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Nursing students' learning experiences through academic mobility in Finland and Spain

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Laurea University of Applied Sciences

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in Finland and Spain

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This empirical study attempts to explore experiences of undergraduate nursing students before and during international academic mobility through Erasmus+ exchange programme in Finland and Spain.

The phenomenon of globalization in the academic context increases the opportunities for sharing knowledge and innovative strategies for enhancement of connections and partnerships between academic institutions worldwide, promoting internationalization of education through academic mobility programmes. For nursing career, international education and study abroad possibilities increase the expansion of educational and professional opportunities, facilitating the development of essential competences and knowledge needed for successful healthcare interventions and interactions with an increasingly multicultural population.

The current study provides an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding about the main competences developed by nursing students through academic mobility in Finland and Spain. Furthermore, it facilitates a richer description of the determinant factors which hinder and facilitate exchange processes before and during mobility.

This study used the qualitative research method and was conducted in Finland and Spain. Data collected through individual, semi-structured interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis approach. There were eight participants involved in this study, whose ages ranged from nineteen to thirty years old. For comparative purposes, the sample was divided into two groups: Group 1 and Group 2. Three participants were Finnish nursing students during their academic exchange in Spain (Group 1) and five participants were Spanish nursing students before their academic exchange in Finland (Group 2). Most of the participants were females, there was only one male participant. Only two participants developed clinical practicum abroad. There was only one participant who did not complete theoretical studies abroad, but only the clinical practicum.

Five dominant themes were identified in this study: motivation, feelings and emotions, development of intercultural communication competence, development of cultural competence and development of professional competences. The results provide reflection about international experiences in nursing education and identification of important obstacles in teaching-learning processes abroad. This study offers strong support for commitment and collaboration between educational institutions to improve the mobility processes of nursing students, to overcome difficulties and barriers faced by nursing exchange students, and to enhance education for culturally competent nursing.

Keywords: international nursing education, academic mobility, cultural competence, intercultural communication

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1 Introduction

The fast changing of the societies due to the process of globalization, the ever-increasing mobility of populations and the phenomenon of migration represents an impact on higher education and an important challenge to higher education systems (Streitwieser 2014). Knight (2008) states that “internationalization is changing the world of higher education, and globalization is changing the world of internationalization”. According to Hans de Wit et al. (2015, 283) internationalization in the context of higher education is described as the process which enhances the quality of the education and research for students and staff by integrating international, intercultural or global dimension in the delivery of post-secondary education, meaningfully contributing and benefiting the society.

Furthermore, medicine and healthcare are also affected and influenced by the current magnitude of globalization; as a result, a truly global society characterized by interactions and exchanges among different individuals, communities and cultures requires a healthcare system adapted to diversity, offering global-based care (Mittelman & Hanaway 2012). Internationally educated nurses and healthcare professionals have the opportunity to learn from culturally diverse environments. The continuing process of integrating cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural skills, cultural encounters and cultural desire in the delivery of health care is explained by Campinha-Bacote (2002) as the process of gaining cultural competence and achieving the ability that facilitates effective work and interventions within the cultural context of the person, considering individual, familiar and community dimensions.

Previous studies have investigated the impact of educational programmes abroad for undergraduate nursing students as a strategy for developing culturally competent care. As an example, Caffrey et al. (2005) conducted an investigation about cultural competence developed by students of nursing and concluded that students who participated in a five-week immersion experience in a foreign country gained much more cultural competence than students who did not participate in educational experience abroad. Another example could be the study of Ilter (2016), which investigated intercultural awareness of students joining exchange programmes and how it affected their life, attitudes and beliefs. The results were very positive; participants expressed how the experience influenced them in a beneficial way, growing and gaining more cultural sensitivity and understanding, reducing stereotypes, acquiring an increased tolerance by learning a new language and a new culture, among other benefits. To conclude, the author emphasized the importance to take into consideration intercultural competence needed by students of higher education if they join mobility programmes. (Ilter 2016.)

Such positive outcomes as seen in previous projects (Caffrey et al. 2005; Ilter 2016) provide encouragement for embracing globalization by increasing learning opportunities in a global dimension. Collaborative relations and international cooperation appropriately established between institutions can offer high quality learning experiences to the mobile students enhancing and supporting their careers, by developing and innovating worldwide connections. This key goal may not be achieved by educational institutions if difficulties are not visible and solved. Such potential problems and challenges should be identified in order to offer necessary and constructive solutions. It is interesting as well to identify contributing factors that make the process of international education in the field of nursing successful.

This study aims to explore perceptions of Finnish and Spanish students of nursing about internationalization in nursing education. This study also intends to explore determinants that hinder and facilitate international learning experiences for students of nursing in Finland and Spain before exchange and during exchange programmes. By identifying main circumstances that make the opportunity not as beneficial as desired, educational institutions may take advantage from the results of this project to overcome possible difficulties in order to ensure maximum optimization of the learning conditions in international environments.

2 Background

2.1 Higher education in the European Union

In the European framework, the Bologna Process and the Erasmus+ Programme, facilitate mobility of individuals, increasing study, training, volunteering and employment opportunities worldwide (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2018). The Bologna Declaration was signed by 29 European Ministers of Education in 1999; this agreement means a transformation of Higher Education in the European Union and establishes unification, common objectives and cooperation between countries, contributing to strengthening education systems, ensuring excellence, promoting and enhancing education, teaching and learning processes (Bologna Declaration 1999). The 2001 Communiqué of the meeting of European Ministers in charge of Higher Education highlights the importance of considering education as a public good and shared responsibility, as well as promoting mobility between students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff, allowing individuals to benefit from the diversity of cultures, languages and higher education systems. As a result of the Bologna Process, European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was established in 2010; it is signed up and implemented in 47 nations and its aim, among other objectives, is to accomplish the goals related to the Bologna Process, provide guidance, identify new challenges in the field of education and consequently respond rapidly, evolve, adapt and develop effective responses in accordance with the needs required by our societies (EHEA 2010).

Apart from Bologna process, Erasmus+ Programme contributes as well to the success of internationalization in the field of higher education in the European Union. In accordance with the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Erasmus+ is defined as:

The Union Programme that supports actions in the fields of education and training, youth and sport, providing the opportunity to gain competences and have a personal, socio-educational and professional development through studies, training, work experiences or volunteering abroad worldwide (European commission 2018).

Internationalization strategies are adopted by European higher education systems, with the purpose of improving the quality of the mobility processes through measures implemented at institutional, national and European level. As a result of high quality mobility programmes, competences, knowledge and skills of the mobile people will be enhanced, contributing to improve learning processes and expand academic collaborations (EHEA 2012). As part of the commitment to improve the international dimension of higher education, key targets and goals are established. In the 2009 Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, it has been agreed by 46 European ministers Responsible for higher education that in 2020, at least 20% of students graduating in the framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) should have had study or training experience abroad (EHEA 2009).

Erasmus+ is the EU Programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sports for the period 2014-2020 (European Commission 2019). It intends to provide to over 4 million people the opportunity to benefit from experience of mobility with a budget of 16.45 billion of Euros for the years 2014-2020 (European Commission 2018). All national and international strategies implemented will promote, facilitate and increase the number of individuals who benefit from mobility activities, avoiding unintended consequences and contributing to professional and personal development.

2.2 Internationalization of higher education

Initially, it is important to clarify the concepts of globalization and internationalization; both terms are related but they have different meanings. As stated by Altbach and Knight (2007):

Globalization is the context of economic and academic trends that are part of the reality of the 21st century. Internationalization includes the policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions -and even individuals- to cope with the global academic environment (2007, 290).

Knight (2012) divides the concept of internationalization into two perspectives: 'internationalization at home' and 'cross-border education'. Both concepts are differentiated but they

are closely connected. At home internationalization refers to campus-based strategies, which are described and characterized by “intercultural and international dimension in the teaching learning process, research, extracurricular activities, relationships with local, cultural and ethnic community groups, as well as the integration of foreign students”. As an example, learning and teaching methods in the educational setting are recommended by Koskinen et al. (2012) in order to support cultural competence and international education in health care. The authors developed a cultural framework, which suggests experiential and immersive learning experiences such as, simulation games or role-playing in class, case studies, use of literature and films, among other methods, as strategies in the educational institution for developing cultural awareness and cultural knowledge. Repo et al. (2016) presented as well some ways of internationalization without going abroad, since this option is not possible for all students. Some strategies are mentioned by the authors: participation in international online courses, simulation, gaming, among others.

Cross-border education is explained as the “movement of people, programs, providers, policies, knowledge, ideas, projects and services across national boundaries”. (Knight 2012). Regarding cross-border education, Banks and Bhandari (2012) affirm that student mobility is seen as global and physical movement of students across borders, being considered one of the most visible types of internationalization related to higher education. Moreover, this phenomenon is included in a global process of increased mobility of individuals for opportunities related to education and research, employment, economy, migration, tourism, among other areas. Student mobility is possible through exchange programmes, which are offered by participating universities, facilitating and allowing organized exchange of students (Ahn 2014).

Considering the high importance of this topic, there is no doubt that much research about internationalization in higher education has been done previously. For instance, the study carried out by Endes (2015) examined the experiences about the education process of students going abroad; effects and solutions to possible problems are summarized. The final conclusions mentioned by the author according to the obtained findings are expressed as convenient for language and personal development, cultural awareness, among others. Some challenges are also mentioned by the students, for example, difficulties regarding financial situation, adaptation to everyday life or preparation of required documentation.

Finland makes a strong commitment to promote internationalization in Finnish higher education and research. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland has established an international strategy for higher education until 2025, ensuring an active participation in the global community through policies and reforms in higher education that promote international engagement, while adding value and strengthening the existing high-quality education system (Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland 2019).

Spain has implemented initiatives and strategies as well to promote the Spanish higher education system on the international stage, assessing quality and excellence. The strategy for internationalization of higher education in Spain was adopted in 2015 within the framework of Mobility Strategy 2020 approved in the European Union. It has progressed significantly, but economic crisis has negatively affected the education sector in Spain. Despite the challenges and barriers, Spanish Government is strongly committed to internationalization of curricula and great efforts in internationalization have been made, succeeding in student mobility and developing modern internationalization programmes (Spanish Service for the Internationalisation of Education 2017).

