. The number of nurses and the complexity of their practice continue to grow in both contexts. Investment has been huge and here in Malaysia the number of Schools of Nursing has increased to ensure that the number of new practitioners will meet the need projected by the

government. Nurses require both theoretical and practical education in order that they can function as professionals. Therefore the issues surrounding nurse education are of interest whether you yourself are employed in a college or school that has a nursing cohort, work in a clinical area that hosts student nurses or are a student nurse yourself. Whatever your involvement you need to understand and hold an opinion with reference to contemporary change and nurse education if you are to be a part of moving our profession forward so that it is respected and recognised by society as a whole.

There are many parallels between nursing here in Malaysia and back in the UK. In Malaysia the push toward a graduate workforce is driven by the promise of better remuneration for those with an appropriate undergraduate degree. The onus is upon the individual who can, where appropriate, apply for funding from the Human Resource Development Fund. In the UK nurse education is generally funded by the employer and individuals are rewarded equitably at the point of registration with a system that then tentatively rewards further education and competence as the individual nurse progresses through their career. Neither

country, at the moment, has a workforce that can be expected to have graduate skills at the point of registration. In the UK this development is anticipated with new courses to commence in 2011. The world, including Malaysia, will watch this development with interest and no doubt this column will have much to discuss and debate.

The Malaysian Journal of Nursing will provide a reservoir of evidence that is appropriate to nursing practice in South East Asia and across the globe. As such it is an important credential when considering the professionalism of the Malaysian nursing workforce; a concept that will no doubt be debated within this column in the months and years to come. Other issues for debate may include the aforementioned acquisition of graduate skills by nurses, increasing nursing autonomy, how nurses work with medical staff to ensure that they are embraced as equal partners who deliver a different yet complementary service and how nurses can extend their roles to improve the experience of the patients within their care. Most of the issues debated will be as relevant in other parts of the world as they are here, thus enabling nurses to think in a global context. Malaysian nurses are welcomed internationally and recognised as individuals who deliver a high standard of care and have enthusiasm and drive; this journal will provide a vehicle to raise the profile of

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Malaysian nurses and Malaysian nursing on the world stage.

So, if you are a nurse educator and would like to work with me to produce 800 to 1000 words discussing an educational issue or issues that would be of interest to colleagues, whether or not they themselves are directly associated with education, please contact me via the editor. Remember education matters to everyone and advancement rarely happens without it. Opportunities do exist and those who search them out will not be disappointed. I therefore look forward to working with Malaysian nurse educators and to being able to share our thoughts with you in the months to come.

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and educational programs in-order-to maximize the benefits and limit the potential drawbacks of internationalization of higher education. This is especially important in healthcare given the mandate for medical and nursing interventions in direct patient care in complex health systems.

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