



SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL NURSING STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT DURING PRACTICAL PLACEMENTS

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Abstract

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Nursing studies last for three and half years. During the studies students have several practical placements in different nursing environments. International nursing students study with a different language and in a different cultural environment from their own. Lingual and cultural difference can create dilemmas in studies like it has been noticed in earlier studies about international nursing students' experiences during practical placements. The purpose of the research work was to describe the support that the international nursing students receive for professional development during their practical placements.

The informants of the thesis were the third year international nursing students from Laurea university of applied sciences. The third year international students were asked to fill a questionnaire about support they receive for their professional development during practical placements. Six (6) respondents took part in the study. The questionnaires were analyzed by using qualitative content analysis.

The findings of the study manifest that international nursing students received support from their tutors during their practical placements. The support from facilitators was not consistent. International nursing students voiced also that extracurricular Finnish courses were helpful during practical placements due to the practicing Finnish language skills prior to practice. Based on the findings improvement suggestions about improving support from tutors and facilitators were made to enhance the support international nursing students receive during practice.

Keywords: Support, international nursing student, professional development, practical placement

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Sairaanhoitajaopinnot kestävät kolme ja puoli vuotta, minkä aikana opiskelijoilla on useita harjoittelujaa eri sairaanhoidon ympäristöissä. Kansainvälinen sairaanhoitajaopiskelija opiskelee Suomessa vieraalla kielellä ja vieraassa kulttuurissa. Kielelliset ja kulttuurilliset erot voivat hankaloittaa opintoja, kuten aikaisemmissa tutkimuksissa on huomattu. Tämän tutkimustyön tavoitteena olikin tunnistaa kansainvälisten sairaanhoitajaopiskelijoiden saama tuki ammatilliselle kasvulle harjoitteluiden aikana ja millaista tukea he saavat tuutoreiltaan, opettajiltaan sekä mahdollisilta muilta tahoilta harjoitteluiden aikana.

Tutkimustyön kohteena olivat kolmannen vuoden kansainväliset sairaanhoitajaopiskelijat, joita pyydettiin täyttämään kyselylomake tuesta ammatilliselle kasvulle harjoitteluiden aikana. Yhteensä kuusi (6) kansainvälistä sairaanhoitajaopiskelijaa vastasi kyselyyn. Data analyysi tehtiin käyttäen kvalitatiivista sisältöanalyysiä.

Tutkimustulosten perusteella kansainväliset sairaanhoitajaopiskelijat saavat tukea harjoitteluiden aikana ohjaajiltaan. Tuki kansainvälisten sairaanhoitajaopiskelijoiden opettajilta oli vaihtelevaa. Opintosuunnitelman ulkopuoliset suomen kielen kurssit olivat omalta osaltaan tukevia, koska siten kansainväliset sairaanhoitajaopiskelijat pystyivät harjoittelemaan suomen kielen osaamistaan ennen harjoitteluita.

Avainsanat: Tuki, kansainvälinen sairaanhoitajaopiskelija, ammatillinen kehittyminen, harjoittelu

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1. Introduction

The popularity of studying in a foreign country has increased during last few decades. The trend has become apparent also in Finland. Nowadays in Finland there are approximately 10,000 international students. International students come from various countries and do not usually have a Finnish nationality (Garam, I. 2011; The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2001).

In Finland studying in higher education level is generally free of charge except of few chargeable degree programs. Consequently the Finnish higher education system is funded by the tax resources of the nation (European Migration Network). There are several degree programs taught in English. One of them is a degree program in nursing which is carried out in several Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) for example in Laurea UAS, Metropolia UAS, Arcada UAS, Jyväskylä UAS and Lahti UAS (National Board of Education n.d.).

Nursing studies last for three and half years. During the studying period nursing students have lectures, projects and practical placements. In order to learn the essential nursing skills practical placements provide the necessary surroundings for rehearsing and improving their skills concerning their study paths. Practical placement (PP) studies include for example encountering patients, performing different nursing interventions and they are accountable for 80 study credits altogether. PPs are completed for example in hospitals, in nursing homes, in health care centers where students practice nursing skills (Laurea University of Applied Sciences 2014).

Practical placements (PPs) are vital parts of nursing students' learning process. Hence PP studies are meant to promote and facilitate students' professional development. Through professional development a person's skills, knowledge, beliefs and values change and evolve (Laurea University of Applied Sciences n.d.). Professional development does not occur only during nursing studies but it is a part of lifelong process of self-development (Health professions and pre-law center 2007). Consequently PP studies foster nursing students' professional development by building their knowledge base, by helping them to observe and to carry out nursing interventions.

In order to learn efficiently international nursing students need support throughout their studies and especially during PPs (Walsh 2010; Eaton & Henderson 2006). According to the Collins Dictionary (n.d.) support means giving somebody practical or emotional help, giving approval to something, and establishing truthfulness or accuracy of a theory or a statement by providing new facts. In PPs nursing students are supposed to receive

support from the mentoring nurses. Support in PP context includes establishing effective working relationships, facilitating, assessing and evaluating students' learning (Walsh 2010; Eaton & Henderson 2006).

As an international nursing student in Finland, a student uses a different language than his or her own mother tongue to study. In practical placement the communication language is Finnish. Therefore the international nursing student (INS) and tutor speak different languages. Additionally the INS and the tutor are from distinct countries, which may also result in having different values and cultural heritage. (Ludwick and Silva 2000) Regardless of the cultural and lingual differences a nursing student is legitimate for receiving the support he or she needs for boosting his or her professional development (American Nurses Association (ANA) 2011).

In the process of developing as professionals-to-be international nursing students need support in PPs especially because of studying by using a second language and overcoming cultural differences that are barriers to working towards their carriers (Ujitani & Volet 2008). Studying with a different language can be a daunting and complex process. In practice the language used is Finnish while the medium of instruction in Laure UAS is English for INS. Generally in English nursing degree programs in Finland international nursing students have to use different language when studying nursing theory and a different language when completing practical placements (Hurme 2013).

PPs cover 80 credits of 210 credits of nursing studies. Practical placements construct the basis for acting in different nursing environments. Therefore this thesis targets at identifying what kind of support international nursing students need in their practical placements so that their professional development can be fostered.

The purpose of the thesis is to describe support that the international nursing students receive during their practical placements.

2. The purpose of the thesis

The purpose of the thesis is to describe support the international nursing students receive during their practical placements.

Research question of the thesis is: what kind of support do the third year international nursing students have received during their practical placements?

The objectives of the thesis are to

- understand what international nursing students experience during their clinical studies
- emphasize on the importance of support for international nursing students' professional development during their clinical studies
- provide more knowledge for fostering international nursing students' professional development

3. International nursing students

3.1. The curriculum of nursing degree program in Laurea

Degree program in nursing in Laurea University of applied sciences consists of basic, professional and elective studies. In nursing studies there is much emphasis on learning in practical placements where the practical nursing skills are acquired. (Laurea University of Applied Sciences n.d. d) The nursing studies are designed so that a nursing student learns the principle theories, models and practices about nursing. (Laurea University of Applied Sciences n.d. a) Thus the curriculum is constructed so that each study unit, each practical placement helps a nursing student to develop him- or herself as a professional-to-be (Laurea University of Applied Sciences n.d. a & d).

One of the main principals of the curriculum at Laurea is its supportiveness for a student's professional growth according the competence-based curriculum (Kallioinen (ed) 2007). Therefore this study targets at finding out the factors international nursing students find as the sources of support during their practical placements so that nursing students would get the best possible support during their clinical studies.

3.2. International nursing studies

In Laurea UAS internationality is appreciated highly and therefore it also participates in the improvement of the internationalization the Metropolitan. In Laurea Finnish and English are used as working languages. Thus studies in Laurea are conducted in both languages. Additionally in Laurea the aim to increase co-operation between European Universities is facilitated for example by increasing staff and student exchange between high education institutions in Europe (Laurea University of Applied Sciences n.d. b).

In nursing degree program in Laurea UAS there are students from several countries including Finland. The Finnish nursing students studying in English are not international nursing students but they have added international elements to their studies (Niemelä 2008). Thus an international student is one who is living and studying in country different from his or her country of origin (Clark n.d.).

In Laurea UAS nursing is taught in Finnish and in English. In the English nursing degree program the students are selected from different countries and there also Finnish

students. All teaching is organized in English except of Finnish courses which are held for international nursing students to learn Finnish language. Practical placements, however, are usually completed in nursing environment such as nursing homes, hospital wards where the working language is Finnish.