2.3 Nursing education in the European higher education context

Finland and Spain, among many other European countries, are full members of the Bologna Process and member countries of the European Higher Education Area since 1999 (EHEA 2016). It is explained by Davies (2008) that Bologna has provided the opportunity to raise educational context of nurses from diploma to graduate level and advanced the education to the university level, presenting appropriate circumstances to facilitate mobility, employment and collaborative relations through uniformity of curricula. Nursing education in Finland is a Bachelor programme, which consists of 210 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits gained through a 3.5 year full-time programme at Universities of Applied Sciences. After, a Master's level degree can be obtained only when a minimum of working experience for 3 years has been achieved and also postgraduate studies can be completed afterwards. (Råholm et al., 2010). Nursing education programme in Spain is a full-scale academic education with degree, master and doctoral levels. The Bachelor Degree in nursing lasts 4 years and consists of 240 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits. (Zabalegui & Cabrera 2009.)

Despite the efforts to unify and standardize curricular programme of nursing education, much remains to be done in order to improve the studies of nursing offered by educational institutions in the European Union. This fact is confirmed by a study conducted by Lahtinen, Leino-Kilpi and Salminen (2014), which aimed to analyze the implementation of nursing education in Europe. Main differences and similarities are illustrated in Table 1. The authors concluded that more similarities than differences were found between member countries. However, more support is needed in order to coordinate, regulate and unify criteria regarding national practices and mobility in nursing education.

Differences in:	Similarities in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nursing education system and entry points ➤ Duration of nursing education programs ➤ Title of nursing graduate ➤ Postgraduate degrees ➤ Entry qualifications and practical training ➤ Registration, specialization and tuition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bachelor degree or equivalent offered ➤ Studies of nursing last three or more years ➤ Possibilities to continue nursing education at master and doctorate level ➤ Minimum entry qualifications and amount of practical training fulfilled by all countries

Table 1: Variations in implementation of nursing education in EHEA according to Lahtinen, Leino-Kilpi and Salminen (2014)

2.4 Internationalization in the field of nursing and nursing education

Initially, it is beneficial to define the concept of ‘nurse’. The International Council of Nurses (2019) uses the definition of a nurse according to Virginia Henderson. It is enounced as:

The unique function of nurses in caring for individuals, sick or well, is to assess their responses to their health status and to assist them in the performance of those activities contributing to health or recovery or to dignified death that they would perform unaided if they had the necessary strength, will, or knowledge and to do this in such a way as to help them gain full or partial independence as rapidly as possible (1977, 4).

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that nursing promotes health, prevents illness and cares of ill, disabled and dying people of all ages, families and groups, sick or well in any community and setting through autonomous or collaborative intervention and care of individuals (WHO 2019).

The close relationship between care and culture determines how human processes related to health, illness, wellbeing, disability and death are experienced. Human behavior towards health and illness integrates cultural perspective; therefore, healthcare needs to be integrated and conceptualized in different and specific cultural contexts, understanding and acknowledging the cultural diversity and universality about care. (Leininger & McFarland 2006.)

Parker and McMillan (2007) mention main benefits that internationalization of nursing brings, such as, more developed cross-cultural understanding, improvements in the standards of nursing education, practice and health, improved practices in workplaces across countries, among other benefits.

The research done by Mitchell, Del Fabbro and Shaw (2017) which aimed to explore experiences of international nursing students abroad, found out that students faced stress due to the lack of language skills. Moreover, they needed more time to learn and adapt to a new education system and they experienced discrimination in class and in clinical placements because of cultural differences and differences among languages. Authors agree that educators in faculty and clinical settings must be competent culturally, provide support and understanding to all students and enhance equal learning opportunities by avoiding discriminatory attitudes. This is emphasized because main challenges for international nursing students in achieving optimal student learning are: language acquisition and education acculturation (Lum et al. 2015).

2.5 Developing intercultural communication through nursing education

Communicative problems and cultural differences might hinder effective, appropriate communication and interaction between individuals with different cultural backgrounds (Dutta 2008; Chen 2017). Cultural and language barriers in health represent major professional challenges and add additional complexity to healthcare interventions, compromising quality and patient safety (Chen 2017). Both nursing practice and nursing education require strong communicative skills and abilities for effective communication, in order to manage successfully different cultural and personal experiences with diversity in values, norms, beliefs, different contextual factors and ambiguity of the language, avoiding unnecessary discrepancies and misunderstandings which can create unfortunate situations of conflict and disagreement (Xu et al. 2004).

A study of Henderson, Barker and Mak (2016) revealed main intercultural communication challenges experienced by nurses and students, including strategies to overcome such difficulties. The study reported four main challenges faced: prejudice, unfamiliarity with cultural boundaries, stereotyping cultural behaviors and difficulty understanding English. All these problems affected negatively on their work and their learning. Participants reported a lack of cultural knowledge and developed strategies to address the obstacles.

Interestingly, Yakar and Alpar (2018) conducted a research with the aim of determining nurses' competence in intercultural communication when providing care to patients with different cultural background. The results showed that the main difficulties faced by professionals of nursing were the language barrier and a feeling of incompetence with fear of being misunderstood. As healthcare professionals, special attention must be given to the failure in building effective communication with patients, it may represent poor quality healthcare intervention, inadequate attention and insufficient information. (Yakar & Alpar 2018.)

This topic has been investigated from a different perspective, obtaining very interesting results. Williams (2005) explored how students who study abroad develop intercultural communication skills comparing with those who stay on campus and concluded that study abroad increases and enhances intercultural communication skills. However, the experience of studying abroad itself is not enough, development of intercultural communication skills is gained when students interact with the host culture. The author emphasizes that educational institutions must find ways which facilitate the interaction of incoming students with their hosting culture and moreover, must find strategies on campus to help exposing local students to other cultures (Williams 2005).

2.6 Developing cultural competence through nursing education

Repo et al. (2016) state that “cultural competence is an essential component in nursing”. It is agreed by Koskinen et al. (2012) that cultural awareness, knowledge and skills need to be integrated, developed and emphasized in health care education. Due to the lack of clear standards concerning enhancement of culturally diverse care in health care education in Europe, the authors developed a cultural framework following these main principles: “developing cultural competence is a continuing process, cultural competence is based on sensitivity toward others, and cultural competence is a process of progressive inquiry”. (Koskinen et al. 2012.) The aim of this framework is to assist European higher health care educators in integrating concepts of culture and cultural competence in the curriculum of health care education. A study done by Repo et al. (2016) evaluated the levels of cultural competence acquired by graduating nursing students in Finland as moderate and concluded that positively associated facts to higher cultural competence are: students’ minority background, frequent interactions with different cultures, linguistic skills and exchange studies. The authors of the study recommend more opportunities to all students for interacting with different cultures, developing linguistic skills and increasing possibilities for home and cross-border internationalization.

Developing culturally competent health care, adapted to the characteristics of every racial, cultural and ethnic group, will facilitate health equity and avoid injustices, discrimination, marginalization and health care disparities (Dutta 2008). Intercultural competence includes “increasing cultural self-awareness, deepening understanding of the experiences, values, perceptions, and behaviors of people from diverse cultural communities, and expanding the capability to shift cultural perspectives and adapt behavior to bridge across cultural differences” (Hammer 2011, 2012). In the field of education, it is agreed by Fitzgerald, Marzalik and Kue (2018) that universities must guide, support and track progress of cultural development of international students instead of only offering the possibility to participate on exchange programmes. The purpose of the research conducted by the authors is to assess inter-

cultural competence achieved by students of nursing enrolled in education courses abroad. Students created their personal intercultural development plan and results showed that they were progressing and achieving intercultural mindset, recognizing and appreciating more and more cultural differences, developing cultural perspective and adapting their behavior in accordance with cultural differences (Fitzgerald, Marzalik & Kue 2018).

2.7 Academic mobility in nursing in the era of globalization

Being aware of the impact that globalization has in societies will provide a wider understanding and knowledge about the connection between education, healthcare and globalization. The dynamic process of globalization has considerably changed the demographic structure of the world. It has also transformed the human societies from an economical, cultural and political point of view, increasing diversity and interconnecting communities (Kawachi & Wamala 2006).

Knight (2008) defines globalization as: “the process that is increasing the flow of people, culture, ideas, values, knowledge, technology, and economy across borders, resulting in a more interconnected and interdependent world”. The author affirms that education is a very impacted sector by globalization (Knight 2008). Health systems are as well significantly affected by the phenomenon of globalization, presenting new health challenges and difficulties. Healthcare services and professionals need to be capable of adapting to contemporary societies and provide appropriate responses in accordance with the requirements of the increasingly diverse communities (WHO 2008).

Interconnecting education and health in an international framework has been done by different authors. For instance, Da Silva (2008) reflects on effective responses to the challenges that nursing faces in a globalized world, affirming that the discipline of nursing needs to be strengthened locally and globally through the fields of education, research and care with multicultural perspective, sensibility and ability to cope with diversity. In the context of education in nursing, the author emphasizes the need for education to be committed in preparing professionals of nursing with proper knowledge about local and global realities, with understanding of health conditions and characteristics of the population, with vision and experience about the complexity of individual and collective interventions in health care, with cultural competence, values and respect to differences in culture, gender, beliefs, among other factors. As a result, levels of quality and wellbeing in the society will be increased. (Da Silva 2008.)

In order to improve global health, the WHO provides a vision, thematic areas and principles that guide growth of capabilities, maximizing nursing contributions to global health (WHO

2016). Nursing workforce education through updated, evidence-based learning practices and continuing professional development is one key contribution, among others, and a core objective to the achievement of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and to the support of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), as illustrated below in Figure 1 (WHO 2016).

