

Autoethnography as critical inquiry: self narratives of a black foreign educated nurse working in New Zealand

Nurses are involved with intimate aspects of other people's lives, in situations that often involve profound vulnerability. Building culturally safe relationships with clients who use health services, and other health professionals involved in their care, requires an understanding of the self in relation to others. Focusing attention on the self in the social context of professional practice is an important aspect of coming to know ourselves as others see us. Autoethnography is a research approach that enables nurses to critically engage with their own historical and cultural backgrounds, to question what influences the self to think and act in certain ways. It offers nurse researchers deeply reflexive strategies to reveal the cultural history of the self that we bring to encounters with clients and colleagues.

This presentation explores the cultural history of a black foreign educated nurse who was recruited from Zambia to work in New Zealand. Using Chang's (2008) conceptualisation of autoethnography, it examines how her cultural background influenced her passage into nursing in a new social and professional context. This research gives voice to the challenges she experienced in coming to understand how the theme of colonisation that emerged in the analysis had played a role in shaping her identity as a person and a nurse. In opening up her past for interrogation, she became aware of how she had embraced certain views of the world as the outcomes of interactions between herself and the array of social forces and cultural practices that she participated in.

Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as method*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, Inc.