As an international student one may experience various challenges and difficulties in one's study path. For example cultural differences, communicational challenges are common when studying in a foreign country (Hurme 2013; Ciulinaru 2010; Ujitani & Volet 2008). There are several studies (Hurme 2013; Laiho 2008; Nevala, Olki and Törmä 2013; Giacomo 2009) about the experiences international nursing students have had in practical placements and during their study periods abroad. However there is not much study about what kind of support international nursing students would find supportive for studying in a foreign country.

Nursing degree program is not the only degree program conducted in English in Laurea UAS. Internationality is an important concept and it is enhanced by improving education that is provided in Laurea. By improving the education internationality in the Greater Helsinki area is targeted to be facilitated (Laurea University of Applied Sciences n.d. a). Consequently this study pursues at contributing to the internationalization project carried out in Laurea UAS. Thus this study concentrates on letting international nursing students express their need for support for having more advantageous learning experiences during practical placements and in the English nursing degree program in Laurea UAS.

3.3. Cultural background of the students

Culture as a concept refers the way people "give order to the world" (Novinger 2001). According to Novinger (2001) culture is a filter for communication by its patterns of language and behavior. Consequently culture is tightly connected to the knowledge, experiences, meanings, beliefs, values, attitudes, religions, perception of the environment, role expectations people have.

International students carry their own cultures inside them. As an individual or as a group, the students have different ways of perceiving situations, behave differently, speak differently, and have different values. Thus, it is not well known or described what happens when two varied cultures meet in work place or in practical placements (David & John 2010). In practice INs' different culture heritage affects INs by

challenging them to learn a new language and culture during the PP. Cultural values, which are deeply rooted ideas and belief systems (Ludwick and Silva 2000), are an integral part of a person. It is presumed that the individualistic way of life and thought is enshrined in the so called western civilization which underlines the importance of individuals over the mass (Ludwick and Silva 2000). Meanwhile, in other parts of the world especially in the developing countries like in Africa and in Asia collectivity is more important and individuals are loyal to their family and friends (Ludwick and Silva 2000).

Globalization has increased the frequency of contact between different cultures. Nursing students also are part of this global phenomenon. During their practical placements as international students need to learn not only to communicate in a new language but also to deal with a lot of non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication speaks volumes in conveying messages. As a student progresses in studies and practices he or she needs to adapt to the new culture in which he or she endeavors the skills needed in nursing. Students' cultural tenets have impact in the development as a person and as a professional (Novinger 2001). Therefore the process of adaption has to be supported so that the INS can grow as professionals-to-be (Walsh 2010).

4. Practical placements

4.1. The importance of practical placements in nursing

Terms clinical placement and practical placement are both used in literature. The difference between two words clinical and practical is defined in the Oxford English Online dictionary in the following way. The word clinical means: “relating to the observation and treatment of actual patients rather than theoretical or laboratory studies”. The word practical describes actual doing or the use of something rather than dealing with theory and ideas. (Oxford online English dictionary) Thus words practical and clinical are quite similar in their definitions. Both of the explanations make you to understand that the meaning of the words has to do with the process of doing different tasks in a rational environment. The word combination practical placement (PP) was selected as the main word to describe international nursing students’ learning in practice.

In practical placements students learn to combine the theoretical knowledge they have gained and to practice the nursing skills they have learned in school. In practice students learn how to encounter clients, work as a team member in multidisciplinary environment. Therefore planning, implementing and evaluating nursing care is one important learning target during practice since it is a vital part of nursing practice (Laurea University of Applied Sciences n.d. c). Consequently developing one’s ability of being creative and assessing a client’s situation are important skills to learn in practice.

Apart from learning how to deliver nursing care, nursing students are required to practice critical thinking. Consequently learning to be innovative is important in learning nursing profession (Kuiper, Ruth & Pesut 2002). The practices and philosophies of nursing are dynamic. Throughout nursing studies developing as a professional-to-be a nursing student is challenged to acquire multiple skills. In relation to this the nursing degree program is designed to prepare a student with knowledge of working in different settings such as in health centers, hospital wards and clinics. The main goal of PP is to orient precept and manage competences of student nurses to work on their best (Chapman & Howkins 2003). The same applies to registered nurses who are in working life; they are challenged to excel in their profession as nurses (American nurses association 2009a&b).

4.2. Dilemmas during practice placements

In PPs international nursing students face challenges due to different reasons. In this thesis one of the objectives is to study the ways to support international nursing students. One of the problems related to PPs is getting suitable practical placement for nursing students. Students select their preferred practical placement study periods through an online reservation system called Jobstep. Availability of practical placements varies and all students are not able to book a placement through Jobstep (Tetri 2012). Apart from having difficulties in getting suitable PPs, there are communicational problems due to international nursing students having inadequate Finnish language skills prior to entering practical placements (Giacomo 2009). Poor Finnish skills result in difficulties in understanding verbal guidance from a tutor or in communicating with patients and with a tutor. Often communication difficulties during PPs result in acquiring more time to understand and learn in practice. Therefore an INS would need more guidance and concentration from one's tutor to help the student to learn in practice. Like Giacomo's (2009) study about international nursing students highlighted the fact that INSs were getting poorer scores in practical placements than Finnish students, which supports the fact of INSs needing more tutoring than Finnish nursing students.

There are several studies concerning how students perceive the practical placements and what kind of issues students confront during their clinical studies. Some of the most common problems according to previous studies INS face during their practical placements are lingual barriers, cultural differences, tutors' reluctance to speak English with the students, and tutors' negative attitude towards guiding an international nursing student's in practice (Hurme 2013; Laiho 2008).

Currently in Finland at workplaces nurses have several clients and have little time to take care of their clients. (Heponiemi, Sinervo, Elovainio 2009; Laiho 2008). Regardless of shortages in staff new nursing students are taken to learn in practice. The dilemma develops when nurses have limited time for working and for mentoring a student. Additionally international nursing student would require more guidance and attention than nursing students due to cultural and lingual differences (Hurme 2013; Laiho 2008).

5. Professional development of a student nurse

5.1. Learning process of acquiring nursing as one's profession

In the curriculum of Laurea UAS it is stated that “through the professional growth process the student learns to act in various nursing environments and deepens his/her knowledge and abilities in relation to the substance of the profession” (Laurea University of Applied Sciences n.d. c). Consequently growing as a professional means developing oneself in the knowledge, understanding, and ability to act as a professional in one’s field for example in nursing.

According to Laurea study guide (n.d. f) professional growth process begins before one applies for the education. Thus it means a student starts preparing oneself for the nursing studies even before one gets an admission to the study program. After receiving an admission a student’s process of professional development starts in the school to be through different learning environments (Laurea University of Applied Sciences n.d. c).

Growing as professionals INS is challenged to learn how to learn better, to handle ambiguity, to think like a professional and to develop a sense of responsibility (Kuiper & Pesut 2002). The process of acquiring the attributes needed as a nursing professional is important so that a nursing student learns to deliver good nursing care for his or her clients (Chapman & Howkins 2003). Consequently the crux of developing as a nursing professional is to practice to think your patient’s best (McKie, Baguley, Guthrie, Jackson, Kirkpatrick, Laing, O’Brien, Taylor & Wimpenny 2012). In order to ensure patient centeredness in one’s professional development a nursing student is guided to develop his skills in leadership, teamwork, communication and in advancing clinical practice (Chapman & Howkins 2003).

According to research conducted by Carnell and Lodge (2001) students’ learning abilities are determined by student’s attributes. Such attribute are formed by students’ abilities, intelligences, social background and motivation. Langurand (1996) explains how nursing students go through education which fosters a student’s inborn abilities. Such abilities can be categorized in to different groups such as lingual and communicative skill, logical intelligence, intra- and interpersonal skills and spatial, musical and naturalist intelligences are developed in the nursing education (Gardner 2003). All the different abilities of a nursing student are endeavored to be supported and developed during theoretical and practical studies. Thus nursing students need to

be considered individually so that a nursing student's attributes and skills are developed towards acting as a nursing professional.

5.2. Evaluation of a nursing student's professional development in practical placements

A student's professional development requires evaluation of student's learning in practice. In Laurea UAS the evaluation of student's learning is carried out by agreeing on a learning contract which states the learning objectives of the study unit in practice (Laurea University of Applied Sciences n.d. e). In addition to the general learning objectives of the study unit student formulates his or her own learning objectives (Laurea University of Applied Sciences n.d. d). Student's own learning objectives are evaluated by the facilitator and by the clinical tutor who help to improve student's learning objectives in order to facilitate student's learning during practice (Chapman & Howkins 2003). Consequently the learning objectives are different in each practice because of having acquired more nursing skills and because of entering different practical placements.

