
KEMI-TORNIO UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED
SCIENCES
HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES

CHALLENGES DURING THE STUDIES EXPERIENCED BY
INTERNATIONAL NURSING STUDENTS

Bachelor's Thesis

Mingxia Liu & Ming Gao

Degree programme of Nursing

Kemi 2012

ABSTRACT

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Medical-Surgical Nursing

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Bachelor's Thesis, 45 Pages with 4 appendices

Advisors: Eila Heikkinen & Anja Mikkola & Tuula Ehrukainen-Sykkö

18.04.2012

Key words: international nursing education, lived experience, cultural differences, language barrier

Nowadays more and more nursing students from developing countries choose to go to developed countries to advance their knowledge and skills. There are some challenges and problems with their studies and livelihood. Our purpose was to map out what kind of problems are faced and experienced by nursing students during their lectures and practical training in health care unit. The aim was to get suggestions from students' experiences and provide some advanced solutions to international nursing students to cope with those challenges, and it is also to develop the content and methods in teaching for the degree program of nursing.

The data collection method used in this research is in-depth interview, in which interviews we conducted among international nursing students of Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences. Analysis method is the content analysis.

From the research we got the result that the culture challenges, academic challenges and language challenges are the main problems faced and experienced by international nursing students during their study.

Conclusively, it is crucial to notice that study problems actually exist, we can not change this situation, but some good suggestions and wishes from our interviewees should be consideration by our school. Finally, the international students need more mental support from school and supervisor in health care unit.

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1 INTRODUCTION

For the last three decades nursing education internationally, as well as in the Scandinavian countries, has experienced ongoing reforms. The driving forces behind these reforms have been efforts for professional development within nursing and to harmonize higher education in several European countries. (Holm, Hedegaard, Fmark & Slettebø 2010, 1.)

A challenge for the ministries of education in the Scandinavian countries is to compare and coordinate nursing educational programmes in order to enable nursing students, educators, researchers and nurses to study and work in Scandinavia, Europe or even globally. (Holm 2010, 1.)

The European Ministers of Education (1999) promoted objectives: (a) to adopt a system of academic degrees which are transparent and easily compared, including the introduction of the diploma supplement, (b) to adopt a system based on two cycles: the undergraduate cycle of 3 years of study, which is mainly aimed at providing qualified personnel for the job market; and the postgraduate cycle for Master's and doctoral degrees, conditional upon completion of the undergraduate cycle; (c) to establish the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS); (d) to promote the mobility of students, teachers, and researchers; (e) to promote cooperation in quality assurance; and (f) to promote European dimensions in higher education. (Holm 2010, 2.)

Finland's population is highly educated. As a country, it has made the development of an educated, multilingual, motivated work force a national priority. Its educational system is among the best in international competitiveness reports. According to an OECD literacy survey on teenagers, Finland continues to be on top, globally. Finnish workers generally are proficient in several languages. (Thompson 2004, 21.)

Finland's most serious future problem will be a severe shortage of labor as the baby-boom generation enters retirement age. This is the same dilemma faced by other Northern European countries and will be particularly vexing for those whose social welfare systems may be brought to the breaking point by this demographic trend. The Finnish government is attempting to stem the tide through incentive programs that reward workers who stay on the job after retirement age. (Thompson 2004, 22.)

Imbalances in registered nurse (RN) supply and demand is a global, significant and recurring issue that impacts on healthcare systems, organizations, staff and patients (Attree, Flinkman, Howley 2011, 786-802). The nursing staff shortage is a worldwide phenomenon which has been acknowledged by the multidisciplinary Global Advisory Group of the World Health Organization. (Sapountzi-Krepia 2008, 256–263.)

International health care experiences offer undergraduate nursing students the opportunity for significant personal and professional growth. During a month-long travel course to Cameroon, West Africa, students improved their skills in clinical assessment, data management, intercultural communication, and collaboration based on an empowerment model of international partnership. Although it is not possible for all students to participate in providing health care in another country, it is possible to design a local course in which students are able to meet similar outcomes in a community health experience in partnership with an immigrant and refugee center. (Wros & Archer, 2010)

Health care institutions are progressively more aware of the need to respond to diverse patient populations and cultivate leaders to enrich the nursing profession, both locally and globally. One response has been to establish international exchange programme for nursing students to give them experience of different cultures and health care systems. (Button, 2005)

International placement programme can impact on the lives and practice of participants, and those who undertake international experiences develop intellectually and increase

their global understanding of health care, alternative cultures and political issues. It has been further suggested that students mature personally and professionally as a result of the transcultural experience. (Button, 2005)

Nowadays along with society development, human's cognitive knowledge of health has improved. So more and more nursing students from developing countries choose to go to developed countries to advance their knowledge and skills. Although it is a common phenomenon, there are still some problems with their studies and livelihood .