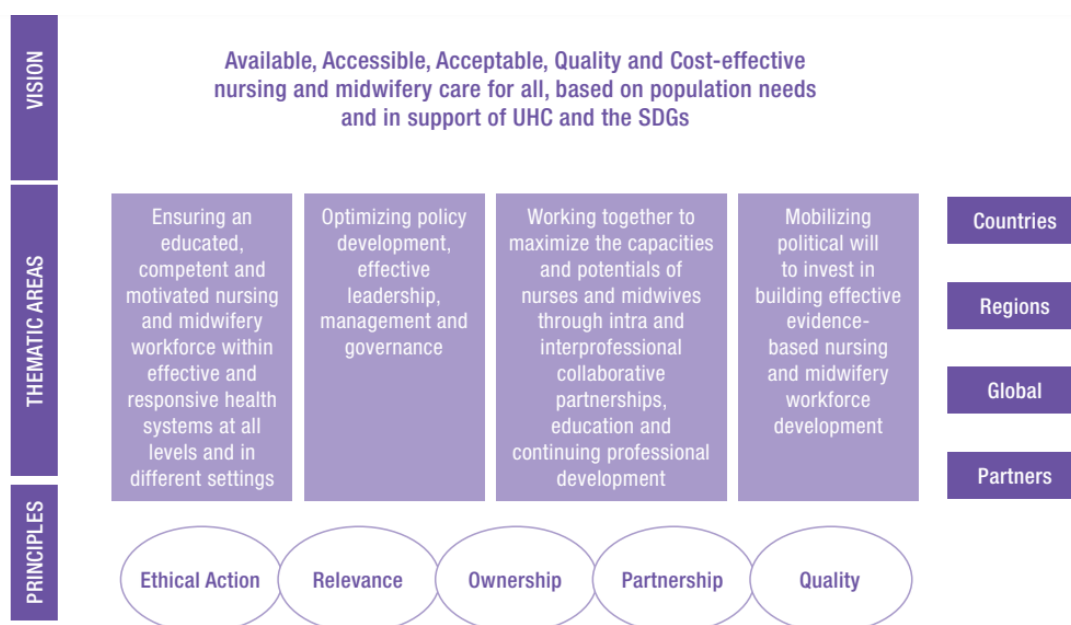


Figure 1: WHO Global strategic directions for strengthening nursing and midwifery 2016-2020: conceptual framework (adopted from WHO 2016)

Nursing contribution to health services delivered globally is very valuable and unique; nurses play a key role in strengthening health systems, bringing person-centered health care closer to communities, collaborating actively in improving health outcomes and cost-effectiveness of health services by promoting and maintaining health and wellness of the population (WHO 2016).

3 Goal and objectives

The goal of this research is to explore the learning experiences among Finnish and Spanish nursing students before academic mobility and during academic mobility through the European international exchange programme Erasmus+.

The objectives of this study are:

1. Explore perceptions of academic mobility for Finnish and Spanish nursing exchange students.
2. Explore main areas of development and learning processes for Finnish and Spanish nursing exchange students.
3. Explore influential factors hindering and facilitating learning through academic mobility for Finnish and Spanish nursing exchange students.

4 Study performance

This project was developed in Finland and in Spain. It involves perspectives of international education in the field of nursing experienced by Finnish and Spanish nursing students before academic mobility and during academic mobility.

4.1 Methodology

A qualitative methodology was chosen for this research project using individual semi-structured interviews as data collection method to explore the experiences of nursing exchange students. Transcriptions of voice recorded data were analyzed using thematic analysis methods. Qualitative research like this focuses on human experiences, analyzing individual cases in great detail through systematic and interactive approaches. Qualitative approach allows the detailed examination of personal experiences and enables the work in depth with few participants, conducting and helping them in giving detailed information of their experiences. (Newell & Burnard 2010, 36). The aim of the qualitative approach presented in this project seeks a better, richer and deeper understanding of international education in nursing from the perspective of nursing exchange students who experience international learning processes in Finland and Spain (Vaismoradi et al. 2013). Individual interview is used as data collection method; semi-structured interviews permit detailed exploration and allow respondents to tell their own experiences in their own way (Newell & Burnard 2010, 36). Afterwards, qualitative data was analyzed. The author of the study used thematic analysis for qualitative data analysis. The collected information from exchange students of nursing will focus on how international experiences are accomplished and processed (Jeanfrau & Jack 2010).

This study aspires to ensure trustworthiness through all phases by securing appropriate availability of data through advanced skills in data gathering, proper analysis and accurate report of results (Elo et al. 2014).

4.2 Study settings

Data was collected from participants whose host educational institutions were: Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Finland), which is a non-profit public higher education institution

located in the Finnish region of Uusimaa and University of Valencia (Spain), which is a Public University, located in the Spanish city of Valencia.

Laurea University of Applied Sciences began operating in 1992. It is established in the region of Uusimaa (Finland) in 6 different campuses, with 500 staff members, around 7800 students and more than 24.000 alumni. This higher education institution offers 16 degree programmes, 6 of them are taught in English. Laurea has around 250 international cooperation partners worldwide. International exchanges and projects are developed by Laurea; around 350 staff members go on exchanges to partner institutions annually and Laurea receives around 170 visitors from partner institutions every year. Annually, around 460 students go abroad as exchange students and Laurea receives 400 international students from abroad (Laurea University of Applied Sciences 2019).

The University of Valencia is one of the oldest universities of Spain, it was founded in 1499. It offers degrees in all fields of knowledge in a total of 4 university campuses with 18 faculties and schools and doctoral schools. The Teaching and Researching Staff is formed by a total of around 3850 members. The technical, administrative and services staff is formed by a total of 1850 members approximately. In 2017/2018 around 50.000 national and international degree students, official master's degree students and doctoral programme students were registered in this higher education institution. There were around 2000 under-degree incoming students from international mobility programmes and 1700 under-degree outgoing students (University of Valencia 2019).

4.3 Participants

As represented in Table 2, the participants of this study consisted of eight nursing students, three participants were from Finland and five participants were from Spain, whose ages ranged from nineteen to thirty years old. Most of the participants were females, there was only one male participant. At the time of the interview, Finnish participants were completing their exchange studies in Spain. Spanish participants were going to complete their exchange studies in Finland in the following months. Only two participants developed clinical practicum abroad. There was only one participant who didn't complete theoretical studies abroad, but only the clinical practicum. There were only two participants who spent one whole academic year abroad. The other participants studied abroad only half of the academic year. Respondents were studying their 2nd and 3rd year of Nursing. All participants speak, at least, three languages. In this study, purposive sampling is the approach of choice; purposive sample involves people that are selected on the basis of their being reasonably likely to provide information or perspectives on the given topic (Newell & Burnard 2010, 72). Saturation was reached after the eight interview: this fact can help in considering the sample size. Satur-

tion means that the study will continue until the same information starts being repeated, with no new information emerging (Newell & Burnard 2010, 74). For comparative purposes, the sample of this study was divided into: Group 1 and Group 2. Dividing the sample in two groups facilitates the understanding of how academic mobility programme in nursing is experienced from two different perspectives: before going abroad and during the stay in the destination country. It enables as well to gain a deeper insight about the understanding of differences, ability to overcome barriers and desire to use developed skills.

	Gender	Age range	Academic year	Home country	Destination country	Experience
GROUP 1	3 females	24-30 years old	2 nd and 3 rd year of Nursing	Finland	Spain	During exchange
GROUP 2	4 females 1 male	19-21 years old	3 rd year of Nursing	Spain	Finland	Before exchange

Table 2: Profile of participants

4.4 Data collection

Initially, written permissions for conducting this research were applied from: Laurea University of Applied Sciences and University of Valencia. Both educational institutions represent the home universities of the participants. After receiving a positive answer and the written permissions from the institutions, the researcher contacted the participants with the help of International Coordinators of both Universities.

Trustworthiness in preparation phase is ensured by choosing and using the best data collection method to answer the questions of the research, in this case, open and semi-structured (Elo et al. 2014). The main form of data gathering for this project was on-site interviews. Participants were individually interviewed through a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews are a type of interview organized around open-ended questions, which allow participants to respond freely, involvement of the conversation based on the participant's responses and permission for clarification of questions and answers (Goodell et al. 2016).

The interview guide was produced in assistance of literature (Holloway & Galvin 2017, Brinkmann 2013, Newell & Burnard 2010) and included initial questions about background information and open-ended questions, included in a framework that enables the access and identification of key areas of study. Areas of interest included experiences studying abroad, experiences preparing future exchange, experiences and factors that hinder and facilitate intercultural communication, cultural competence and professional competence (Appendix 1). The

author of this study is bilingual; therefore, interviews were conducted in Spanish and English. The interviews were conducted in April 2019 in a quiet environment, they were fifteen to fifty-two minutes in length, interviewees decided best time and location, generally Public Libraries or facilities at the University, and were informed about the characteristics, the aim and purpose of this study and gave written consent to voluntarily participate.

All interviews were recorded. Recordings were saved in a secured and personal mobile phone with password only known for the author of the project. Transcribed data in Word documents was saved in the author's personal computer, which is secured by password only known for the author of the project. All data was carefully saved and destroyed after publication of the study; audio files and transcription of the audios in Word documents were digitally destroyed, field notes were physically destroyed. According to the General Data Protection Regulation, when data is no longer necessary in relation with the purpose it was collected for, it is obligatory to erase all the personal data gathered (GDPR 2016).

4.5 Data analysis

In this qualitative research, the data was analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. Elo & Kyngäs (2008) state that the data in inductive approach progresses from specific to general approach and the process of inductive analysis follows three steps: preparation, organizing and reporting. Thematic analysis is defined by Braun & Clarke (2006, 79) as: "a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data". Spoken word of the participants was coded. This approach ensures that the expression of participants about their experiences is directly reflected in the analysis. After receiving written permissions and written consents, collection and transcription of the data into a written form was completed. Researcher transcribed and translated in detail, as accurately as possible. By allocating each interview transcription a number, confidentiality was maintained and ensured through all phases of the study. The collected material was ordered and organized.

In this case, data was analyzed only by one researcher. With the aim of becoming familiar with the information, reflection on the meaning of the data was developed through constant review and comprehensive reading. Relevant information from interview transcriptions was identified and given initial code. Saldaña (2013) states that coding with words and sentences extracted from the interview transcripts is a method that enables organization of the data into categories because they share several characteristics, allowing the classification of many words into smaller units of content. As a result of the process of coding, themes are obtained. Themes are statements, ideas, observations, phrases and sentences derived from the stories of the participants during the interviews, which capture the nature of the experiences and bring meaning to the phenomenon which is being investigated (Saldaña 2013). Themes were

checked and reviewed, before defining and naming them. Finally, the report of the analysis was produced. These six stages comprise the process of data analysis in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006; Vaismoradi et al. 2013) and are represented in Figure 2.