Evaluation is part of the teaching learning process both in the school and in practical setting. Evaluation helps both the learner and the instructor to assess the extent of the impartation of knowledge and skills. Evaluating student's clinical learning is a major challenge for instructors (Morin & Phaneuf 1991). There is no simple and complete method of evaluating students. Rogers and Smith (2006) described evaluation to be merely based on the instructor's observation of the student's behavior. The complexity of the assessment process is magnified, as in nursing education theory and practice are often assessed simultaneously and this assessment according to Stuart (2013) is three-dimensional. "The three-dimensions which ought to be assessed consist of the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domain of learning." (Halarie 2007). A clinical tutor observes for example a student's behavior, skill development in the clinical practice whilst considering how student is able to adjust to the new learning environment.

The final evaluation of the student's learning progress in practice is made based on the general learning objectives and based on the student's own objectives for the study unit. In the final evaluations the tutor assesses to which extent the objectives of the learning in practice were met, and address the possible challenges in student's learning as a professional-to-be. The student also evaluates his or her own learning based on the

learning objectives (Laurea University of Applied Sciences n.d. d & e & f) (Appendix 1). Thus evaluation is an important part of the practical studies in nursing. INSS' competence evaluation helps them in developing as professional and that is why it is crucial to increase the understanding of the INSS' need for evaluation of their skill development in practice.

6. Support during practical placements

Support as a word can be used as a verb or as a noun. It has several meanings depending on the context where it is used. However when it used as a verb support means agreeing with someone or about something or it means approving something or giving approval to someone. Supporting signifies a person giving help to someone which makes it a social action such support is called social support (An Encyclopaedia Britannica Company n.d.; Mattson and Gibb Hall 2011). The purpose of support is to reduce uncertainty and enhance control over an issue (Mattson and Gibb Hall 2011).

In order to understand support as a concept better, it is vital to understand how it is manifested and given. Support can be divided to five different sections which are emotional, information, esteem, network and tangible support (Mattson and Gibb Hall 2011; Uchino 2004). Emotional support is distributed via communication which responds to an individual's need at that moment. Belongingness to a network or to a community is one type of support and it is fostered by communication. Esteem support boosts a person's self-esteem. By information support a person receives knowledge which provides a person with important knowledge in order to help him or her to overcome a challenging situation. The last support type is tangible support which means "physical assistance provided by others" (Mattson and Gibb Hall 2011). Such kind of support can be for example giving money or any good to somebody or assisting hand in hand how to do something new.

Support can, thus, be delivered in different ways. However in the process of delivering and receiving support the receiver of the support and the deliverer of the given support may have different opinion about the end result of the support received. How the receiver of the given support finds the support is described as perceived support (Mattson and Gibb Hall 2011; Uchino 2004).

In practice a nursing student's tutor has a major role in supporting him or her during practice. According to Walsh (2010) a mentor is supposed to act as a student's role model, energizer, investor, supporter, standard prodder, teacher-coach, feedback giver, eye opener, door opener, ideas bouncer, problem solver, career counsellor, and challenger. A tutor's roles are multiple for a student's learning thus it is important that the nursing student and the tutor have a good relationship with each other. By having a good relationship with a student, fostering a student's learning is easier, since the student and tutor or the student and facilitator are able to communicate well (College of Nurses of Ontario 2009).

In literature a supportive learning environment is one facilitating factor for a students' learning (Hurme 2013 & Laiho 2008). The acceptance by other team members was also important for students to feel accepted in the work community which created more positive learning environment for nursing students (College of Nurses of Ontario 2009).

There are several studies about how different factors influence a student's development as a professional-to-be during practical placements. The main issues during practical placement were mentioned to occur concerning language, cultural issues, and differences in mentors' attitudes towards international nursing students (Hurme 2013; Laiho 2008). In order to decrease the problems in supporting international nursing students in PPs, this thesis tries to point out what kind of support international nursing students receive during practice. The study does not concentrate on social relationships which student would be having during a practice placement but rather the study tries to identify several different sources of support which would enable international nursing students to develop better as professionals-to-be during their clinical placements. In addition to understand the support INSs receive during practice the thesis targets at clarifying possible development opportunities in the INSs' studies in general so that they learning in practical placements could be facilitated.

7. Methodology

7.1. Qualitative research method

Qualitative research is a descriptive method to study a phenomenon, interactions from the inside of the study target (Gibbs 2007). Qualitative study is not selected as study method when aiming at having many respondents. Rather qualitative study is descriptive study method with which an issue is measured and clarified and new information about the issue is formed by analyzing the results after carrying out a research (Gibbs 2007; Coffey & Atkinson 1996). The purpose of using qualitative research method is to understand the studied phenomenon through the eyes of the study target (Gibbs 2007). According to Auerbach & Silverstein (2003) “Qualitative research is research that involves analyzing and interpreting texts and interviews in order to discover meaningful patterns descriptive of a particular phenomenon.”

The inductive qualitative analysis is used understanding the data: “The purposes for using an inductive approach are to (a) condense raw textual data into a brief, summary format; (b) establish clear links between the evaluation or research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and (c) develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident in the raw data.” (Thomas 2006). Inductive content analysis is used for deriving knowledge from raw data and categorizing it into themes concerning the issues raised in the data analysis. Consequently by using inductive content analysis the thesis tried to identify different dilemmas and development needs during practical placements from the international nursing students’ point of view by analyzing the raw text first and making the themes based on the data analysis findings. -Apparently, identification of issues in the research process is a part of an applied research process. Furthermore the main purpose of applied research is to “pave the way for change” (O’Leary 2004) which is one of the objects of this thesis also.

7.2. Data collection

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in an established systematic fashion that enables the research process to provide answers to a research question, test hypothesis and evaluate outcomes. Accurate data collection is essential to maintaining the integrity of research (Arts, de Keizer & Scheffer 2002).

The data collection method was carefully selected before starting the research. Since the study is qualitative, several methods of gathering data for example observing, questionnaires, group and personal interviews. Nevertheless, a questionnaire was chosen as a solo way for gathering students responses. The study used questionnaire because questionnaires gives feedback from the view points of the respondents and it is quick and time effective to administer. However, interviews take time to prepare and carry out, although non-verbal responses can be monitored during the process (Brace 2013).

According to Brace (2013) the role of the questionnaire is to elicit the information that will enable the researcher to answer the objectives of research. Formulating the questionnaire was before putting them as one final version that would be delivered to the respondents. The sequence of the appearance each individual question had been taken into consideration since this may affect the accuracy and reliability of the collected data (Phillips & Pulliam & Cathy 2008).

Before proceeding with the research, thesis proposal was framed which was negotiated in a thesis workshop in Laurea. Thesis contract was outlined finally which described the purpose and the research question. After such plan was made, it was approved by signing the contract of carrying out the thesis study by the writers and the supervisor (Appendix 5). Apart from the thesis contract a research permission had to be applied from Laurea UAS. After receiving the research permit the appointment for conducting the research had to be arranged. The time for carrying out the study was granted for us by one of the nursing degree program teachers. The time for the research took place after the third year international nursing students' class on the 26th of February 2014.

The data collection focus group consisted of third year international nursing students of Laurea Otaniemi. The Finnish students were not included since they did not fulfill the requirement for participating to answer to the questionnaire. The requirement for participating in the study was that a nursing student had a nationality of a foreign country or being raised in a different society, which meant an INS was not familiar with the Finnish culture before entering the country for study purposes.

Before the data collection respondents were asked to fill a permission form guaranteeing that their personal information was not requested. In addition the respondents were informed that no third party will have a right to access their responses to the questionnaires. They were also let to understand their right to withdraw from filling the questionnaire after receiving the questionnaire form. Before giving the questionnaires to the respondents the researchers told the respondents

about the purpose of the study and its research question and the objectives. Additionally writers described the concept support before giving the questionnaires so that students would understand the meaning of the word support.

Altogether six international nursing students answered to the questionnaire. The students were from Africa, Asia and Europe. The questionnaires (Appendix 2) consisted of twelve questions. All the questions were formed in English language. The questions included open ended questions and multiple choice questions. However the multiple choice questions were about students' heritage, sex and time that they had spent in Finland. Open-ended questions guided students to describe their experiences and ideas about their professional development during PPs and how they were supported during those times.

