

# Self-Directed Learning in Nursing Education. What Do the Students Do to Learn Nursing? Student Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

This article reports on a Danish research project investigating nursing students' initiatives to learn nursing. There is an international focus on nursing students' competencies to learn Self-Directed so that they can continue to develop their nursing competencies to provide patient-centered care and meet the demands of the ever-developing healthcare system. The aim was to investigate nursing students' learning initiatives to learn nursing and to realize learning areas in which further support is required to develop students' Self-Directed Learning ability. A phenomenological-hermeneutic approach was taken. The participants comprised a class of nursing students, who we followed throughout their 3.5-year Bachelor's Degree Programme in Nursing. The data were generated by narrative interviews and a survey about students' learning initiatives. Three themes emerged: learning by preparing, learning by writing and, learning in interaction. Most students did initiate learning activities based on their learning abilities, their life circumstances, and the learning resources available. The Self-Directed Learning ability varied among students, and a few needed external motivations and more supervision than they got to achieve competencies to learn self-directed. This study provides knowledge about nursing students' self-directed learning initiatives and uncovers some areas to consider when planning to facilitate the development of Self-Directed Learning among nursing students. Faculty may consider how to allow more time for supervision and how to encourage nursing students' motivation to develop Self-Directed Learning ability, so SelfDirected Learning ability can increase among all nursing students.

**Keywords:** Self-Directed Learning, Nurse Education, Student Perspective, Qualitative Research, Narrative interviews