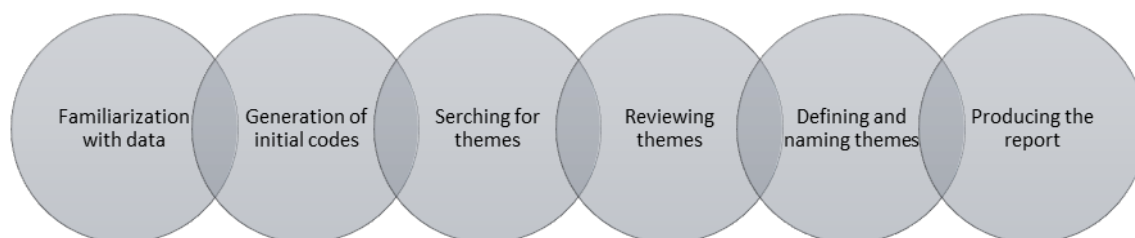


Figure 2: Phases of thematic analysis. Applied from Braun & Clarke (2006) and Vaismoradi et al. (2013)

The main sentences obtained and selected from a total of twenty-seven pages of written and transcribed data were used in the analysis process to answer the following research questions:

- 1: How do nursing students experience international education under the Erasmus+ Programme in Finland and Spain?
- 2: What is the core learning about nursing education and how is it experienced by exchange students?
- 3: What factors hinder and facilitate the learning process of nursing exchange students before mobility and during mobility?

5 Results

This study has identified five dominant themes and related issues associated with international experiences in nursing education: motivations, feelings and emotions, development of intercultural communication competence, development of cultural competence and development of professional competences. The results are presented and illustrated with statements from the interviews (Appendix 3). In order to preserve confidentiality, identification of participants is not used in the report of results due to the small size of the sample.

Motivation

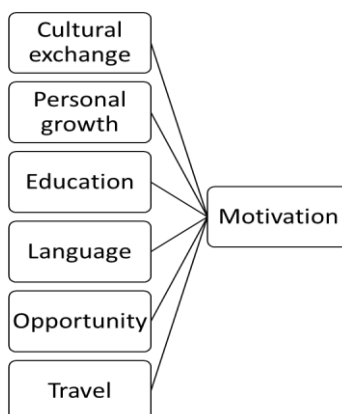


Figure 3: Motivations for academic mobility expressed by Finnish and Spanish Nursing students

The principal motivations that participants have for studying part of their nursing career abroad are represented in Figure 3. The main motivation which is cited by almost all respondents is related to culture, expressed as interest for cultural exchange, the opportunity to discover and experience a new culture, to live a new life in a new and completely different context, the possibility to experience a new country, a new way of living and the chance to meet local people.

I want to see the world, to see different cultures, because that helps me understand people.

I want to know new cultures, meet new people.

All Spanish participants (Group 2) highlighted the attractiveness of going to Finland, which is a destination located far away from Spain, to experience a very different culture, environment and lifestyle.

Destinations closer to Spain, where lifestyle is similar, don't attract my attention. I would like to experience a different country, a different culture. Nordic countries are far enough from Spain, so definitely, I will find important differences, I am not used to the cold weather. The culture and the way of living, working, thinking, might be completely different.

Finnish participants (Group 1) revealed motivation and opportunity in terms of personal growth and self-development through the experience of exchange.

I am challenging myself every day.

I think that, in so many levels, it is a very developing (experience) for yourself.

Participants from Spain (Group 2) don't mention the motivation for personal growth when the interviewer asked directly about the main reasons or motivations for applying and being an exchange student. As the interview goes by, it was founded out that all the participants in Group 2 despite one, aim to develop personal growth through the educational experience abroad.

I won't have the support of my parents if I am far from home. I will have to solve everything by myself and this will make me grow.

International experience will be very enriching for me.

I would like to learn to be very independent and responsible, to have my own view of life, to have my own reasonable criteria and find myself.

I have always lived with my parents; I have never been out of my comfort zone. Being far from the reality I know will contribute to grow up.

In Group 1, only one participant mentioned the importance of discovering a new education system, but this was not the main reason for studying abroad.

It is an experience studying here and to see how the studies are, how do they vary from the studies in Finland...I have to say (the main motivation) wasn't to look for... ok do they offer the best nursing studies for me here?

The opportunity of experiencing a new education system was one of the main motivations for two Spanish participants (Group 2).

(The main reasons are...) the possibility to study one year abroad... and discovering a new education system. I have read that the education in Finland is very dynamic, centered in developing professional abilities for the future, with more projects and learning through experience, it is not as theoretical as in Spain.

I would like to discover a new education system.

Interestingly, two Finnish students (Group 1) reported seeking improvement in Spanish and English languages and one participant in Group 2 is willing to improve skills in English language.

I can practice different languages... I choose Spain because I want to practice my Spanish...and of course, I want to improve my English.

The first thing was more about the Spanish language that I want to learn.

I want to improve my English.

One significant motivation for two participants in Group 1 is expressed as the possibility to increase the future opportunities of employability through their learning experiences abroad.

Maybe one day I would like to go to work to Latin America or maybe Spain or United States.

Hopefully later on I have a chance to work here as well if I want so...it opens many doors.

Despite one, all participants in Group 2 showed their interest in travelling and mentioned that it was a motivation for studying abroad. Any participant in Group 1 gave similar answer for the same question.

I love travelling and this is the perfect opportunity to travel while I study.

To conclude, the results show more similarities than differences about the main motivations that Finnish and Spanish students of nursing have for academic mobility. The main motivation expressed by almost all participants is the interest in the cultural exchange.

The main motivations for studying abroad expressed by Finnish students of nursing are the possibility for personal growth, language learning and major opportunities for the future. In contrast, the main motivations Spanish students of nursing have for studying abroad are enthusiasm for Finland, the possibility do discover Finnish education system and increasing chances to travel.

Feelings and emotions

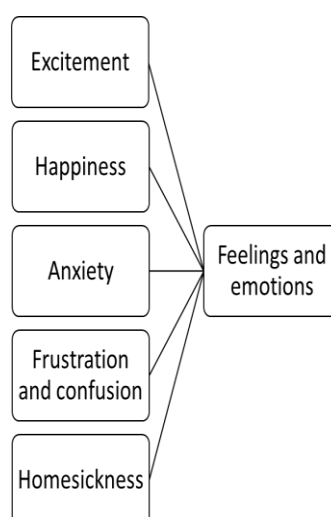


Figure 4: Feelings and emotions expressed by Finnish and Spanish nursing students related to academic mobility through Erasmus+ exchange programme

Figure 4 reveals how participants from Finland (Group 1) make sense of their experiences and how preparation for studying abroad made the participants in Group 2 feel.

Most of the participants of the study expressed feelings of excitement and happiness related to international learning experience as exchange students. Positive feelings were identified by only one of the participants in Group 1, who was already living abroad and experiencing the international perspective in education and in life.

Mainly, (I feel) excited, fortunate and happy for being here.

Mostly, I am very very happy and I feel that we are lucky to have this possibility... we are very fortunate... it makes me very happy.

Almost all the participants in Group 2 identify excitement as the main feeling experienced before going abroad.

Most of the time I am happy and very excited.

(I have) feelings of excitement and motivation.

The feeling of excitement is amazing.

In contrast, however, negative emotions were expressed mainly by the participants in Group 1, who are facing some difficulties in the new context. It is possible to observe a sense of anxiety expressed by one participant in Group 1 as a consequence of being out of the comfort zone.

I didn't expect it but I am having a lot of anxiety... Sometimes I can be at home and I feel anxious, I do not want to go outside because everything is too much at the same time, new places, new people.

The language barrier and a different context of living and learning are the main reasons that cause feelings of frustration and confusion.

It is a new environment, a new language... due to the difficulties in communication I sometimes feel frustrated and confused.

It is also possible to identify feelings of homesickness in some participants in Group 1. However, only few participants in Group 2 are aware that they might experience some difficulties such as feelings of longing for their homes when they arrive to the country of destination.

There is nothing around that reminds me about home.

I feel homesick sometimes.

I am aware that I can feel homesickness sometimes.

I also know that it will be hard sometimes, I will miss my family and friends.

In contrast, more positive than negative thoughts, emotions and feelings are expressed by participants from Spain (Group 2).

I experience more excitement than fear.

I have more positive than negative feelings.

In conclusion, the emotions experienced by Spanish students in the phase before academic mobility are very positive and demonstrate enthusiasm for the future experience. Despite this, they reflect about possible challenges and difficulties that they might face in the destination country. In contrast, Finnish students studying abroad express worry in general due to the real obstacles they find in academic and daily contexts.

Development of intercultural communication competence

The following figure summarizes the related factors to one core learning developed in international context in nursing education: intercultural communication competence. Main difficulties, main facilitating factors and the willingness to learn and improve are illustrated in Figure 5.

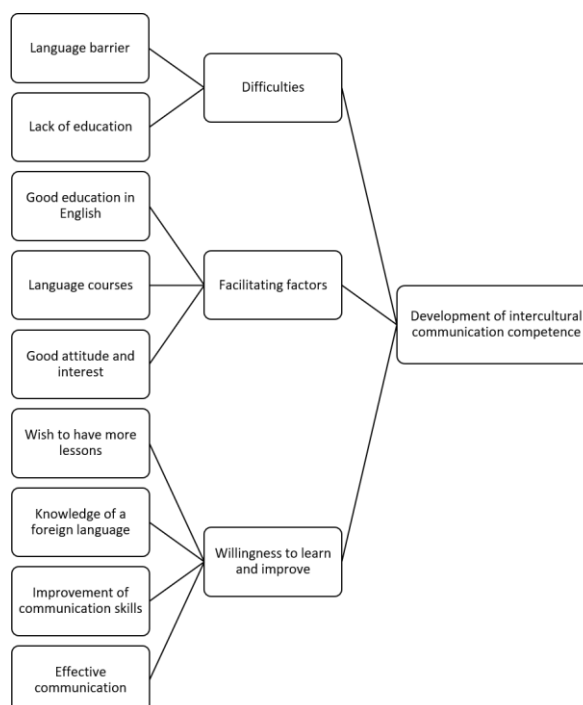


Figure 5: Experiences of Finnish and Spanish Nursing students about intercultural communication competence

One of the most significant findings shows that all respondents brought up the importance of language and communication and many different facts about how communication processes across cultures are experienced and developed. The analysis of the data revealed previously that language was considered a relevant motivation for few participants and the possibility to improve language skills and acquire more knowledge and ability in Spanish and English, mainly, was a motivating factor for studying abroad.

