Abstract

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This article is grounded in a dialogical and sociocultural tradition within research on talk and communication in institutional settings. It is concerned with discourses of merged or mixed kinds in contexts where working life encounters educational contexts. The data are drawn from spoken activities in vocational training for student nurses enrolled in a nursing programme within higher education in Sweden. In particular, the article examines data extracts in which students receive training in the practice of patient assessment for hospital admission. Based on video recordings from conversations between patients, student nurses and their nurse preceptor on the ward, the article analyzes the complex hybridity in instructional sequences where the participants orient to several goals simultaneously. The detailed analysis of five excerpts selected from these sequences shows how an experienced nurse preceptor masters multiple roles and tasks embedded within a pedagogical practice encompassing both care work through assessment talk and instructing student nurses. Using a combination of analytical tools from Goffmanian frame analysis and Conversation Analysis rooted in ethnomethodology, the analysis pays attention to the communicative and pedagogical resources used by the participants in their interaction when coping with the differing demands imposed by the situation. The results of the analysis underline the importance of including the use of different modalities as constitutive parts that function together in minimizing the objectivation of the patient in frame shifts. In particular gaze direction is proposed as a method for the preceptor to enable her to orient simultaneously to both the student and the patient.

Keywords: vocational training, supervision, nurse student–patient interaction, interactional hybridity, frame analysis, activity, Conversation Analysis, instructional sequences, multimodality.