The respondents were asked to fill the questionnaires individually without talking to their fellow students concerning the questions. They were also allowed to take the time they needed to fill the questionnaire. Students used approximately 10-15 minutes to answer to the questions. During the time the respondents were filling the questionnaire the researchers were present in the classroom. The purpose of the researchers' presence in the classroom was to ensure that the respondents answered to the questionnaires individually and they had a peaceful environment to think about their answers. The researchers' presence in the classroom also enabled students to ask questions about the questionnaire.

After completing the questionnaire the students dropped the questionnaires to a white cartoon box so that researchers would not know the identity of the respondent.

7.3. Data analysis

In order to understand the data collected with the questionnaires it had to be examined methodically and in detail. The data analysis thrives at discovering the relevant data and therefore to bring out the facts or problems that relevant to the study. By explaining and clarifying the content analysis in detail in order to create an understanding of the process of how the results were retrieved from the raw data.

Coding is an analysis tool that is used for symbolically assigning the data collected in the research process (Saldana 2009). By using coding as an analysis method it enables the writer to find out idiosyncrasies in other words patterns and regularities in the text that is analyzed. After spotting out idiosyncrasies they are categorized and finally

formed into themes which are used for describing the phenomenon or dilemma raised during analyzing the data (Saldana 2009).

The questionnaires were analyzed several times in order to assure the reliability of results and after the first coding round it is not possible to retrieve all the items that should be coded (Saldana 2009). Additionally in this coding process there were two writers working together which enabled writers to understand and to code items better than one writer working on the data alone (Saldana 2009). Consequently, many coding rounds enabled writers to bring forth data from different perspectives, which was beneficial concerning the reliability and truthfulness of the study.

In the coding process all data was grouped on Microsoft Word Office program according to the questions. Under each question were the answers collected from the respondents (Table 1). After grouping the questions and answers systemically the coding of the answers started.

In the coding process the writers searched for similarities, differences, frequencies, sequences, correspondences and causations in the answers in relation to questions asked (Saldana 2009). In the coding process cognitive, emotional, hierarchy and inequality aspects were examined in the raw data. Hence idiosyncrasies were pointed out from the questionnaires. For example idiosyncrasies in the answers concerning supportive action from facilitators, tutors and other sources were coded in order to reveal support INS had received during the practice and to reveal important information in relation to the questions asked.

Firstly a few highlights were made in order to pin point important issues in the raw data. After that all the data was numbered according to the relevant items to the study by the coding instructions and finally grouped into initial codes by the other writer. After the first round of coding the other writer coded the second round.

The third coding round was a concluding and summarizing round based on the codes retrieved after the first and second coding rounds. The third round combined the two rounds together. Whilst combining the first and second round together the coherence of the two rounds was also tested in order to find out whether the writers understood the answers similarly.

In the fourth round the main findings for each question were formed. After linking the findings and answers together, some findings needed more clarification and consequently researchers had to examine the raw data and the codes in order to

understand the results better and clarify them if needed. Thus the final round of coding process the analysis results became clearer and the connections between results and questions were more evident. Finally based on the final coding round the themes for the study were formed.

QUESTION	Student	Answer	First round	Second round	Third round	Final round
	Student 1					
	Student 2					
	Student 3					
	Student 4					
	Student 5					
	Student 6					

Table 1 A demonstration of the chart used for the coding process

8. Findings

8.1. Individual support

According to responses tutors support students to observe role models, practice, and develop their skills.

Two of respondents described support from tutors in the following ways:

“Showed me how to do nursing interventions. Showed me, guided me then let me do something”.

“They supported me as a student, that I can do this profession. They supported me as a foreign student that I will learn the language, support was verbal.”

The findings depicted INSs had tutoring that helped an INS to practice different nursing interventions by getting instructions. This support was meant to gear up the international nursing student towards acting independently in a PP setting. Henceforth the INSs referred to the support from tutors as individual support but without considering them holistically (Figure 1). Thinking an INS holistically would mean including considerations about INSs' personal characters and cultural heritage in his or her guidance, which only one INS mentioned his answer. However it was apparent in all the respondents' answers that a tutor had been helping the INS in the learning process of the nursing profession and the nursing interventions.

In addition to explaining support that a respondent had received during PPs a few respondents emphasized their tutors' emotions towards them and how their tutors' emotional behavior affected the guidance during PP. Such behavior affects the holistic support INS receives during placements. The hindrances to learning in practice were tutors' attitudes towards international nursing students, lack of time and a language barrier between the international nursing student and the tutor. If a tutor is not motivated in guiding a student it is difficult for a tutor to think about student holistically. Issues especially related to the attitude and motivation of the tutor affect the quality of INSs' tutoring and guidance (Figure 1).

“For the first 2 clinical tutors. It has been really encouraging and stimulating while for the last 2, it has been discouraging and demoralizing.”

In the questionnaire INs were asked to describe the support they had found as the most beneficial support during PPs. As a result many students emphasized on the issue of not having much tangible support and thus they had to express the difficulty of pinpointing most beneficial support during PP.

“I don’t actually get that much support to mention during clinical placement.”

Apart from having a facilitator who has cares for your wellbeing during practice, a tutor who has time for and cares for the progress as student was mentioned as the most beneficial support during practice.

“A good tutor in the placement is the best kind of support you can get as you need to learn from them + spend most time with them”

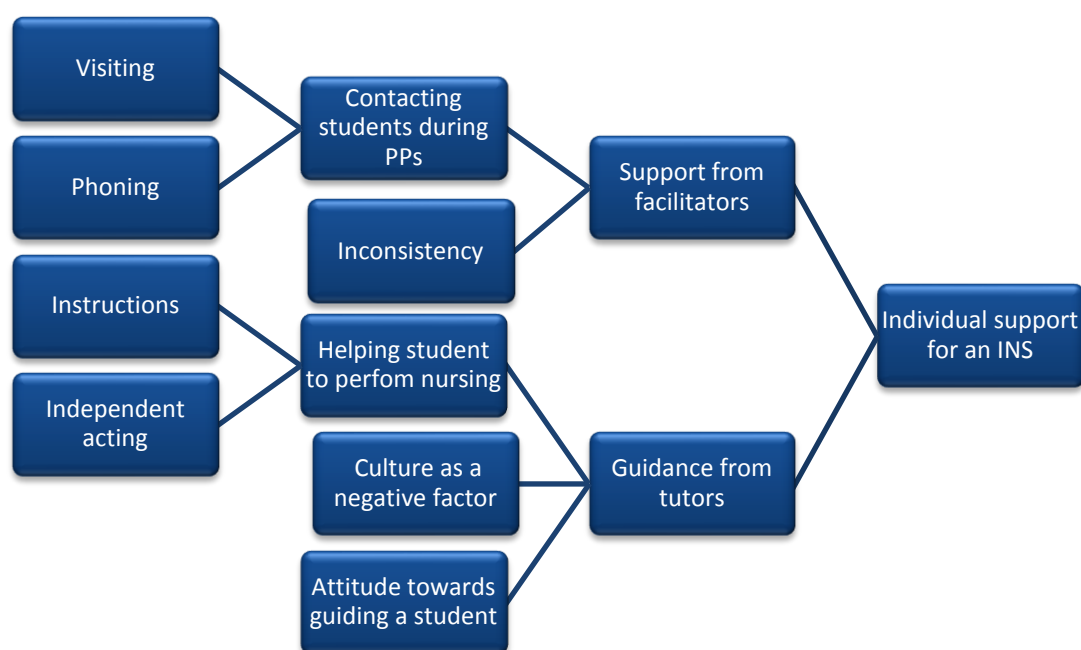


Figure 1 The illustration of the support from facilitators and tutors comprises as individual support for an INS (international nursing student).

Regardless of facilitators’ different supporting methods, the authority as a facilitator was appreciated during PP due to helping a student to solve a difficult situation.

“During placement, if there is misunderstanding between practical tutor and student, facilitator can help to contact or explain to practical tutor that will be beneficial. Usually our own defend is not that powerful...”

In the findings it was revealed that nursing tutors in the practical placements tend not to recognize or consider the individual student’s cultural heritage which impacts on an INS as a person. In fact one respondent claimed that in PPs a foreign nursing student experienced doubt and mistrust concerning his or her skills. Additionally, INSs described some internal factors and rules in PPs which inhibit the use of English language in the ward which is a hindrance to the individual guidance and support. The results indicate that the individual tutors either lack the knowledge of cultural difference or do not consider an INS’s heritage in tutoring one even if having the knowledge about the INS’s culture. Thus, having a tutor who would consider an INS’s heritage would be supportive and beneficial in the PP setting.

8.2. Lingual and cultural considerations

In responses to cultural considerations international students exclaimed how they were treated like Finnish students during the practice.