Despite the major motivation, some difficulties and challenges are reported. Language barrier was considered an important obstacle in communication in the clinical environment for Finnish students studying in Spain. The experienced difficulties hindered the learning process and the integration in the professional team. Some challenges related to studying in a different language were reported as well.

The difficulties related to language are stopping the communication.

In the hospital I feel integrated in the team... but many times it is difficult to participate in a conversation because of the language barrier.

Academic English in Nursing and vocabulary in Nursing is more difficult.

I have to translate a lot of words because it (a report) must be written in scientific language, it can't be colloquial or slang English. That is the hardest part.

The lack of appropriate education in communication and the insufficient preparation for effective interaction through competent communication is addressed by a participant from Group 2. The improvement of intercultural communication skills through education and training is seen as necessary.

In the university we learn techniques, theory... but there is a lack of education about effective communication, improvement of communication skills... it is very important that we learn about this.

Good education in English, the language courses, a good attitude and showing interest were seen by most of the participants from both groups as very important factors in helping them overcome learning difficulties and adjust to the new learning environment.

I think we are privileged in Finland for having good education in English, it opens many doors and I feel secure.

The language course helps.

Here you have to be motivated, you have to learn because you are studying in a different language, you have to be super focused in class.

With a little and basic knowledge of the language, a good attitude helps and being interested in communicating will facilitate interaction with others, it will be easier.

All Finnish participants (Group 1) attend a course on Spanish during exchange period and all participants of Group 2 will attend a course on Finnish and Finnish culture at the host University. More than half participants reported willingness to learn the language and desire to improve language skills.

I would like to have more (Spanish lessons).

I would like to continue Spanish lessons in Finland.

I would like to learn the basics about Finnish language. I would like to use the Finnish language I learn.

I would like to improve my communication skills... I want to express myself in the best way I can.

It is important to find effective ways of communication.

During exchange programme, some difficulties in communication were experienced by Finnish nursing students in clinical and academic environments in Spain. A lack of education and training in effective communication was recognized by a Spanish student before exchange programme. Despite that, participants from both groups reflected about coping strategies to overcome difficulties related to language disparities and communication challenges. All students expressed desire and motivation for improving and advancing skills in multicultural communication.

Development of cultural competence

Findings of this study related to one main learning point are illustrated in Figure 6. It presents the theme of development of cultural competence through academic mobility and related issues described by the interviewees, such as: core values, difficulties, facilitating factors and willingness of cultural and social integration.

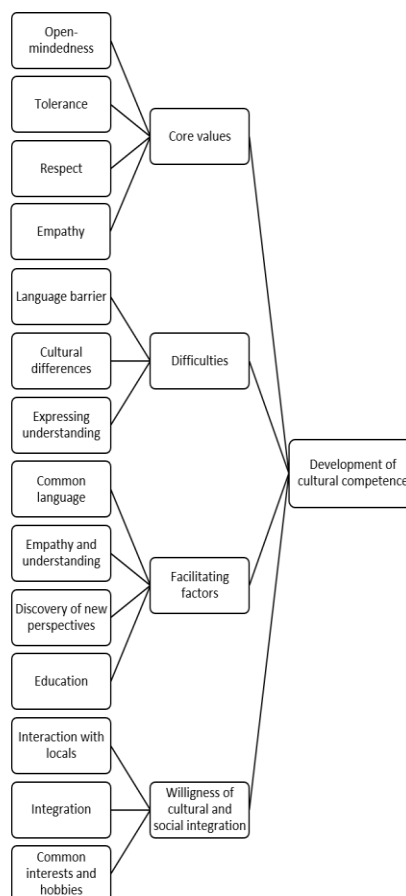


Figure 6: Experiences of Finnish and Spanish Nursing students about cultural competence during Erasmus+ exchange programme

The increasing opportunities that all participants have for interacting with different cultures through exchange programmes allow the reflection of core values needed in culturally diverse environments and international academic atmosphere both at educational and healthcare institutions. All participants express awareness about cultural differences that might be experienced, and essential values required and developed in such circumstances. The main ones announced are: open-mindedness, tolerance, respect and empathy.

(In the new cultural setting) the key is being open-minded.

The most important attributes are tolerance and respect.

I will learn to be more tolerant.

This experience will contribute very much in being open-minded, in eliminating stereotypes and prejudices.

On the issue of difficulty while interacting with people with different cultural background, participants pointed out that language barrier, cultural differences and difficulties in expressing understanding and a sense of integration may challenge the relationship between culturally diverse individuals.

It is challenging because of the language. I don't understand.

There are issues difficult to understand because I have been educated in a different way than another person. We might prejudice, we might have preconceptions.

The most difficult issue is to make the other person feel integrated and not offended or discriminated. Sometimes it is hard to transmit quietness and a feeling of understanding.

Different ways of thinking, different philosophy, a different logic from ours... these factors can challenge the relationship between people from diverse cultures.

Despite the difficulties, many key factors were identified as facilitators in the interaction between different cultures. Firstly, language as a facilitator.

A common language helps.

Secondly, an increased feeling of empathy and understanding after the experience of living abroad by themselves.

Being empathetic will be easier after living abroad and experiencing by myself an international experience.

Thirdly, the opportunity to discover new realities and adopt new perspectives, more tolerant and open to diversity.

I think the more you get to know people from different cultures, the easier it gets to understand that we are all humans, we just have different ways of doing things.

When we learn from different cultures, we also adopt new perspectives, we see reality from different viewpoints.

Finally, education.

Education (is a facilitating factor). It is very important to have a proper education and learn how to interact with people from different cultures.

All participants from both groups gave a negative answer when the interviewer asked if students complete a course about cultural competence before or during exchange programme through host or home educational institution.

Expressions of desire and interest for interaction with local people, integration in the new cultural setting and finding common interests and hobbies are expressed by participants of both groups.

I am trying to meet local people. I am trying to get all the information about the culture. I wish there were more local (students in my class).

We did not have the opportunity to meet Spanish nursing students... school has not done much for us to meet the Spanish students...that is something I would have hoped.

I have some Spanish friends... we meet for lunch, we go out together...

I would like to be integrated in Finnish culture.

I would like to discover main interests and hobbies of Finnish people and find common interests that we could share.

Development of professional competences

Main factors related to the theme of development of professional competences through studies abroad are presented in Figure 7 and include difficulties, facilitating factors, opportunity and suggestions for improvement.

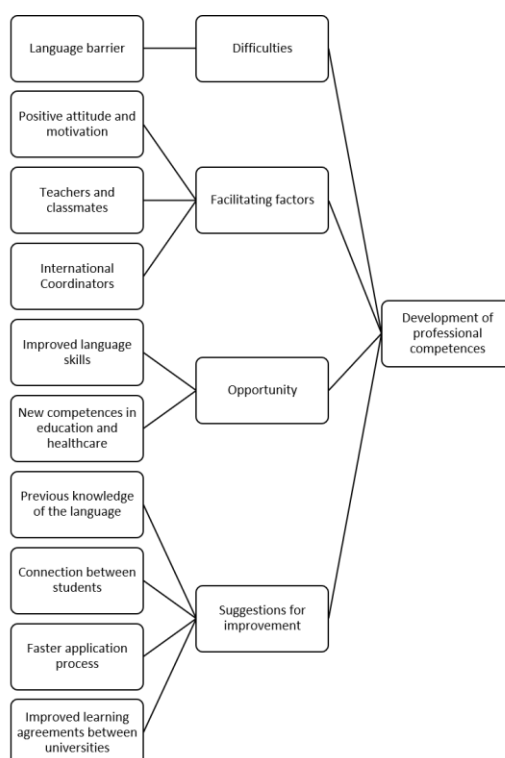


Figure 7: Experiences of Finnish and Spanish Nursing students about professional competences during Erasmus+ exchange programme

As participants in Group 1 said, language difficulties were considered a serious barrier to learning in the destination country. Due to this obstacle, the quality in teaching-learning processes can be negatively affected.

I feel that mentors here can't guide me properly because of the language barrier.

My Spanish is not so good...I think I learn more in Finland about my professional skills...I want to use my practice, to get everything from that, to learn everything.

In order to maximize learning opportunities, two participants in Group 1 consider that motivation and an active learning attitude are very important and positive factors in the learning process.

Excitement and happiness for being here help to be motivated for the studies, for learning...the feeling of being fortunate. We have very nice teachers here, who are very good, encouraging us.

Despite the challenges, the support from mentors and classmates in the host country is very much appreciated by Spanish participants (Group 2).

The tutors are very helpful and supportive, they encourage me in focusing in the things I want to learn, in my goals and objectives... we have meetings every week.

I have a group, me and four other students, we have the best team...it makes the learning interesting... we discuss about it...then it is easier to present something, and they give you support.

Participants of Group 2 expressed gratitude for the help in the application process before going on exchange.

The international coordinators are always ready to help.

International coordinators have helped very much in the application period.

The university provides guidance about the future experience and it facilitates paperwork and procedures.

Although most participants in Group 1 reported difficulties in the learning process during the exchange period abroad, all of them considered that learning in a different language was beneficial for their career.

This exchange helps me to work abroad.

I am ready to work with people who come from abroad... I can work in an international team.

I am also studying English vocabulary in nursing and this is very good for my future profession.

Participants in Group 2 revealed that being exchange students will have many beneficial consequences for their career and for their professional future. An experience abroad is considered very positive in many dimensions. It is seen as a privilege, as an opportunity for increasing cultural competence, for gaining new competences and knowledge in nursing and for discovering new perspectives about education and healthcare.

Learning from different cultures helps to give better attention.

Not everybody can study abroad, an international experience will be very enriching for me.

I would like to learn a new way of working, so when I come back, I can use all the new ideas I had during my international experience.

I would like to develop professional competences, leadership skills, ability to work in a team, to learn new concepts and perspective related to global health.

Learning experience in Finland will help me to do a better work in multicultural environment.

I will study the same career from a completely new perspective.

