The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how undergraduate pediatric nursing students experienced the art and science of pediatric nursing through journaling. Data were obtained from eight student participants during a six-week pediatric clinical rotation.

There were four main findings from this study: (a) journal entries contained aesthetic descriptions of patients and clinical experiences; (b) journal entries contained empiric descriptions of patients and clinical experiences; (c) in their discussions of “the art and science of nursing,” some students consciously separated the art and science of nursing with science elements often coming first, and some students integrated these elements; and (d) some students found journaling useful, and some journaled only when compelled to do so.

The findings from this study support journaling as a way for students to explore the art and science of nursing. When writing about patient experiences, participants were able to discover, or uncover, something they did not know about themselves or their patients. Many of these discoveries were evident in their words describing their care of pediatric patients and interactions with families.
Implications for nurse educators include allowing time for non-prescriptive writing, recognizing opportunities for journaling, and providing writing prompts for new and seasoned faculty.