Problems are difficulties and challenges or a kind of bad situation need resolutions. The problems in our students can affect learning outcomes and efficiencies. So in response to this situation among nursing students we try our best to research challenges during the study experienced by international nursing students. Our purpose is to map out what kind of problems are faced and experienced by nursing students during their lectures and practical training in health care unit. The aim is to get suggestions from students' experiences and provide some advanced solutions to international nursing students to cope with those problems, and it is also to develop the contents and methods in teaching for the degree program of nursing.

2 THE CHALLENGES MET BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Many countries are becoming culturally diverse, but healthcare systems and nursing education often remain mono-cultural and focused on the norms and needs of the majority culture. To meet the needs of all members of multicultural societies, nurses need to develop cultural sensitivity and incorporate this into caregiving. (Ruddock & de Sales Turner 2007, 361.)

Each year, international students uproot themselves from their home countries, families, friends and other key people within their social support networks to pursue study at

universities around the globe. Most international students assimilate and acculturate in the "host" culture successfully. However, some international students are challenged and distressed by cultural differences, social isolation, academic differences, and difficulties with English language proficiency. Through grounded theory method, analyses revealed how international students survived the human costs of transition shock during their sojourn and thrived while negotiating changes in physical environment, and cultural, academic, and social differences. (McLachlan & Justice 2009, 27.)

Levels of stress are higher for health professionals than for other workers. A higher number of stressors with negative health consequences are present, especially among nursing professionals. Stress is a psychosocial factor that influences the academic performance and well-being of this group. (Martos & Landa & Zafra. 2011.)

“Opening our hearts and minds” was described by the study’s participants, with the following themes: increasing understanding of other cultures and peoples, increasing understanding of global sociopolitical and health issues, increasing the commitment to make a difference, experiencing personal and professional growth, contributing to professional development in the host country, making interpersonal connexions, and developing cultural competence. It has recognised that Callister & Cox study makes an important contribution to the documentation of the meaning of participating in international nursing clinical experiences. (Callister & Cox 2006.)

2.1 Culture challenges

Every person carries within him/herself patterns of thinking, feeling, and potential acting that were learned throughout the person's lifetime. Much of it was acquired in early childhood, because at that time a person is most susceptible to learning and assimilating. As soon as certain patterns or she must unlearn these patterns before being able to learn something different, and unlearning is more difficult than learning for the first time. (Hofstede & Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 4.)

The world is full of confrontations between people, groups, and nations who think, feel, and act differently. At the same time these people, groups, and nations, are exposed to common problems that demand cooperation for their solution. (Hofstede et al 2010, 4.)

There normally is continuity in culture. But if you were caught in a gale at sea and found yourself stranded on an uninhabited island with twenty-nine unknown others, what would you do? If you and your fellow passengers were from different parts of the world, you would lack a common language and shared habits. Your first task would be to develop an embryonic common language and some shared rules for behavior, cooperation, and leadership. Role divisions would emerge between young and old, men and women. Conflicts would arise and somehow must be handled. Whose responsibility would it be whether two people mate? Who would take care of the sick, the dead, and the children born on the island? The point of this example is to show that no group can escape culture. Creating shared rules, even if they are never written down, is a precondition for group survival. This pioneer group of thirty people united at random will has to create a new culture. The particulars of that culture will largely depend on chance, inherited from existing values, particularly those of the most prominent group members. However, once the culture is set, and supposing children are born into the group , that culture will reproduce itself. (Hofstede et al 2010, 11-12.)

International students are often very lonely in their new environment. Such loneliness includes not only the lack of familiar friends and social networks, but also the lack of familiar cultural and/or linguistic environments. (Mark & Peter & Chui 2009, 34.)

Central to this process was the students' experience of studying in an unfamiliar environment, experiencing stress and varying degrees of culture shock, and making a decision to take on the ways of the host culture (Ruddock & Turner, 2007).

The problems experienced by international students are not all peculiar or specific to them, but such students, a long way from their own cultural, social and linguistic

environment, are more likely to feel the cumulative nature of the potential difficulties to which they are exposing themselves by studying abroad. (Sovic 2007, 145).

Students must also learn the communication characteristics of the patients to whom they deliver care to, their convenient times, spaces which are comfortable for them, social organizations which are important in their lives, how they control their health, and their genetic make-up. This information should be employed in all stages of patient care delivery, as well as at the stage of planning. Thus, the effect of cultural diversity in patient care can be minimized with the help of education. (Ayaz1 & Bilgili & Akın 2010.)

During their international placements all students interacted with people from different cultures and became accustomed to new cultural norms. They gained an increased awareness of differing cultural values which facilitate greater tolerance of others and an understanding of how challenging life might be for members of minority groups. Such insight was gained from participants' temporary experiences as a minority group facing the challenges of language and cultural understanding. This new awareness would prove valuable at professional levels, when working with overseas nurses and at a personal level of tolerance of 'different' people. (Green & Johansson & Rosser & Tengnah & Segrott 2008, 989.)