This experience will allow me to learn from new education and healthcare systems, in the future I will have more options... more opportunities.

The results of the current study also provide elements that are useful for improving teaching-learning processes and application procedures for becoming exchange student of nursing.

A Finnish participant in Group 1 considers highly important learning Spanish before exchange period in Spain.

Not everybody can communicate in English in Spain... I would suggest learning Spanish before coming here. Good skills in English only are not enough (in Spain). Learning medical terms in Spanish could be beneficial.

In the application process, more information would have been appreciated. It is expressed by few participants that it would be very interesting and positive to be in contact with students who have previously being on exchange in the same destination. Educational institutions can facilitate these connections.

Why (the university) don't use people who have done the same exchange to give advice and help? And specially, in the own field.

More ideas for improvement suggest that a faster application process would be appreciated and helpful.

I had to ask few times for it (a signature). They don't reply very quickly.

The process is too long. We started the application process in December, now is April and I still don't know what courses I will study.

Overall, results from this study show that all participants highlighted the necessity of improved learning agreements between universities. Despite one, all participants are very interested in doing both theoretical and practical studies in the destination country. What is more, one participant in Group 1, who is only completing theoretical studies at this moment, is going to extend the time abroad and complete internship. A Spanish participant (Group 2) will suffer delays in his/her career due to the exchange programme and the impossibility of developing the internship in the country of destination.

I would like to do practical experience as well. But the university doesn't accept the practical experience from Finland.

I would like to have an experience in a Finnish hospital, but this option is not possible unfortunately.

It is important to improve agreements between universities. I am very upset because I can't do the internship in Finland. It would have been very beneficial to have both theoretical and practical experiences abroad. Studying one year abroad has a negative side: my studies will take longer. My classmates are interested as well in doing the practicum in Finland but they don't want to delay their studies, I understand it very well...

In the University we learn new techniques, theory... but there is a lack of education about effective communication, improvement of communicative skills...

The only missing thing, which would make my experience very complete and rich, is the internship.

I understand that the healthcare system is different and the language can be a challenge, but anyway, I would have been interested in having the practical experience in Finland.

6 Discussion

The development of international academic mobility programmes in nursing education within the context of increased globalization adds value to the personal and professional life of exchange students broadening their worldview, enhancing their knowledge and adaptability to the current situation of population diversity across the globe. The implementation of international initiatives by educational institutions aims to achieve outcomes, as documented in literature (Matlay 2007; Jackson 2015), increasing and promoting student exposure to different

cultures, realities and systems, integrating global learning, developing social consciousness and cultural, communicative and professional competences.

The results of the current study described a broad range of experiences, reflections, skills and abilities developed through academic mobility in nursing, with both personal and professional impact. Additionally, it showed the reflection, commitment and preparation process required before the international exchange.

Participants identified main motivations for studying abroad and special emphasis was placed on the opportunity for interaction with different cultures through personal and academic experiences in a new cultural and diverse setting. Significant contrast was appreciated about main emotions and feelings experienced by students before mobility and during mobility. Despite the enthusiasm and excitement for studying abroad, difficulties experienced in the destination country, mainly due to the language barrier and unfamiliar environment, are responsible for negative feelings of anxiety, frustration, confusion and homesickness.

Study-abroad experience was considered by nursing students as an opportunity for improving communicative skills in multicultural settings. Despite the willingness to learn a new language, to gain new skills in communication and improve communication patterns in different cultural situations, language differences were regarded as an important challenge, obstacle and problem in some teaching-learning processes in the clinical and academic settings. As an example, one Finnish nursing student pointed out that many patients and healthcare professionals in Spain have poor knowledge of English. This fact hinders, not only the communication and work with patients and other healthcare professionals, but also the opportunity to learn in the clinical environment during academic mobility. Similar findings were summarized in a study done by Jirwe, Gerrish and Emami (2010), which affirmed that nursing students experience difficulties and challenges related to cross-cultural communication, particularly when a common language is not shared with patients from different cultures. The authors considered that nursing programmes must provide competent education in cross-cultural communication and offer the best opportunities for nursing students to put the learning into practice (Jirwe et al. 2010).

Awareness of the core values associated with cultural competence is showed by all participants, before and during exchange. However, some difficulties were expressed regarding interaction with people from different cultures, especially due to language barrier and cultural differences. It was agreed by all students that studies in cultural competence were not developed neither before nor during academic mobility. Lack of cultural competence in healthcare professionals was considered an important reason which hindered proper healthcare interventions and access to healthcare services of the migrant population in Finland (Castaneda et al.

2012). Interestingly, similar difficulties were discovered in a study done by Plaza del Pino et al. (2013) in Spain. It was reported that, despite the immigration phenomenon and the increasing ethnocultural diversity in Spain, specific preparation, training or education has not been provided to many nurses and healthcare professionals. Cultural competency in healthcare professionals' education was considered an essential tool for overcoming prejudices and stereotypes, increasing cultural awareness and sensitivity, developing effective communication processes and, consequently achieving an improved healthcare quality (Plaza del Pino et al. 2013).

Several nursing students in this study made special emphasis in possible solutions to overcome cultural boundaries. It was noteworthy the interest expressed by all participants to have increased opportunities for interacting with the host culture, gaining a better understanding and achieving immersion in the new cultural setting. The difficulty to meet and interact with local students was expressed by few participants during exchange and their disappointment could be noted while expressing the lack of opportunities given by educational institutions to socialize with local students of nursing.

As mentioned before, language barrier added difficulty to the learning process abroad. Consequently, language boundary was the main reason why a student wanted to develop the internship in the home country. The student affirmed that the opportunity for learning in the native language optimizes the learning outcomes. Factors which facilitated professional development through academic mobility were considered as internal and external determinants. Internal determinants included motivation and positive attitude for active learning. External determinants included the support and help of teachers and classmates in a motivating academic atmosphere. Main benefits recognized by several students were learning a new language and increasing competencies in nursing skills. A study conducted by Dohrn et al. (2018) stated that transformation of nursing curricula strengthened with global approach added value to nursing education and deepened the understanding about global healthcare, health disparities and nursing role in different healthcare systems and contexts.

Regarding the application process for going abroad, the assistance and support received from International Coordinators from both educational institutions was considered very helpful and appropriate. Despite this fact, application process was considered long, and students suggested more opportunities facilitated by universities to meet students who have already developed the same experience abroad in previous years, in order to learn from their experiences and receive their advice and guidance about practicalities. Finally, a major concern expressed by the participants should be emphasized. All students identified as very necessary an improved learning contract between universities. Many of the respondents are negatively af-

ected by the lack of opportunity for internship implementation as part of the agreement between educational partnerships.

The small sample of this study means that conclusions from the findings should be drawn carefully. Additionally, the different background of the participants, their education and learning experiences may be reflected in the findings and therefore differ from other comparable samples and situations. Consequently, these findings may not be generalizable to all nursing exchange students. Transferability of the results to other contexts is limited due to the unique characteristics of each study' setting and framework. Nonetheless, the findings obtained in this study could contribute positively to the success of further research projects.

6.1 Conclusion and recommendations

Many conclusions can be drawn from the results obtained in this study, which explored undergraduate nursing students' experiences before and during international academic mobility programmes in Finland and Spain. Certainly, a broad range of variables are identified as beneficial for professional and personal development, since educational exchange strengthens capabilities, skills and abilities contributing to a better understanding of core competences in nursing. Insights gained from the current study can contribute significantly to the identification of difficulties, coping strategies and needs for improvement suggested by exchange students and future exchange students of nursing. Answers to these questions aim to shed a light on factors that hinder learning processes abroad in order to provide effective support and optimize outcomes and learning conditions of international students.

Despite some difficulties experienced such as obstacles in the application process, language barrier and cultural differences, enthusiasm and major motivation was expressed by all students for taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by international education.

Firstly, the study revealed an important hindering factor in the application process for studying abroad; agreements in curricula between educational institutions were considered limited. The lack of opportunity for developing internship in Finland was considered a responsible factor for delays in education of Spanish nursing students. Apart from this, the combination of theoretical and practical experiences makes the learning richer and more valuable. Some aspects could be better systematized and interinstitutional relationships improved in order to offer stronger curricula construction, faster and smoother procedure of application.

Secondly, the language barrier experienced by exchange students in the host country during practical and theoretical studies could be minimized. Increased possibilities for training intercultural communication and for developing language skills in foreign languages before and

during exchange would be very beneficial. Moreover, an interesting reflection is that clinical settings which receive international students must develop cross-cultural competences and effective communication skills in order to offer proper, good quality guidance and training.

Finally, the cultural differences experienced by exchange students could be minimized through education in cultural competence and strategies implemented by educational institutions in order to facilitate integration of students in the culture, increase the opportunities for interaction with people of the host culture and avoid isolation from local people. Likewise, it contributes to expose local students to other cultures, facilitating internationalization at home.

As a conclusion, more effective communication and agreements between universities can bring better results and greater conditions to develop innovative ideas and achieve common teaching objectives which contribute to the development of nursing profession through emphasized commitment to global health and increased understanding of sociocultural impact in health.

6.2 Validity

Knowledge and skills required for qualitative analysis may not be as professional as desired due to the limited experience of the researcher. Despite that, strong effort and commitment for achievement of accurate, skillful, good-quality research has been made through all phases of this study with the assistance of literature. Full awareness and knowledge of possible threats to validity was developed. Although the concept of validity in qualitative research is seen from different perspectives and has several and different definitions and implications, criteria for evaluation of qualitative research takes into consideration the reliability or accuracy and the rigor or enhancement of the quality of the study (Holloway & Galvin 2017). By following the principles of dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability, trustworthiness of the study was increased and ensured. (Holloway & Galvin 2017, Seale et al. 2004, Elo et al. 2014, Roulston & Shelton 2015, Treharne & Riggs 2015.) Further, one of the strategies to maximize trustworthiness and authenticity was peer evaluation through thesis-supervisor evaluation.