“BACKGROUND was never an issue to consider. I was treated as any one else, in the first placement, my tutors spoke English to me that’s all.”

“I have treated as an individual. Though my culture was taken into consideration at some point but not in most cases because I was expected to manage as a student in this culture irrespective of my background. This is the most evident in the language aspect.”

Showing cultural considerations towards students was usually colored with attempting to speak with INSs in English. However, often English was not a student’s own language considering the fact just one of the respondents had English as her first language.

Being in a different environment than in the home country was rarely considered and an INS cultural status was taken as a prejudice and a hindrance factor when giving guidance an international nursing student.

“...Because of I am international student, sometimes its hard for them to trust that we are qualified.”

The issue of negligence towards INS's background was not only problem INSs faced during PPs. INSs were expected to be able to speak Finnish language and the ability to speak Finnish often was highlighted as a significant restrictive factor for INS.

An INS explained the lack of having good Finnish language skills as a problematic factor:

“Not always. Actually never. For example in Peijas they have a “no English policy” and a nurse shouted at me for talking out loud (as I wrote) in English. My culture is usually used as a prejudice against me ‘oh she is English - she doesn’t know Finnish, doesn’t know anything, can’t document anything etc!’”

The participants of the study were asked to explain how their Finnish language skills had been fostered during the practical trainings they had completed. Two of the respondents described the help they received from tutors or from facilitators as supportive for developing their Finnish language skills. One way of supporting the development of the Finnish language skills was having patient listeners with whom INSs communicated in Finnish.

One student expressed learning Finnish language in a following way:

“The support was through talking Finnish only to me, but explaining words and concepts it I don’t understand, letting to look in a dictionary the word. if they couldn’t explain.”

One of the INS expressed having stayed in Finland for five years and referred to Finnish courses in school as “non-helpful” because of the higher level of Finnish language he or she had gained during the years in Finland.

Cultural and lingual issues during PPs were evident factors during INSs' PP studies. INSs appreciated if tutors used English as a supportive language when guiding an INS as a nursing student in practice. However some tutors refused to speak English with INS. In addition INS foreign background was a negative aspect in guiding them in their studies.

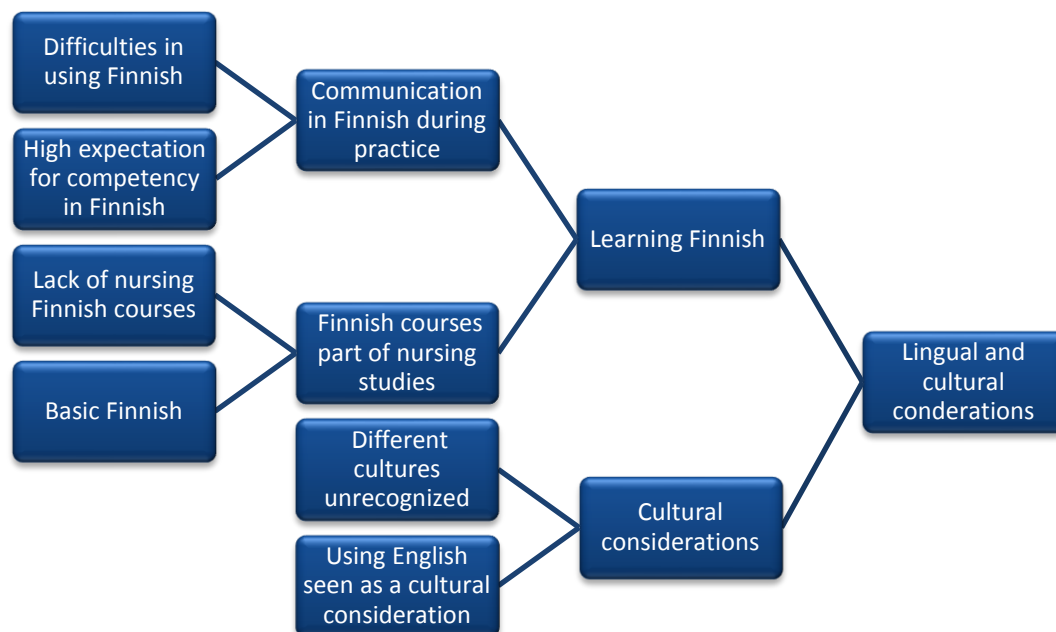


Figure 2 The illustration of the theme called “Lingual and cultural considerations”

Provision of good tutoring and guidance during PPs is important. INSs have expressed difficulties in receiving guidance and support for their professional development. The difficulties for professional development arise from cultural and lingual barriers additionally to the issues in guidance and support during the practice. Thus decreasing the issues due to poor command in Finnish language and differences in INSs’ cultures compared to the Finnish culture should be considered.

8.3. Conquering obstacles for international nursing students

In order to facilitate the professional development it is important to hear what kind of improvement suggestions INSs would have concerning learning in practice. Therefore INSs were asked to tell ideas and to include suggestions about how the learning during practice could be facilitated. All the students’ improvement suggestions were included.

Three students pointed out that having English speaking tutors would be helpful during PPs.

“First tutors should know that international students learn in English and should not be discriminative if they don’t know these things in Finnish language in their initial practices”

“Tutors should be more tolerant to the foreign students. Especially in the first two placements more places should be provided with English speaking tutors”

“- more open minded placements - that international students CAN speak finnish -Helping international students with Finnish so that they can integrate better”

Apart from having English speaking tutors guiding INSs during practice the importance of Finnish nursing courses was raised in the improvement suggestions. Two students exclaimed that Finnish courses concentrating on nursing Finnish would prepare students better for using Finnish language during the PPs.

The other respondent explained the improvement suggestion:

“If the Finnish language course be a little bit structured and be focused to issues related to the practical placements.”

Nursing Finnish language courses would be beneficial for INSs’ learning during PPs. In Laurea there are several Finnish courses that challenge INSs to learn Finnish language. However there is no Finnish course that would acquaint INSs about the nursing Finnish used in PPs. Consequently having a nursing Finnish course would develop INSs’ understanding about the Finnish language used in PPs and thus facilitate the communication between INSs, tutors, other professionals and patients in the practical placements.

In addition to getting better guidance during PPs it was mentioned that receiving support for balancing work and going to a practical placement would be beneficial (Figure 3). However there were suggestions made about what kind of measures could be taken to facilitate INSs’ financial management during PP periods.

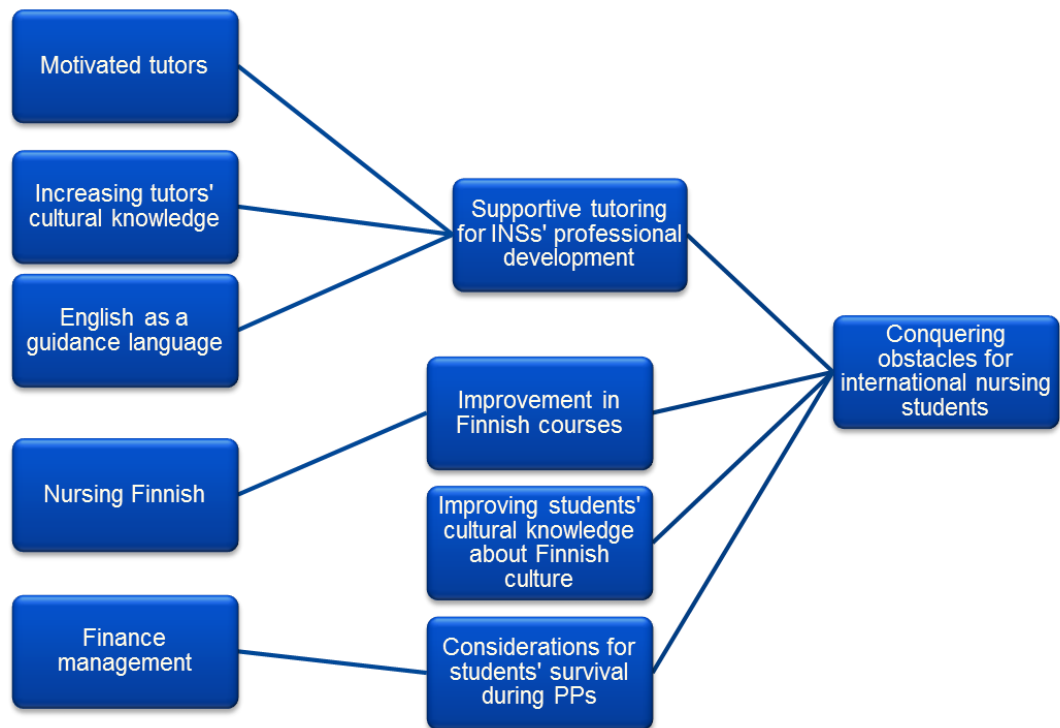


Figure 3 The illustration of the INNs' improvement suggestions considering learning during practice

9. Ethical considerations

Ethics means the moral principals of acting or doing in a right way (Oxford Dictionary). Ethical issues in doing relate to following the principals of conducting a good research (O'Leary 2004). Ethics in research is used for examining the correctness of the thesis and identifying any biases that could have affected the trustworthiness of the results or the writing process of the thesis (Stewart 2011).