According to the study of Ayaz, most of the students (85.5%) had experienced cultural differences while giving care to their patients, and 73.8% did not know the definition of this concept. The issues where cultural differences were experienced to the highest degree were differences in dialect and pronunciation (53.4%), differences of language (37%), traditions and customs of the individual (30.7%), and religious belief and sect (30.2%). It was found that the grade the students were in had a significant effect on the experience of cultural differences ($P < 0.05$). (Ayaz 2010)

2.2 Academic challenges

Problems connected with studies maybe easy to ignore by teachers and students. They all perhaps think it is easy to overcome them. Most bad emotions are endured by students. Long term bad emotions affect their health and life quality without right understanding and proper solutions. Good assessment is a fundamental process that describes and promotes students' best performance across time.

Teaching seems relatively traditional/old fashioned, at least in a Scandinavian context. Dr Chung cites teachers in Finland with experience of working in Sweden who say the classes are far more disciplined in Finland (Mansell 2011, 2).

Based on educators' and students' descriptions, the use of teaching methods was narrow and conventional. However, their views about the extent of the use differed significantly. The three most used methods were discussion, lecture and seminar. Students' perception was that educators had used less discussion and seminar and more lecturing than what educators had reported. The least favoured were methods that required special arrangements and resources. (Numminen & Leino & Arend & Katajisto 2011, 8.)

Studies on education have been conducted in different nursing cultures as well as educational systems. The scope of the studies has varied due to the use of different research designs and frameworks. And the findings are partly contradictory. (Numminen et al 2011, 3.)

Educators' age, teaching experience and implementation of integrated teaching in years had several statistically significant correlations with the extent of teaching (Numminen et al 2011, 9).

The use of teaching and evaluation methods was conventional and narrow and there were contradictory views between educators' and students' descriptions. Educators preferred methods that were interactive, student-centred and integrated to theoretical

nursing studies and clinical practice. However, students' perception was that the use of methods was individually oriented, educator centred and preferred separate ethics studies. This notion needs further exploring. (Numminen et al 2011, 12.)

It also shows that although many of the difficulties experienced by staff and students are well known, there is still much to be done to address curriculum, pedagogical and assessment practices. A necessary precursor to this work is the examination of underlying attitudes, values and systems that may give rise to difficulties for both staff and students. A new approach is needed that positions international students not as 'problems' to be solved but as 'assets' to internationalization and the generation of new knowledge and new ways of working in the academy. (Ryan 2011)

2.3 Language challenges

When the first time foreign students come to another totally different country to study, there are amount of problems faced by them. During school time there are many different professional lectures and assignments related to those lectures. Students have language problems because English is not their mother tongue. Sometimes students are confused about those forms and content of those assignments. Foreign students are not used to the new learning environment and the way of self-directed learning as well as how to make better use of school reference materials. Some kind of problems come out and they are unable to resolve them. Depression and some other emotional problems have come out; for example: giving up school and hating to go to classes. Some students do not want to talk to classmates any more. Even some students lose hope about future career.

The main challenge is the English language ability, or rather consideration of the fact that many international students are non-native speakers of English. This has two aspects to it. Firstly, there is a minimum language requirement for entry for all overseas students and secondly, even if students have more than met this entry requirement they

may not be familiar with technical terminology for a specialist subject area. (Bamford. 2008)

Increases in global migration have contributed to the need for an international dimension in nursing education. Personal mobility is a crucial part of the European Union's goal of becoming a knowledge society. Clinically based experiences pose challenges that are additional to and often more complex than traditional course-based experiences. Students who came from a non-English-speaking country for clinical practice in Norway faced challenges regarding language. Accepting incoming students is a way of achieving higher quality and more relevant education in nursing. (Myhre 2011)

Language differences are not regarded as a problem but as a way of developing personal and professional competence. The ability to compare healthcare systems in the two countries is important in developing competencies in nursing. (Myhre 2011)

Communication is a fundamental component of cross-cultural care encounters. Nurses experience communication difficulties in situations where they do not speak the same language as their patients. Communication difficulties are a major obstacle for immigrant patients and can lead to insufficient information and poor quality nursing care in contrast to the majority population. (Jirwe & Gerrish & Emami 2010, 1.)

Student nurses experienced particular difficulties communicating with patients with whom they did not share a common language. This led to care becoming mechanistic and impersonal. They were fearful of making mistakes and lacked skills and confidence in questioning patients. (Jirwe et al 2010, 1.)

Difficulties also occurred due to different preunderstandings between the nurse and the patient which could lead to misunderstandings (Jirwe et al 2010, 4).

Although they use a range of strategies to facilitate communication they find themselves in situations where they are unable to communicate effectively and this leads to dissatisfaction with the caring experience. They also lack skills and confidence in cross cultural communication. Even in situations where students felt satisfied that they were able to communicate, it does not mean that the patient was satisfied with the interaction. In the light of these findings, is important that nursing programmes enable student nurses to become competent in communicating in cross-cultural care encounters and that the clinical learning environment provides them with the opportunity to put their learning into practice. (Jirwe 2010, 8.)