The development of systematic and well-organized research as well as detailed and extensive field diary increased research dependability and validity of this study (Holloway & Galvin 2017). Every effort was made to present the context of the research, the content and the concepts in the most detailed, accurate, transparent and understandable way. Connection between results and data was expressed with quotations from different participants, which adds credibility and authenticity to the research. The main reason why transferability is diffi-

cult to achieve in qualitative studies is that single cases or unique phenomena are examined. Moreover, the goal of most qualitative studies is not to generalize but to provide rich and deep understanding of human experiences through study and observation of particular cases (Holloway & Galvin 2017). Despite that, the knowledge acquired in one study might be very relevant in another context. It is acknowledgeable that a study can not be replicated but it can be repeated in similar circumstances.

Special attention was paid to the possible presence of bias, which represent a threat to the credibility or confirmability of the study (Roulston & Shelton 2015). Professional and educational background of the researcher may represent a risk for bias in this study. Emphasis in avoiding bias was placed and researcher put in practice the ability to exclude assumptions, prejudice and preconceptions during the research project and to present the results in a neutral, objective way. Researcher developed an active listening during the interviews and let participants speak; attempt for self-reflexibility instead of imposition of own interpretations was developed.

6.3 Limitations of the study

Several limitations must be noted in this study. Only one researcher was involved in the investigation: this is a possible threat to dependability. Research findings were potentially limited due to the small number of participants. Unintentionally, the sample size of nursing students during exchange was small and this fact may hinder significant comparison between experiences before and during academic mobility. Although communication process between researcher and participants went smoothly without major limitations or difficulties, it should be acknowledgeable that English was the second language of researcher and Finnish participants. Despite the fact that researcher is bilingual, it must be taken into consideration that researchers' native language is not English. Even though Spanish participants were interviewed in their native language, some limitations in the translation may have occurred when inconsistencies between languages appear. Importance of adequate and accurate translation is knowledgeable, and it was ensured by an optimal use of the language. These limitations may affect the accuracy and credibility of the results and were taken into consideration during the interviews and when interpreting the data.

According to Elo et al. (2014), confirmability refers to 'objectivity and implies that the data accurately represents the information that the participants provided and interpretations of those data are not invented by the inquirer'. Transparency and trustworthiness was indicated with the use of quotations in the process of reporting findings. Clear development of the study from initial phases to conclusions is ensured, with data support in findings and in discussion.

6.4 Ethical and legal considerations

When human participants are involved in the research, ethical conduct of the work is essential (Saldana 2011). The researcher must act with professional, legal and ethical responsibilities, following strictly ethical and moral obligations towards the objects of the research, handling research individuals with dignity, respect, fairness, impartiality and care (ARENE 2018; ALLEA 2017). The dignity, rights, safety and well-being of the participants is considered of supreme importance. Voluntary participation in the research must be ensured. Ethics of qualitative research must follow principles of anonymity, confidentiality and privacy (Holloway & Galvin 2016). The principles of reliability, honesty, respect and accountability guide this work and must be followed to cope with practical, ethical and intellectual challenges (ALLEA 2017).

According to these premises, participants were informed about the voluntary nature of participation in this project. In cases like this, where data is obtained directly from the participant, it is obligatory to inform the person immediately (GDPR 2016). Informed and voluntary consent means: “research participants are fully informed about the research and give their voluntary agreement to take part in it” (Holloway & Galvin 2017, 57). Interviewees who voluntarily accepted and decided to participate in the project, were asked to sign the “Informed Consent Form”, ensuring that they understand the main aspects, goal and context of the project and they voluntarily accept to be involved in the research. The information about the research, which is written in a clear and unambiguous language, is included in the “Informed Consent Form” (Appendix 2).

The principles of data protection are applied to the gathered information for research purposes, so data subject will not be longer identifiable (GDPR 2016). Personal data must be processed with lawfulness, fairness, transparency and accuracy, always ensuring integrity and confidentiality with appropriate security of the gathered data by protecting it against unauthorized processing or loss, damage or destruction (GDPR 2016).

All personal data was kept anonymous, private and confidential. The interview text was recorded and transcribed by the author of the project, who ensures confidentiality and anonymity by transcribing and classifying the interviews in a Word document with numbers: Participant 1 (P1), Participant 2 (P2), Participant 3 (P3)... as a code. Only the researcher knows what number belongs to each participant and that information was always stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Only anonymous text was shown to the supervisor (PL Teija-Kaisa Aholaakko). All information collected through interviews was not shared with any-

one outside of the research context. Digital information was used: voice recording of the interviews and Word documents. Few field notes were taken by the author during the interviews. Both digital and physical data was kept private, secured by passwords and upon completion of the research, the digital data collected will be digitally destroyed and the physical data collected will be physically destroyed after publication of report.

This master thesis is a small-scale research. Despite that, the researcher benefited from the Erasmus+ grant during the field work in the Spanish city of Valencia.

Additional research would be very beneficial in order to identify main challenges related to international education in nursing in different contexts and circumstances. Nevertheless, it is hopeful that the results of this study can be used to develop improvements in the education field. Likewise, this project can contribute to other studies relating to academic mobility in nursing in the future.

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Appendix 1: Interview Themes
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Group 1	Group 2
<p>Introduction and Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Would you be please introduce yourself, tell me where are you from, how old are you, what languages do you speak? ➤ Would you please tell me the main reason or motivations for applying and being an exchange student? ➤ Main feelings experienced during international exchange. 	<p>Introduction and Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Would you be please introduce yourself, tell me where are you from, how old are you, what languages do you speak? ➤ Would you please tell me the main reason or motivations for applying and being an exchange student? ➤ Main feelings experienced before international exchange.
<p>Experiences during international exchange. Internationalization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Do you study cultural competence in nursing before or during exchange? Do you study any language course before or during exchange? ➤ Do you think language is a barrier or a facilitator? ➤ How do you get involved in the new cultural setting? ➤ Could you please mention some challenging aspects for you when working with people with different cultural background? ➤ Could you please mention some facilitating factors for you when working with people with different cultural background? 	<p>Experiences before international exchange. Internationalization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Do you study cultural competence in nursing before or during exchange? Do you study any language course before or during exchange? ➤ Do you think language is going to be a barrier or a facilitator? ➤ How do you plan to get involved in the new cultural setting? ➤ Could you please mention some challenging aspects for you when working with people with different cultural background? ➤ Could you please mention some facilitating factors for you when working with people with different cultural background?
<p>Experiences during international exchange. Barriers and facilitators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What are the main professional and personal skills you are learning/ you would like to learn? ➤ How do you think the international experience will affect and benefit your professional career? ➤ Could you please mention the main factors that contributed positively in the learning process/application process? ➤ Could you please mention the main factors that made your experience more challenging and difficult? ➤ Could you please suggest some solutions? ➤ Would you like to make any comment or question? 	<p>Experiences before international exchange. Barriers and facilitators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What are the main professional and personal skills you would like to learn? ➤ How do you think the international experience will affect and benefit your professional career? ➤ Could you please mention the main factors that contributed positively in the learning process/application process? ➤ Could you please mention the main factors that made your experience more challenging and difficult? ➤ Could you please suggest some solutions? ➤ Would you like to make any comment or question?

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Name of conductor of the study: Iva Stratoberdha Bardhi.

- Student of Master´s Degree in Global Development and Management in Health Care in Laurea University of Applied Sciences
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Name of supervisor: Teija-Kaisa Aholaakko.

- Principal Lecturer/PhD (Medicine), LicSc (Education), MSc (Healthcare), RN (Spec.)
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Institution: Laurea University of Applied Sciences

Name of the project:

Nursing students' learning experiences through academic mobility in Finland and Spain

The goal of this research is to explore the learning experiences among Finnish and Spanish nursing students before participating in the European international exchange programme Erasmus+ and during it.

The objectives of this study are:

1. Explore perceptions of academic mobility for Finnish and Spanish nursing exchange students.
2. Explore main areas of development and learning processes for Finnish and Spanish nursing exchange students.
3. Explore influential factors hindering and facilitating learning through academic mobility for Finnish and Spanish nursing exchange students.

Type of research intervention:

This study will involve your participation in an individual on-site interview about your experiences before or during international student exchange between Laurea and Valencia University developed by the principal conductor of the study and will require from 30 minutes, to one hour of your time.

Participant selection:

You are being invited to take part in this research because your present or future experience as an international student of nursing can contribute much to the understanding and knowledge of internationalization of nursing education.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. The choice that you make will have no bearing on your studies, job or on any work-study-related evaluations or reports whether you participate or not. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

Confidentiality:

Information about you will not be shared to anyone outside of the research context. Only field notes and digital information will be used with Word Documents and voice recording of the interview. It will be kept private, secured by passwords and upon completion of the research, all data collected will be digitally and physically destroyed after publication of report. Only the author of the research has access to the data. Any information about you will have a number on it instead of your name or surname(s). Only the researcher will know what your number is and that information will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Only anonymous text will be shown to the supervisor (PL Teija-Kaisa Aholaakko). It will not be shared with or given to anyone else.

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact any of the following:

- Iva Stratoberdha Bardhi (student) iva.stratoberdha.bardhi@student.laurea.fi
- Teija-Kaisa Aholaakko (supervisor) teija-kaisa.aholaakko@laurea.fi

The permission for this study has been applied and accepted from Laurea University of Applied Sciences and University of Valencia.

Certificate of consent:

I have been invited to participate in this research.

I have read the foregoing information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any question I have asked has been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study. The researcher provides me with a signed copy of this document. I certify I am at least 18 years of age.

Place and date: _____

Signature of the participant: _____

Signature of the researcher: _____

Note: This document has been printed and signed identically twice. One physical copy has been provided to the participant. One physical copy remains with the researcher.