By conducting the thesis work it is required that one do no harm respondents, or to the community where you conducting a research (Oliver 2010). By the research the anonymity of the respondents was not violated and respondents' or university of applied sciences' right to the privacy was not compromised. For example in this study no personal details such as names, phone numbers or addresses of the students were required. (Appendix3). The research data was kept with the other writer and it was stored in a file. Nobody except the researchers was allowed to go through the data in the file which was according to the agreement of carrying out the research that the respondents signed.

Important ethical factor in the research work was to inform the respondent about the purpose of the study (Lichtman 2012). In order to supply the meaning of the research to the respondents, researchers explained the purpose statements and the research questions to the students. Apart from that writers opened the concept of support for students so that they would have understood the wideness of the concept support. Students were also able to ask questions about the research from the writers so that they would have got more understanding about the reasons for the study and the meaning of the study.

Consideration of intrusiveness is also important in a research. Respondents should not be asked to exclusively compromise their time, personal space or their comfort for participating to conduct the study (Lichtman 2012). During the time the questionnaire of this thesis was carried out, the respondents were asked not to discomfort themselves by making participation in the study voluntary. The students were let to understand that verbally and by the agreement form. (Appendix 3) Hence students were allowed to decide not participate in the study after receiving the questionnaire or after starting filling it (Appendix 3).

Data interpretation is one of the most important factors when weighing ethical issues in a thesis work. By data interpretation the research question is answered. In addition the value of the purpose statements is measured through the data interpretation

process by the results that were retrieved from the data analysis (O'Leary 2004). Thus it means the proper use of data analysis methods rules out possible lacks in ethical considerations in the research work. In this thesis the data was analyzed only by using coding as a data analysis method and the results were not biased by the personal ideas that the writers had. On the contrary, only the data collected through literature and through questionnaires filled by the international nursing students in the research process (O'Leary 2004).

In addition the purpose of the thesis was not to benefit from the study financially but to produce vital information for Laurea UAS about the nursing degree program. Hence the purpose of the thesis work was not biased by the financial factors.

9.1. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness according to Oxford online dictionary (n.d.) refers to the ability of something to be honest or truthful. The concept trustworthiness refers also to something deserving trust or confidence and dependable or reliable. Trustworthiness in research means the realness of the study and how genuine it is (O'Leary 2004). The elements used for assessing the trustworthiness are called credibility, objectivity, neutrality, reliability, dependability, auditability and transferability (O'Leary 2004).

As it mentioned in the introductory part of the thesis the writers choice of study method are review of literature and questionnaire. This implies that our sources of knowledge emanate from the two; hence, examining trustworthiness helps the work more acceptable.

The credibility of the study describes whether the findings of the research work can be compared to previous results and whether research findings are not forged (Shenton 2004). In this thesis work the findings are comparable to the findings in other studies about international students. For example in Hurme's (2013) and Laiho's (2008) studies international nursing students expressed their difficulties in communication in practical placements.

Truthfulness of a research work is based also on the trueness of the references that were used in the study, which is called dependability (O'Leary 2004; Shenton 2004). Dependability of the study is safeguarded by searching for the references from reliable databases by using Nelliportaali which is a reliable online database provided for

students in Laurea UAS. Through Nelliportaali articles and books online about nursing, international nursing students, qualitative research, support and practical placements were searched, and the references were found via Sage journals, via Ebraby, via Ovid and via PubMed. In addition to online data bases Laurea libraries and Helmet libraries were used to get references for the study.

Moreover, respondents for the questionnaire are third year INS who had undergone several placements and are considered a good source since they were considered knowledgeable about subject of the thesis. The students also represented several countries, and they were from three different continents. In the study there were six respondents. Due to the small scale of the study the findings cannot be generalized to large scenarios due to the low respondent rate. However the study can be used to pave way for further studies about an English degree program of nursing. Generalizing the findings of the study is diminished also because of the fact it is focused on INSs' student in one University of Applied Science. Consequently the writers do not have knowledge about how INSs are supported in other universities of applied sciences during practice.

The writers tried to be as objective as possible to avoid bias by trying to make distance between the work and themselves. However there is a probability of the risk of subjectivity since the writers are students in the English nursing degree program. (O'Leary 2004) The other writer is an international nursing student and thus more at the risk of subjectivity while the other writer is a nursing student with international elements in her studies. Moreover writers knew some of the students outside the research setting which may be a bias and a benefit to the study. A close relationship between the respondent and the writer may be a bias because of it may have affected a respondent's answers to the questionnaire.

The setting of carrying out the questionnaire should be concerned due to dependability because the student filled the questionnaire after a class in the afternoon and signs of restlessness were noticed among the students (O'Leary 2004.) This is evident by the fact that not all the questions were answered according to the instructions. Some questions were replied by using few words when students were asked to describe the phenomenon in details.

During the time students were filling the questionnaire the writers had stayed in the classroom so that students were able to ask questions about the questionnaire so that any question would not have been misunderstood by the respondents. In addition the writers explained the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study and the

definition for the concept support so that INs were able to understand the meaning of the study and its main targets.

The interpretation of the data was done by two persons in steps that were planned in advanced. In addition to this, the auditability of the thesis, which is, its ability to be traced as a process and how the writers come up with the findings (O'Leary 2004) can be seen by the fact that the reviewing literature are consistent with topic and the purpose statements. In addition, there were three objectives for the thesis and after conducting the research and analyzing the data three themes were formed. The description the thesis process is in detail such that the reader can follow the process of the study.

10. Discussion

In the study it was pointed out that the focus during their PPs was on the INSs' Finnish language skills which in most cases played a pivotal role in the development as a nursing professional. Nevertheless, when the focus shifts to lingual competence excessively, other skills related to nursing practice may suffer (Hansford 1997). Clinical environment is meant to provide the INSs the place and time to integrate the theoretical and practical content learned in the educational institution (Hansford 1997).

Supporting an international nursing student during a PP would involve considering the student as holistically as an individual who is learning a new culture, work ethic and language in addition to the nursing skills during PPs. Professional development is an achievement and the process of professional development inculcates support from multiple sources (Bishop, Scott, Palgrave 2000). Practicing nursing and getting instructions requires communication with the tutoring nurse(s) and with the patients, with colleagues and other professionals in the PP setting. Consequently it is important that the tutor would be able to give an INS holistic support.

INS highlighted in support from tutors that their support was guiding them towards independence and there were not any differences pointed out in the tutors' supporting methods. However, the support from tutors was quite the opposite than the support received from their facilitators. Facilitators' supporting methods were not similar in all PPs, rather facilitators' supporting methods had varied from providing support for the INS during practice by visiting an INS and evaluating his or her progress. Sometimes a facilitator did not come to the PP to evaluate a student or gave a call. However, some facilitators helped INSs to get a practical placement which is not tangible help towards student's learning process during a PP. However helping an INS to receive a practical placement was help that gives an INS a chance to foster her or his skills in a PP. Thus it can be considered as a support for an INS's learning.

The facilitator's role towards INSs was emphasized as help before the PP and as communication during the PP. By keeping in touch with INSs a facilitator can monitor the student's progress and thus evaluate the INS better. After the data analysis it became obvious that INS were not receiving homogeneous support from facilitators during PPs (Figure 1). Lack of similar support from facilitators was pointed out as one of the issues that student experienced from teachers who were acting as INSs' advocate. However, students need to be encouraged by facilitators to openly discuss their fears and concerns prior to the placement and during the practice placement

period (Palmer et al 2005; McSharry, McGloin, Frizzel & Winter-O'Donnell 2009; Brown Herd, Humphries & Paton 2005). Palmer et al (1995) further describes communicating throughout the placement period not just favorable for the student's emotional intelligence but communication also strengthens the student's confidence of handling different situations. Palmer et al (1994) emphasizes also that discussing any unresolved or ongoing issues helps the INS to get the highest possible gain out of the PP experience which is important support for professional development.