3 IMPLEMENTATION OF RESEARCH

3.1 Purpose, aims and research questions

Our purpose is to map out what kind of problems are faced and experienced by nursing students during their lectures and practical training in the health care unit. The aim is to get suggestions from students' experiences and provide some advanced solutions to international nursing students to cope with those problems, and also to develop the content and methods in teaching for the degree program of nursing.

We focus on two parts to do our research. One part is connected to lectures' problems, and another is problems in guided practice experienced by international nursing students. Our main focus on the first part are problems in school time faced by international nursing students, and on the second part the problems in practical training. Although there are more studies about study problems among nursing students during their lectures and practical training we think it is not enough and problems are still there. We hope we can find some good solutions to help them to improve the learning outcomes and skills efficiency. High learning outcomes and skills efficiency can benefit students' future career in nursing. It is not only good to nursing students but also good to patients' quality of life. The research questions are:

- 1) What kind of culture and academic differences have the students encountered during their studies?
- 2) What kind of problems and challenges have international nursing students had during their studies?
- 3) How have they coped with those problems?
- 4) What kind of support do the international students want to get?

3.2 Data collection method

The process of data collection is an integral part of every research that is used to describe the process of preparation and data collection. The reason for data collection is to acquire information, to make important decisions in support of an idea or a research. To maximize data collected, it is very important to be open minded and flexible. (Moule & Goodman 2009, 288.)

A range of terms may be used to describe qualitative interview, including: open, unstructured, in-depth, ethnographic. Such interview approaches are often conversations, guided by an open question. Generally, any interview conversation will have some structure to it, possibly with the researcher following up particular issues or areas of interest raised by the participant. The main purpose of the qualitative interview is to seek out the participant's perceptions, experiences and opinions, and to allow the participant to drive the interview direction. (Moule & Goodman 2009, 297.) The data collection method used in this research is in-depth interview. The reason why we used this method of data collection is because we want to seek out the participant's perceptions, experiences and opinions and to allow the participant to drive the interview direction.

We focus on international students who study in the nursing degree program and joint-degree program in Finland. They have studied nursing in Finland at least two years. Three participants from the international nursing students were involved in our interview and seven related questions have been asked. (See Appendice 1) Each

interview lasted 30-45 minutes. The recorder has been used. The interview environment was isolated, quiet and comfortable. The privacy of the interviewee was protected well. Those three participants come from Nigeria and China. We collected the information by listening to the recorder one sentence by one sentence. Then we analysed the content, and the summary useful point. After handwritten all the information we deleted the information in the recorder to protect privacy of interviewees.

3.3 Qualitative data analysis

As part of analysis data is organized and managed, the researcher is able to retrieve key area of information. The process of analysis is therefore one of making sense of the data. Content analysis is the simplest form of data processing. It is a process that involves labeling the data for retrieval. (Moule & Goodman 2009, 349.) Qualitative data analysis method which used by us is content analysis.

The nurse researcher starts with the textual or visual data. Taking interview transcripts
As one example of textual data, the researcher will have a number of pages of data to analysis. The content of the data is explored, reducing the data by the process of coding. The process of coding is one where we are retrieving the data, which can then be organized into categories and themes or constructs. (Moule 2009, 349.)

We have used charts and graphs to present them so the readers can understand our topic easily. The first step was that we made a summary, some main points through the authentic content from participants. Then we concluded the subcategories and final theme connect to our research questions. (See Appendices 2 and 3)

4 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this research are presented by research questions, which are challenges faced and experienced by international nursing students during their lectures and practical training in the health care unit and getting suggestions about the solution of these problems.

4.1 Cultural and academic differences

Our international students uproot from their own country to other country to get advanced knowledge and skills. There are so many kinds of differences between two different countries. According to interviewed international nursing students, there are some cultural and academic differences, which may or may not have effect on their mood or learning outcome more or less.

The weather is different. It is dark and long in winter and there are bright nights during summer time.

"In Finland especially the winter is quite long and cold, day time become shorter and shorter. I spend most time in darkness which affect my feeling or mood in negative way. "

" In winter it is very cold and dark, and during the summer, it will have bright nights. "

The food is quite expensive and different in Finland.

" Food, vegetable and fruit in market are quite expensive. "

" The food, it quiet different from Nigeria. I can eat anything except those thing I am allergic to, some meat I do not like to eat. "

Behaviour and communication method is different between countries.

" The way of greeting is quite different, in my country just like when you see somebody straightly say hello. Passing respond but in Finland it is not. "

" Less entertainment activities than my hometown. Also Finnish are really shy. Chinese culture people never say something directly because our tradition tells , it will be hurt to others or make others feel losing face, concern with this kind of culture shock, the communicating method is more direct in Finland. "

" There is one more thing about Finnish culture.You know they are very polite in a negative way.You may be do something wrong ,they will not would like correct you. In my country when you do something wrong, they will inform you immediately and that way they do not take it so far.They are very polite in positive.In Finland the polite in negatively, they do not sure where you are wrong."

