Cecilia Rydlo is a registered nurse and has a Master of Science in Nursing. Cecilia has worked for several years as a clinical nurse in surgical hospital settings as well as a clinical lecturer at Mälardalen University, Sweden. During the past five years, she has conducted her doctoral studies at School of Health and Medical Sciences, Örebro University.

In Swedish nursing education, student nurses should gain a foundation and a bachelor degree in the main field of study after three years education. However, five designations of the main field of study exist among the higher education institutions and the present thesis focuses on the main field of study caring science. Former studies show that caring knowledge acquisition among student nurses is characterized by troubles, uncertainty and confusion. In order to reveal an understanding of the acquirement of caring knowledge, the aim was to describe how growing in caring is experienced by student nurses during education.

This study illuminates that growing in caring means a struggle for one’s own caring beliefs to exist and survive in a world filled with diverse expectations of caring. Through recognizing expectations of caring from professional caregivers and caring theories during education, student nurses discover the complexity of caring. In this complexity, the student nurses understand themselves as being different and the otherness appears. The otherness is constituted of unique and self-evident beliefs about caring based on former experiences, which are unlike the caring beliefs by others. In order to show and give evidence for the otherness, concepts from caring theories that agree with one’s own caring beliefs are found, which transform the concepts from being meaningless to being essential in caring. The concepts strengthen the student nurses’ growth in caring and constitute a support in their discussions about caring. In this struggle for gaining access with their otherness, they become convinced that they can make changes for the patient and strength arises to fight for their otherness.