McSharry et al (2009) elucidates a nursing teacher's role's diversity and nursing students' many expectations from lectures during practical placements, which was also described by Brown et al (2005). Brow et al (2005) explained in his study how nursing students perceive a facilitator's role in practice with following verbs: "supporting, directing, motivating, facilitating, problem solving, trouble shooting, advocating and monitoring". In practice facilitators' dense and unified contact with the students, tutors and staff boosts and fosters the maintenance of the lecturers' clinical credibility. Therefore improving a facilitator's role in practice (Figure 1) would be beneficial in bridging the theory and practice in an INS's development in becoming a professional (McSharry et al 2009). Thus INSs' nursing students' professional development would be fostered by improving facilitators' conduct during practice. Every facilitator would need to follow a certain pattern or agreed methods when providing support for INSs. (McSharry et al 2009; Brown et al 2005).

In the questionnaire after the rectifying the findings, lingual considerations during PP was one of the most evident issue that was brought up. The bottom line was that during practical placements INSs had not been supported as international nursing students. Rather they had been taken to the practice as any nursing students who needed guidance, assistance and instructions during the learning process in a practical placement. Altogether it was apparent in the findings that support for professional development received was individual though the support INSs received should be holistic support when a student would be guided as an immigrant who is a nursing student. In the responses INSs did not describe in detail what kind of support they received during their PPs. Rather they used concepts such as guidance and instruction. Difficulty in explaining the tangible support they received in PPs indicates the issue of receiving support that did not correspond to an INS's need for support (Mattson et al 2010). Therefore preparations would be necessary in order to enhance the quality of the guidance during PPs.

The findings of the study also indicate that apart from learning the Finnish language INSs would benefit from learning about the Finnish culture more. According to Ludwick & Silva (2000) collectivity and family centeredness are two differentiating factors between western countries and the countries in Asia and in Africa. Thus it would be beneficial for INS to receive cultural information and education about the Finnish system so that their attention would not be distracted from professional development to issues that could be avoided by increasing understanding about them. Apart from increasing understanding about culture and Finnish language the INSs had expressed the benefit of having tutors who would consider INSs individually. The findings refer to the benefit of having English speaking tutors for INSs. INSs could receive better tuition during practice because of not needing to deal with Finnish language issues.

In the question on the improvement of INSs' Finnish language skills, some students referred to having Finnish courses as a supportive factor during practical placements. Using Finnish language as a communication language in practice has been pointed out as a challenging factor in PPs in different studies in Finland. (Laiho 2008; Ciulinaru 2010) For facilitating the burden of communicating in Finnish two students had taken Finnish courses outside Laurea UAS with an intention to increase their command in Finnish language.

Cultural aspects faced were also mentioned several times and one of the students suggested that learning more about the Finnish culture would be a beneficial factor in coping in a PP. Finnish culture is quite different considering cultures in other worlds (Ludwick & Silva 2000). Thus by studying in a culture different from one's own should be supported with knowledge about the culture where the learning occurs during practice so that facing cultural issues could be decreased during PPs (Ludwick & Silva 2000).

10.1. Conclusions

The study produced information about the issue of tutors' lack of knowledge and willingness to support nursing students during PPs. Other issues during PPs were pointed out about INSs' competency of Finnish language, lack of consistency in support provided by the facilitators and tutors' willingness to support INSs. The findings are congruent to previous studies (Hurme 2013, Giacomo 2009; Nevala, Olki & Törmä 2013), which confirms the trueness of the research findings.

Consistent support for INS professional development during their studies would be vital for considering their learning. Thus it is suggested that facilitators would have certain unified methods for supporting INS during PPs. Such method would help diminishing differences in facilitators supporting methods so that INS would receive constructed support from each facilitator. INS stated that the support they received was not consistent and it was biased with facilitators' individual views on supporting them during practice.

By visiting an INS in each practice facilitators also could concentrate on knowing the PPs and the tutor nurses better in the PP settings. McSharry et al (2009) also voiced out that lectures establishing good social relationships with clinical staff could foster implementing new changes in clinical practice. Consequently in the case of INS good social relationships with clinical staffs in different PPs could be helpful in getting PPs for international nursing students more easily in the future. In order to facilitate the communication with the students it is suggested that modern technology for example video calls or e-mails apart from phoning and visitations would be utilized in communicating with the students. Therefore creating more efficient communication between students and the facilitators would be possible.

In order to foster the tutoring INSs receive during PPs it would be beneficial to provide information for INSs' tutors about the special aspect to take into consideration whilst guiding an INS. Hence it would be important to provide knowledge concerning the English nursing degree program in Laurea UAS. Providing knowledge for tutors and for staff in PPs would also foster the facilitation of internationalism which is part of the aims of Laurea UAS. By informing the tutors about giving support for INSs that could provide more understanding delivering holistic support for INSs. Methods for increasing knowledge about holistic support for INSs during PPs include creating an information letter or a brochure about the relevant issues about guidance for INS during PPs. The letter or brochure could be sent to practice placement before the beginning of the learning period in practice so that the tutor assigned for an INS could be able to orient him or herself for tutoring the incoming international student.

INSs learning experience would be facilitated also by considering their Finnish language competence. Language skills and cultural knowledge should be considered more and integrated for INSs' guidance during PP. INSs voiced that having English speaking tutors would reduce INSs' struggle to understand the guidance from tutors during PPs. Consequently providing English tutoring would enable INSs to concentrate more on learning nursing skills during practice. Students would be learning Finnish language

alongside the nursing profession however the struggle to increase their competence in Finnish. In addition to having guidance in English some of the respondents pointed out that prejudice towards their cultural heritage should not be held as an issue against them. On the contrary, the students who raised the issue of prejudice hoped for having more “open-minded placements” and thus tolerance toward INSs should be embraced.

All in all the INSs’ professional development could be supported by improving the tutoring and facilitation during PPs. Thus it would be important for INS to receive homogenous and structured support from facilitators during practical placements. In addition, providing information for tutors about guiding an INS during practice and about the purpose and the structure of the English nursing degree program were suggested as facilitation methods for improving the guidance and support INS receive during placements. Learning Finnish language and nursing terminology used in practical placements, and culture in Finland would be beneficial for INSs to reduce the issues they experience during PPs. Therefore it is suggested that to the curriculum of the English nursing degree program would be added more teaching about nursing Finnish terminology and cultural aspects.

10.2. Further research suggestions

This thesis viewed support from international nursing students’ perspective in Laurea UAS. Further study could be carried out about facilitators’ ways of supporting INSs and to study their ideas about supporting INSs during practical placements. By creating understanding of the facilitators ways of providing support for international nursing students, the support facilitators give for INSs could be made formed into guidelines for unifying the support facilitators give the INSs.

It suggested to foster learning during practical placements by creating a brochure or on information letter about the purpose of the English nursing degree program in Laurea, which could be a subject of a new research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

A comprised example of a learning contract used in the second practical training (medical-surgical) in Laurea University of Applied Sciences



LEARNING CONTRACT

Confidentiality agreement: According to the Act on the Health Care Professionals 1994/3/17,

I as a student nurse hereby agree that all information obtained in any form during my clinical studies will be kept strictly confidential and none of information shall be discussed, used, exported or disclosed to any third party.

Student's name and group code:

Place of clinical study, date:

Tutor:

Facilitator:

STUDY UNIT:

Study unit objectives of the curriculum:

The student will be able to

- plan, implement and evaluate nursing care of medical/surgical patients in a multiprofessional team
- communicate and interact with acutely ill patients
- acquire and manage patient information and documents accurately the nursing care plan
- act responsibly in the care unit and reflect critically on his/her own actions, emotions, attitudes as a team member
- set own learning objectives and evaluate his/her own learning process (learning contract)

Professional knowing in the beginning of the period

- In the beginning of the practice I am able

My own objectives for current study unit.

- At the end of the practice I am able

Planning how to reach the objectives:

Planning the evaluation of professional learning:

Student's self-evaluation of professional learning:

Challenges for my learning and development in the future:

Date ___/___/200___ _____

Student's signature

Tutors' evaluation of the student's professional learning at the end of the practise:

Challenges for the student's learning and development:

Date ___/___/2011___ _____

Tutor's signature

Clinical studies passed

Date ___/___/2011___ _____

Facilitator's signature

Clinical studies failed

Grounds for decision:

Date ___/___/200___ _____

Facilitator's signature

Appendix 2
Questionnaire used in the data collection

SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL NURSING STUDENTS DURING PRACTICAL PLACEMENTS

Male ___ Female___

How long have you lived in Finland?___

Did you move to Finland just before the beginning of the nursing studies in Laurea?___

From which continent are you? Africa ___ Asia ___ Australia & Oceania ___ Europe___

Northern America ___ Southern America ___

Will you describe what kind of support you have received from

- your clinical tutors during practical placements?