Teaching method, role of teachers and assignment form detect the academic differences.

"According to three years study experiences I had. I think there are many teaching methods which are different from my country, the teaching methods here used by the teachers are like lectures,contact lessons, group study and clinical practice.There are more options for the teachers to choose which one is good for this lesson. "

" The teaching by teachers are totally different between China and Finland. In our country, teachers prefer to provide more examinations in order to check how students studies in their classes. In other hand, it seems Finnish teachers are more concern with assignments, activities during class, or interaction between students and teachers. "

" Finish teachers are act as a role like a guider. They do not tell you everything, but they like guiding you to that point. The students are learning things mainly by group work or group discussion or independent study. "

" There are so many resources which can be used by students in school.They are available all the time. "

" The academic system in Finland is very different from what we have. In Nigeria the study is verry stressful, but the timetable is very flexible, unlike in Finland, the timetable is so tight."

" In Finland it is very easy going, and if you do not have time to do the exam. You can do it at your own base. Unlike Nigeria, we do everything just once. For example,the exam, if you miss the exam, you have to wait for the next year for you to reserve the exam."

According to the data analyses, weather, food and communication method are main cultural challenges. Teaching methods and the role of teachers are main academic challenges.

4.2 Main challenges experienced by international students

From the research we got the result that the culture challenges, academic problems and language problems are the main problems faced and experienced by international nursing students during their study.

The first issue are the cultural problems. Students do not understand each other's culture, so the way of expression and some behavior may not be understood and students got wrong information. In this situation it is easy for foreign students to feel isolated and to miss home.

" In my first year, my classmates they are mainly come from Europe country, they do not understand my culture and what I did , they got it in a wrong way. They should know I come from different cultural background, they should respect what I behaviour. I think that is one of my greatest challenge. "

" I miss my home a lot during studies "

The second issue are academic problems. Foreign students have a different learning background and they absorb knowledge in a different way. Teachers use different teaching methods. For international students, when they get assignments, it may be hard to start to write the assignment or not clear with the assignment instructions.

" If the teacher may just use one method to teach like group discussion, group discussion is good, but just use group discussion, only this way. I believe not only me but most of students may feel bored, and I will not motivated to take that course any more. "

As Ryan said although many of the difficulties experienced by staff and students are well known, there is still much to be done to address curriculum, pedagogical and assessment practices. A necessary precursor to this work is the examination of underlying attitudes, values and systems that may give rise to difficulties for both staff and students. (Ryan 2011)

As a third issue language problems is the biggest challenge, either the teacher or students have similar problems, because English is not their mother tongue, although they have passed English exams. Everyone has their own dialect and pronunciation is different, they must get to use to this language environment.

"As far as I concerned the biggest problem is language barrier, no matter during academic study or the guided practice period. For instance, some of the teachers can not speak good English. As a result, they can not teach so many things to students and those teachers often let us do group study or group work. "

" Sometimes teacher can not give more detail on the task describe, I mean the task describe are not so clear, so which can make some misunderstanding about assignment or we do not know how to do that. Finally the teachers may not get what they wanted or students get low grade. "

*" When I get assignment I already know what is the teacher wants from me.
But some few uncertain "*

Language barrier will have effect on the lectures and practical training in the health care unit. If the students sometimes are not be trusted, they feel isolated and feel hard to demonstrate themselves better. When doing practical training, for some students the most difficult thing is feeling of being ignored if their supervisor is not there. Some nurses do not speak English and some nurses who can speak English have their own student.

" One thing is in my guided practice, for me communication is the biggest problem cause English is not our mother tongue so some misunderstanding can happen."

" Language barrier make me fell isolated, in my guided practices some of staff they do not concern how I feel during my practice,like sometimes some staff made me feel that we can not help you to be here. They must pay more attention to our foreigner student. It is good to help them fell comfortable, they should do know their cultural. "

" Sometimes it is very stress to make mistakes,every can make mistakes. It would be very expensive mistake, but when I was in my practice places that when I did something, they do not trust me, they want to see what you are doing ,if you are doing right."

" During the practice also, we do not get the equality education. If some of the teachers in public to speak good english.That easy for them pass information to us."

Stress from clinical practice and its impact are international yet culturally mediated phenomena. Nursing students are under considerable stress during clinical practice periods, putting their education and health at risk. However, there is little or no empirical evidence about the stress suffered by nursing students and its impact on their health throughout clinical practice. (Jimenez & Osorio & Diaz 2010)

4.3 Coping methods used by international students

In special situation to have a good learning results, students always do as much as they can to solve those problems. For academic problems students always ask help from teachers, send e-mail to teachers or use materials to study by themselves.

" Basically, I ask help from my teachers or I sent them e-mails to get more detail about how to do the assignment. If I have any problems in understanding the lesson. I read books from laboratory or I check more information on the internet or I use my Chinese book to help me understand more. "

" I have my teacher in school if something I can not understand or I can not manage, they will give suggestions to me. I also have a tutor in school. She help me a lot in my studies. "

For culture problems students always encourage themselves to be more active to face these problems, because they know why they are being here.

