The walk: creating my portfolio.

If the simplest definition of a portfolio is a collection of items which represents learning then the painting above can be used as a metaphor to show a portfolio's elements

The walk – in this case it's a predetermined pathway. The road is paved and fenced. This represents my job as a teacher. There is a given. What is expected of a teacher, and a job description to go with it. However the walk is not even you can see it's a slightly bumpy and canted pathway. This represents how the work will shift depending on what I am doing each day, each step I take will take me further in developing my teaching skills. So I need to profile what I do and who with within my portfolio to make my role explicit.

The fence is there for support but you could also say it is keeping the trees and vegetations back. Perhaps this represents the way I keep myself 'at a distance' from my students. Whilst I can be friendly and approachable I will also have to manage their progress and perhaps set boundaries and give uncomfortable feedback as well as constructive feedback to help them progress. Boundaries are necessary; benchmarks for what does and does not go on in the classroom, in practice, what I can and cannot do to make the course as flexible as I can (the holes in the fence perhaps represent this) The flowers grow threw, and the trees grow over the fence. So perhaps I need to reflect on my values and beliefs as a teacher and get some feedback from students and colleagues on how I teach and support students.

The trees are both deciduous and evergreen. The evergreens represent the constant (evergreen) – that there will always be students, modules, colleagues to teach with, a pattern to follow. Still growing with the right nutrients they will remain evergreen. The deciduous represent the fluctuations in teaching. Students will be as different as the variety of trees, some will grow better in one environment than another but all will need food and water to grow effectively and efficiently. Also its autumn in the picture so things are changing rapidly, its colourful, teaching and learning can be as vivid as the colours in the picture. If this was a winter picture this would perhaps represent the key elements of teaching and learning that support a programme – starkness and clarity, the essentials for learning. If it was spring then the budding of the trees, new leaves would represent new learners, new learning and teaching initiatives. So I need to show how I plan to meet different needs, alter my teaching to motivate students, pace the learning to meet different needs, provide additional support or refer students to it.

Under the trees the foliage varies. Some is dense – is that the dross we all have to go through the mundane – the admin the room booking, etc. It has its place but isn't particularly interesting part of being a teacher and I don't think the students realise how much background work there is to enabling their learning. However peeping through the background foliage and hidden in the foliage are a range of flowers, and not so easily seen all the life that is rustling around in the foliage and in the trees. Is this the hidden curriculum? All that goes on that can't be taught as such but is learnt because you are on that walk and in that wood. So perhaps I need to reflect on how students are socialised into the school and into nursing.

Also whilst my portfolio will be a collection of items, these items need to say something about me as a teacher. Give a picture of how I work and who I work with, the underpinning values and beliefs. The sum of the whole is greater than its parts ?