Appendix 3: Evidence from participant sentences and themes

Evidence from participant sentences	Content of theme	Themes
<p>Group 1 <i>I want to see the world. I want to see different cultures... meet different types of people... I can practice different languages.</i></p> <p><i>I want to know new cultures, meet new people.</i></p> <p>Group 2 <i>I would like to discover a new culture, spend one year living a completely different life.</i></p> <p><i>I would like to experience a different country, a different culture.</i></p> <p>Group 1 <i>In so many levels it is a very developing (experience) for yourself. I want to challenge myself.</i></p> <p><i>I want to learn new things, gain a new experience for myself... I learn to grow, to become more independent, to adapt to a new place.</i></p> <p>Group 2 <i>I would like to learn how can I manage by myself when I am out of my comfort zone.</i></p> <p><i>I will have to solve everything by myself, this will make me grow.</i></p> <p><i>Being far from the reality I know will contribute to grow up.</i></p> <p><i>I would like to learn to be very independent and responsible, to have my own view of life, to have my own reasonable criteria and find myself.</i></p> <p>Group 1 <i>It is an experience studying here and to see how the studies are, how do they vary from the studies in Finland...I have to say (the main motivation) wasn't to look for... ok do they offer the best nursing studies for me here?</i></p> <p>Group 2 <i>The possibility to (...) discover a new education system.</i></p> <p><i>I would like to discover a new education system.</i></p> <p>Group 1 <i>I choose Spain because I want to practice my Spanish... I want to improve my English.</i></p> <p><i>I want to learn the Spanish language.</i></p> <p>Group 2 <i>I want to improve my English.</i></p> <p><i>I would really like to learn Finnish.</i></p>	<p>1. Cultural exchange.</p> <p>2. Self-development.</p> <p>3. Education</p> <p>4. Language</p>	<p>1. Motivation</p>

<p>Group 1 <i>Maybe one day I would like to go to work to Latin America or maybe Spain...</i></p> <p><i>I want to (...) have a chance to work here, it opens many doors.</i></p> <p>Group 1 <i>I want to visit many places in Finland because I am interested in nature and in travelling.</i></p> <p><i>I love travelling</i></p> <p><i>I love travelling and this is the perfect opportunity to travel while I study.</i></p> <p><i>I love travelling... visiting new places.</i></p>	<p>5. Opportunity</p> <p>6. Travel</p>	
<p>Group 1 <i>I feel mainly excited, fortunate and happy for being here.</i></p> <p>Group 1 <i>Mostly I am very happy and I feel we are lucky to have this possibility.</i></p> <p>Group 2 <i>I experience more excitement than fear.</i></p> <p><i>I have feelings of excitement and motivation.</i></p> <p><i>The feeling of excitement is amazing.</i></p> <p><i>The main feeling is excitement.</i></p> <p>Group 1 <i>I am having a lot of anxiety... maybe because I am out of my comfort zone...everything is too much at the same time, new places, new people...I feel... that I have to do something all the time, I can't just be at home.</i></p> <p>Group 1 <i>Sometimes a little bit confused...</i></p> <p><i>It is a new environment, a new language... due to the difficulties in communication I sometimes feel frustrated and confused.</i></p> <p>Group 1 <i>I feel homesick sometimes.</i></p>	<p>1. Excitement</p> <p>2. Happiness</p> <p>3. Anxiety</p> <p>4. Frustration and confusion</p> <p>5. Homesickness</p>	<p>2. Feelings and emotions</p>

<p>Group 1 <i>My Spanish is not so good, I know there is always the barrier of the language.</i></p> <p><i>Spanish is a barrier, it makes things more difficult... I can't understand... (working with people with different cultural background) is challenging because of the language. The difficulties related to language are stopping the communication. Due to the difficulties in communication I sometimes feel frustrated and confused...</i></p> <p>Group 2 <i>Language will be a barrier, I can't speak Finnish, I can't understand anything. Language is very different and difficult.</i></p> <p><i>Finnish language will be a barrier. English language will help. I am very shy. It will be difficult for me.</i></p> <p><i>(At school) there is a lack of education about effective communication.</i></p> <p>Group 1 <i>(English language) is a facilitator. We are privileged (in Finland) for good education in English. It opens many doors. I feel secure.</i></p> <p><i>I study (Spanish) every day. If I can improve my Spanish, I will be able to communicate. The language course helps.</i></p> <p>Group 2 <i>(English) language will be a facilitator to communicate and understand. I think I will be able to communicate without problems.</i></p> <p><i>A basic knowledge of the language, good attitude helps. Being interested in communicating will facilitate interaction with others. It will be easier.</i></p> <p>Group 1 <i>I would like to have more (Spanish lessons).</i></p> <p><i>I would like to continue Spanish lessons in Finland.</i></p> <p>Group 2 <i>I would like to learn the basics about Finnish language. I would like to use the Finnish language I learn.</i></p> <p><i>The main skill I would like to learn is communication. I would like to improve my communication skills. (At school) there is a lack of education about effective communication. I want to express myself in the best way I can.</i></p> <p><i>It is important to find effective ways of communication.</i></p>	<p>1. Difficulties</p> <p>2. Facilitating factors</p> <p>3. Willingness to learn and improve.</p>	<p>3. Development of intercultural communication competence</p>
<p>Group 1 <i>(In the new cultural setting) the key is being open-minded.</i></p> <p><i>Being more open-minded while working with different people.</i></p> <p>Group 2 <i>I am open to different cultures.</i></p> <p><i>The most important attributes are toler-</i></p>	<p>1. Core values.</p>	<p>4. Development of cultural competence</p>

<p><i>ance and respect.</i></p> <p><i>When we learn from different culture, we also adopt new perspectives, we see reality from different viewpoint.</i></p> <p><i>I will learn to be more tolerant.</i></p> <p><i>Being empathetic.</i></p> <p><i>This experience will contribute very much in being open-minded, in eliminating stereotypes and prejudices.</i></p> <p>Group 1</p> <p><i>The language barrier...misunderstandings.</i></p> <p><i>Cultural differences</i></p> <p><i>It is challenging because of the language. I don't understand.</i></p> <p>Group 2</p> <p><i>There are issues difficult to understand because I have been educated in a different way than another person. We might prejudice, we might have preconceptions.</i></p> <p><i>The most difficult issue is to make the other person feel integrated and not offended or discriminated. Sometimes it is hard to transmit quietness and a feeling of understanding.</i></p> <p><i>Different ways of thinking, different philosophy, a different logic from ours... these factors can challenge the relationship between people from diverse cultures.</i></p> <p>Group 1</p> <p><i>I think the more you get to know people from different cultures, the easier it gets to understand that we are all humans, we just have different ways of doing things.</i></p> <p><i>A common language helps.</i></p> <p>Group 2</p> <p><i>Language and communication.</i></p> <p><i>Firstly, education. It is very important to have a proper education and learn how to interact with people from different cultures.</i></p> <p><i>Being empathetic will be easier after living abroad and experiencing by myself an international experience.</i></p> <p><i>When we learn from different cultures, we also adopt new perspectives, we see reality from different viewpoints.</i></p> <p>Group 1</p> <p><i>I am trying to meet local people. I am trying to get all the information about the culture. I wish there were more local (students in my class).</i></p> <p><i>We did not have the opportunity to meet Spanish nursing students... school has not done much for us to meet the Spanish students...that is something I would have hoped.</i></p>	<p>2. Difficulties</p> <p>3. Facilitating factors</p> <p>4. Willingness of cultural and social integration</p>	
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<p><i>I have some Spanish friends... we meet for lunch, we go out together...</i></p> <p>Group 2 <i>I would like to meet local people and have Finnish friends.</i></p> <p><i>I would like to be integrated in Finnish culture.</i></p> <p><i>I would like to discover main interests and hobbies of Finnish people and find common interests that we could share.</i></p>		
<p>Group 1 <i>I feel that mentors here can't guide me properly because of the language barrier.</i></p> <p><i>It is difficult to participate in a conversation because of the language barrier.</i></p> <p><i>My Spanish is not so good...I think I learn more in Finland about my professional skills...I want to use my practice, to get everything from that, to learn everything.</i></p> <p>Group 1 <i>Teachers and my own motivation (are the factors that contribute positively in the learning process).</i></p> <p><i>The tutors are very helpful and supportive, they encourage me in focusing in the things I want to learn, in my goals and objectives... we have meetings every week.</i></p> <p>Group 2 <i>The international coordinators are always ready to help.</i></p> <p><i>International coordinators have helped very much in the application period.</i></p> <p><i>The university provides guidance about the future experience and it facilitates paperwork and procedures.</i></p> <p>Group 1 <i>This exchange helps me to work abroad. I am ready to work with people who come from abroad... I can work in an international team.</i></p> <p><i>I try to learn and practice techniques in nursing profession.</i></p> <p><i>The opportunity to see different realities is very positive.</i></p> <p>Group 2 <i>Learning from different cultures helps to give better attention.</i></p> <p><i>Not everybody can study abroad, an international experience will be very enriching for me.</i></p> <p><i>I would like to learn a new way of working, so when I come back, I can use all the new ideas I had during my international experience.</i></p> <p><i>I would like to develop professional competences, leadership skills, ability to</i></p>	<p>1. Obstacles</p> <p>2. Coping strategies and facilitators</p> <p>3. Opportunities</p>	<p>5. Development of professional competences</p>

<p><i>work in a team, to learn new concepts and perspective related to global health.</i></p> <p><i>Learning experience in Finland will help me to do a better work in multicultural environment.</i></p> <p><i>I will study the same career from a completely new perspective.</i></p> <p><i>This experience will allow me to learn from new education and healthcare systems, in the future I will have more options... more opportunities.</i></p> <p>Group 1</p> <p><i>I would suggest learning Spanish before coming here. Good skills in English only are not enough (in Spain). Learning medical terms in Spanish could be beneficial.</i></p> <p><i>I wanted to do theoretical studies as well.</i></p> <p><i>Why (the university) don't use people who have done the same exchange to give advice and help? And specially, in the own field.</i></p> <p>Group 2</p> <p><i>The process is too long. We started the application process in December, now is April and I still don't know what courses I will study.</i></p> <p><i>I would like to do practical experience as well. But the university doesn't accept the practical experience from Finland.</i></p> <p><i>I would like to have an experience in a Finnish hospital, but this option is not possible unfortunately.</i></p> <p><i>It is important to improve agreements between universities. I am very upset because I can't do the internship in Finland. It would have been very beneficial to have both theoretical and practical experiences abroad. Studying one year abroad has a negative side: my studies will take longer.</i></p> <p><i>My classmates are interested as well in doing the practicum in Finland but they don't want to delay their studies, I understand it very well...</i></p> <p><i>In the University we learn new techniques, theory... but there is a lack of education about effective communication, improvement of communicative skills...</i></p> <p><i>The only missing thing, which would make my experience very complete and rich, is the internship.</i></p> <p><i>I understand that the healthcare system is different and the language can be a challenge, but anyway, I would have been interested in having the practical experience in Finland.</i></p>	<p>4. Desired academic assistance and improvements</p>	
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