" Maybe it could have some negative affections , but I know why I am being here, so it is not a big problem in my case. "

" When I get nervous i try to control myself. And it can not stop me from studying very hard and can not stop me making good credits.I know that I am here to study,whatever the challenge I have. I have to deal with them as much as I can. "

" I am usually trying to find out my personal mistake and then adopt myself get into a better situation "

" Due to cultural different. Finnish people are very shy, I mean everybody is shy but it can not stop me being sociable. "

For language problems students can get help from school teachers, they act a role like translator to talk with the nurses.

" Because language problems I have no idea to cope problems in my guided practice. Some of staff they are very shy to speak English and some of them can not speak english. My teacher in school they always come to see me then I will talk to them about my problems. "

Most students choose to send email or use materials to study by themselves. Students also can get help from school.

4.4 Support that students want to get

Although some problems have been solved in some kind of way, there still are problems which are difficult to overcome by students themselves. According to interviewed international nursing students, we sum up those main support form that they want to get from school and practical placements.

The school can hire some teachers whose English reaches a certain level. And school teachers should give more description and explanation about assignments, preferably by example.

" In my opinion I think school can hire some teachers whose english reach a certain level. I mean for our students before we go to study in this school,we had english test. I think the teacher who teach us, school also have english examination. "

" The teacher should give more description or explanation on how to do the assignment or give example to help students how to do that, because examples says a lot."

For international nursing students, they would like to get mental support from school especially in practical placements. They hope to be understood by teachers, supervisors and students.

" I really want to get such of mental support in school and especially in practice places "

" Supervisor should understand we come from different background. When they saw foreigner students in Finland always they are missing home, it is good to help them feel comfortable. "

" Students should try to understand us. When we make mistakes they should correct us not going to talk about us at our backs. "

For transfer students it would be better to give a short period to understand Finland and education system of school. Like basic guided study.

" As a transfer student, we do not have those basic guided lessons for the first year students. I think it is better to give us 1 or 2 weeks to understand Finland and education system of school as well. Therefore, more activities could be organized in order to increase the communications between different international students, and sometimes give a bit time to students and ask them to present their culture, in order to make classmates know each other better, something like this. "

Students want to get mental support from school and practical placements. Transfer students hope to have a short period to understand Finland before enrollment to school.

4.5 Conclusion of the study

Study problems faced by international nursing students include cultural differences, academic challenges and language barriers, which are found by our research and earlier researches. According to our research and earlier researches, we have noticed that those problems actually exist, we can not change this situation, but some good suggestions and wishes have come out from our interviewees; a) International students should have active attitude and realize personal shortcoming; b) Reading books or searching internet to get more information; c) Consulting teachers about study problems; d) Making enough preparation before enrollment as a student in Finland.

At the same time, we got solutions as for support which international nursing students want to get for coping with those problems; a) Mental support should be given to students especially in guided practice; b) Both teachers and students who will be in international group should reach a certain English level; c) Supervisors should have enough experiences to guide students during the guided practice; d) Sufficient guidance and appropriate arrangement should be given to transfer students before enrollment as a student in Finland.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of the topic

We found that studying nursing profession abroad is a huge challenge for those students whose mother tongue is not English after we came to Kemi-Tornio university of Applied Sciences Finland in September 2010. International students have to adapt to this totally new environment. Then we decided we were going to search study problems and challenges experienced by international nursing students in spring 2011. The interview started at the end of 2011 after we got permission of our tutors and approval of school. (See Appendices 4) We finished data analysis in February 2012.

Through guidance by our supervisors we started our research step by step. At the same time we combined our study experience abroad and interview results which we got from international nursing group. We have mapped out study problems experienced by international nursing students objectively and reliably. Although the result is not enough to solve all those study problems, advice from nursing students and about support they wish to get could give good suggestions to school. Our study will be good for management and development of international student groups of Kemi-Tornio university of applied science in future.

The data collection is limited by inviting participants because of few international students are available to take part in our interview. The international group of our school is not so international, it does not include so many countries, some students come from the same country.

We have been studying at Kemi-Torio University Of Applied Sciences in Finland about two years and experienced study problems in the first year, because we are not familiar with the education system in Finland. For instance, the first class of the lecture in school, the teacher gave assignment of this lecture to students, and we knew nothing about that lecture and how to write the assignment. We did not know the guidelines for thesis and other written assignments. We were very puzzled and upset with this situation. Practical training problems were another big challenge for us. We did not know the Finnish language, we did not know what happened around us, we felt so isolated in practical training placements. So lots of problems we had experienced, we want to map out those problems and find solutions to cope with study and practical training problems, therefore not only international nursing students but school managers can benefit from our Bachelor's thesis.