- your facilitators during practical placements?

How have you been taken in consideration as a person during your practical placements? Has your culture been noticed as guiding you as an international nursing student?

How has the improvement/development of your Finnish language skills been supported during your practical placements?

How have your competences as nursing professional-to-be been fostered as you have completed more practical placements?

Have you received support from other sources than from your clinical tutors, facilitator/teacher? Can you explain briefly what kind of support you have received?

What kind of support during your practical placements has been the most beneficial? How has the support you have received helped you during your practical placements?

How could learning during practice be improved so that it would foster an international nursing student's professional development?

Is there anything else you would like to mention?

February 26, 2014

[SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL NURSING
STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
DURING PRACTICAL PLACEMENTS]

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Participation to this study is voluntary. A person may decide not to participate even after receiving the questionnaire.

The questionnaires answered will be used only to generate information about the topic of the study. The questionnaires do not require a participant to write down one's personal information such as name, phone number or address.

The questionnaires are kept safely and protected, no third party is allowed to go through the questionnaires. After completing the thesis the written questionnaires and the study participation agreements will be destroyed in order to protect a participant's privacy.

Hereby I agree to participate in the research project and know my rights concerning the participation

Date Participant's Signature

Appendix 4



Research permit

4.6.2014

Research permit application should contain at least following elements.

If needed you may give additional information in attachments.

Name: <i>Lisa Nurmilaukas, Aemad Tefera</i>	
Title: <i>Thesis Research Permit Application</i>	
Address: <i>Lisa's: Helmipöllönkatu 1 C 30, 02680 Espoo</i> <i>Aemad's: Maininkitie 4 D 40, 02320 Espoo</i>	
Tel: <i>Lisa's 0458741739, Aemad's 0466561186</i>	
E-mail: Lisa.Nurmilaukas@laurea.fi , Aemad.Tefera@laurea.fi	
Date <i>21.2.2014</i>	
[Research, thesis, etc.] <u>Author(s)</u> <u>/investigator(s):</u>	<i>Lisa Nurmilaukas and Aemad Tefera</i>
Degree programme / college / university:	<i>Degree Programme in Nursing/ Laurea University of Applied Sciences</i>
Unit/department:	<i>Otaniemi Active Life Village</i>
[Research, thesis, etc.] <u>Instructor(s):</u>	<i>Emmaculate Tamankag</i> <i>Kaija Heikkilä</i>

<p><i>Title of the {research, thesis, etc.}:</i></p>	<p><i>Support for international nursing students during practical placements</i></p>
<p><i>Objectives / research problem:</i></p>	<p><i>The purpose statement of the thesis:</i></p> <p><i>-to identify support that the international nursing students receive during their practical placements.</i></p> <p><i>Research question of the thesis is:</i></p> <p><i>what kind of support do the third year international nursing students receive during their practical placements?</i></p> <p><i>The objectives of the thesis are</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>□ to understand what international nursing students experience during their clinical studies</i> <i>□ to emphasize on the importance of support for international nursing students' professional development during their clinical studies</i> <i>□ to provide more knowledge for fostering international nursing students' professional development</i>

<p>Concise definition of what information is needed, the format in which they are needed and how the information is delivered:</p>	<p><i>The information needed in the thesis project will be collected as written information with a questionnaire. The information will be gathered from international nursing student concerning the support they have received during their practical placements.</i></p> <p><i>The thesis work will be published in Theseus and one copy will be in Laurea Otaniemi library. The research results will be distributed to nursing teachers in Laurea Otaniemi.</i></p>			
<p>Timetable (in two months accuracy):</p>	<p><i>The thesis is planned to be ready in March 2014.</i></p>			
<p>Attachments (research plan, questionnaire, framework for theme interview etc.):</p>	<p><i>Research plan, Research questionnaire, Application letter, Description of the scientific research data file</i></p>			
<p>HFilled by issuer of permit at Laurea</p>	<p><i>Research permit is granted</i></p>	<p>x</p>	<p><i>Research permit is not granted</i></p>	
	<p>Grounds</p>			

Name of the issuer of permit:	Hilkka Heinonen
Date:	24.2.2014

Research permit is granted on the condition that applicant complies with legislation when processing and saving personal data. All data is confidential and provided only for purposes of survey/research in question. The applicant is responsible for securing identity and anonymity of persons in data provided. After the survey/research is completed the applicant is responsible for deleting the data in appropriate manner.

If personal data file is created during the research (Personal Data Act -523/1999- Section 10)

then applicant must comply with the provisions of law when processing and protecting of personal information

If necessary, the application must be accompanied by Scientific Research Register Description

The applicant is responsible for providing positive decision to a person who will provide information at Laurea. Practical implementation of survey is negotiated at this point

Appendix 5



Thesis Contract

7.2.2014

The name of the student(s):

Aemad Tefera, Lisa Nurmilaukas

The project of the thesis:

International nursing

The subject and the aim of the thesis:

The subject:

Support for international nursing students' professional development during practical placements (the topic)

The purpose of the thesis:

To identify support that the international nursing students receive during their practical placements.

The research question:

What kind of support do 3rd year international nursing students receive during practical placements?

How the thesis is connected to the objectives of the project :

By carried out the research study of the project to objectives of the project are expected to be met.

The objectives:

- understand what international nursing students experience during their clinical studies
- emphasize on the importance of support for international nursing students' professional development during their clinical studies
- provide more knowledge for fostering international nursing students' professional development

The main concepts and theoretical framework:

The concepts

- international nursing student

- professional development
- practical placement
- support

The most important sources (references):

- Eaton, E. & Henderson, A. 2006. Enhancing support for nursing students in the clinical setting. Nursing Times. Volume 102 Issue 14.
- Tetri, Birgitta. 30.10.2012. Hoitajiksi opiskeleville harjoittelupaikkoja. Helsinki. Helsingin Sanomat.
- Ujitani, E. & Volet, S. 2008. Socio-emotional challenges in international education: Insight into reciprocal understanding and intercultural relational development. Journal of Research in International education. Volume 7, Issue 3.
- Walsh, D. 2010. Nurse Mentor's Handbook : Supporting students in clinical practice. Berkshire, GBR. Open University Press.
- National Board of Admissions
<https://admissions.fi>
- Center for International Mobility (CIMO)
<http://cimo.fi>
- Health professions and pre-law center. No date. Professional Development. Bloomington, United States.
<http://hpplc.indiana.edu/pd/>
- Learning by Developing Strategy(LbD.No date.Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Espoo, Finland.
[http://www.laurea.fi/en/Research/learningbydevelopingcenter/lbd_model/Documents/Learning%20by%20Developing\(LbD\)%20Strategy%202011.pdf](http://www.laurea.fi/en/Research/learningbydevelopingcenter/lbd_model/Documents/Learning%20by%20Developing(LbD)%20Strategy%202011.pdf)

The methods:

Qualitative study with questionnaire, mixture of closed and open ended questions

The data analysis method:

Qualitative Content Analysis (coding)

The time-table of the thesis:

The thesis is ready at latest by the beginning of March 2014

The role of the working life partner as a facilitator:

Laurea UAS

How the results of the thesis will be published and distributed in working life:

Through Theseus, Recommendations for improvement for supporting international nursing students will be distributed to the nursing teachers in Laurea Otaniemi

The student's assurance of commitment to follow ethical guidelines during the thesis process

I am fully aware of being under the oath of confidentiality as the legislation in Finland

prescribe when doing my thesis work. ¹ No information is released without prior knowledge and informed consent of the participants. I assure to keep any personal information confidential. The oath of confidentiality is also valid after the thesis is completed.

I will take care of proper dealing with the data and will not give it to any outside persons. I obey confidentiality and truthfulness in gathering and analysing the data. I take care of that the thesis will not make any harm to the participants. In my actions, I adhere to Laurea codes of research ethics.

How supervision is organized:

By mentoring sessions and by attending thesis classes

Signatures

Students(s)

¹ *Sosiaalihuollon asiakkaan asema ja oikeudet (2000/812/15 §) and Laki terveydenhuollon ammattihenkilöistä (1994/3/17 §)*

Aemad Tefera 0901115

Lisa Nurmilaukas 0801754

Supervisor(s)

Emmaculate Tamankag and Kaija Heikkilä

Working life partner(s)

A copy of this contract will be given to each party (student, supervisor, working life partner) and it also will as will be saved in the work place of the project at Optima