5.2 Ethical aspects of studies

The dignity, rights, safety and well-being of participants are paramount in any research project. For research involving patients, service users, healthcare professionals or

volunteers or their organs, or data, there must be independent review to ensure that ethical standards are met. There must be appropriate arrangements for obtaining informed consent. This includes the provision of suitable material, such as written or pictorial information, so that participants, caregivers, parents or supporters have clear explanations that they can understand. (Moule & Goodman 2009, 45.)

However, if you are doing research as part of an educational qualification, you will also need to gain approval from your university (Moule et al 2009, 47).

The focus for gaining ethical approval is on 'risk'. It does, however, recognise that risk can be complex and not necessarily physical; for example, it might relate to a person's personal values and beliefs, social standing, family or community circumstances. (Moule et al 2009, 47.)

We had to arrange enough time and interview those three students. We have informed them about the nature of the research before interview. We made sure that autonomy of the participants was guaranteed. Before the interview they had been given enough time to prepare their opinions. The environment we chose was peaceful and comfortable. Each interview lasted about 40 minutes. We deleted all the taping after the content analysis. Privacy of participants has been protected and kept them from harm. Ethical principles were applied in our research.

5.3 Reliability

The data presented in any qualitative research report or publication has to be seen to be credible, just as quantitative data needs to be seen as valid. Those reading the research must believe that the data presented is a 'true' representation of the participants' view, experience or belief. (Moule et al 2009, 188.)

Resources which we used are topicality and fresh and the references we chose for support theoretical framework is relevant and updated. The truthful of information is very important. So we got a great deal of information about study problems experienced by international nursing students through analysis the data of interview. There is much research on studying abroad, but we have emphasized on study problems experienced by international nursing students who study at Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Science in Finland.

5.4 Research usability and new problem areas

The result could be used for enhancing the students study outcomes, to develop the content and methods of teaching in the degree program of nursing and nursing education. However, all information is collected based on the interviewees own experiences and the participants are from the same group. Other study problems may not be noticed by our research. Hence our research can be used as literature for further future research on international study problems.

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7 APPENDICES

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions are used in interview.

1 self-introduction,our status,our purpose and aim.

2 Could you describe cultural differences from your country and Finland.

Eg -weather

-food

-entertainment

-Ways of greetings

-Ways of communicating

-Polite and unpolite behaviour.

3 What kind of academic differences have noticed/experienced during your study?

Eg , -Ways of teaching by teachers .

-Learning ways of students.

-Form of assignments

4What kind of problems or difficulties have you had during academic study and guided practice period?

Eg , -Communicating

-Misunderstood

-Technique

5 How have these problems affected on your studies?

Eg -Invalid study outcomes

-Mood or attitude of study

6 How have these problems affected your life?

7 How do you cope with these problems?

Eg -talk to you supervisor or get support from your classmates?

8 What kind of support do you wish to get in these problems?

Appendices 2

Content analysis

Culture and academic differences	Problems/difficulties of academic and guided practice	Those problems affected on study and life	How to cope with those problems	What kind of support do they want to get
<p>In Finland especially the winter is quite long and cold, day time become shorter and shorter.</p> <p>Food, vegetable and fruit in market are quite expensive.</p> <p>Transportation method the bus comes like once per hour or once</p>	<p>As far as I concerned the biggest problem is language barrier, no matter during academic study or the guided practice period. For instance, some of the teachers can not speak good English. As a result, they can not teach so many things to students and those</p>	<p>As a time goes by everybody get tired to this study. We can not just focus on what we are discussing. We focus on other things, we are pretending we are discussing but we actually not.</p> <p>I believe not only me but most of students may feel bored, and I will not motivated to</p>		<p>In my opinion I think school can hire some teachers whose English reach a certain level. I mean for our students before we go to study in this school, we had English test. I think the teacher who teach us, school also have English</p>

<p>every two hours. It is not convenient for me as a student from the place where i live to school.</p> <p>According to tree years study experiences I had. I think there are many teaching method</p>	<p>teachers often let us do group study or group work.</p> <p>If the teacher may just use one method to teach like group discussion,group discussion is good,but just use group discussion,only this way.</p>	<p>take that course any more.</p>		<p>examination.</p>
<p>which is different from my country, the teaching method here used by the teachers are like lectures,contact lessons,group study and clinical practice.There are more options for the teachers to choose which one is good for this lesson.</p> <p>There are so many resources which can be used by students in school.They are available all the time, such as computers you can find everywhere in the study building and we have library which consist of different books</p>	<p>Sometimes teacher can not give more detail on the task describe,I mean the task describe are not so clear.</p>	<p>so which can make some misunderstanding about assignment or we do not know how to do that.Finally the teachers may not get what they wanted or students get low grade.</p> <p>Well, those problems that I had may affected my felling in a negative way.</p>	<p>Basically, I ask help from my teachers or I sent them emails to get more detail about how to do the assignment. If I have any problems in understanding the lesson.I read books from laboratory or I check more information on the internet or I use my Chinese book to help me understand more.</p>	<p>The teacher should give more description or explanation on how to do the assignment or give example to help students how to do that,because examples says a lot.</p>

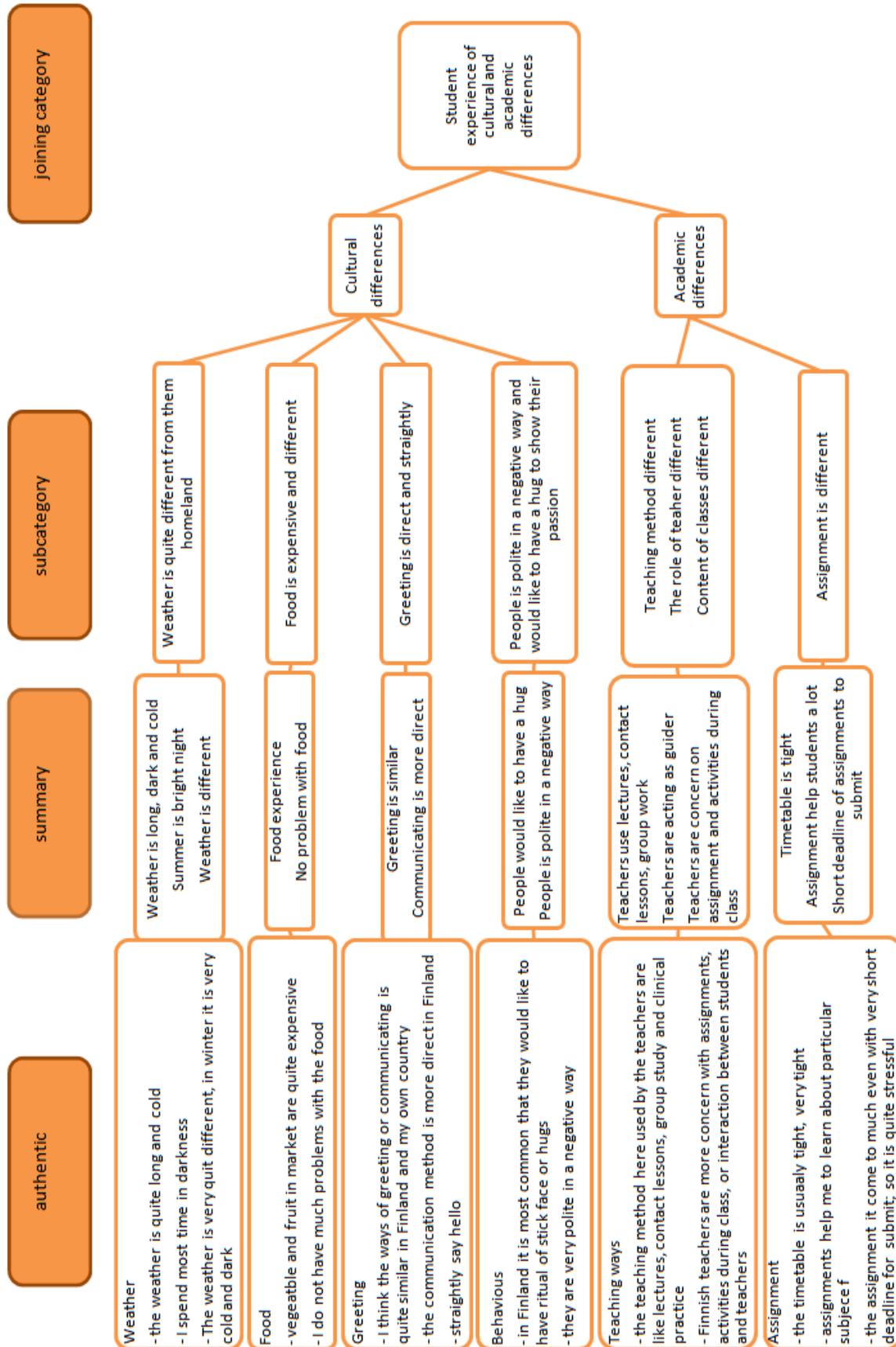
<p>in different professional. We can borrow books.</p> <p>Finish teachers are act as a role like a guider. They are not tell you everything, but they likes guiding you to that point. The students are learning things mainly by group work or group discussion or independent study.</p> <p>2 The way of greeting is quite different, in my country just like</p>	<p>2 There are many Difficulties for the new students, like cultural differences in my first year I mean my classmates they are mainly come from Europe country, they do not understand my cultural and what I did they got it in a wrong way. they should know I come from different cultural background, they should respect what I behaviour, I think that is one of my greatest challenge,</p>		<p>Due to cultural different . Finnish people are very shy I mean everybody is shy but it can not stop me being sociable. So I think that it has affected number of my friends.</p>	<p>I really want to get such of mental support in school and especially in practice places.</p> <p>Supervisor should understand we come from different background. When they saw foreigner students in Finland always they are missing home, it is good to help them fell comfortable.</p>
<p>when you see somebody straightly say hello. passing respond. but in Finland it is not.</p> <p>In winter it is very cold and dark, and during the summer, it will have bright nights</p> <p>The food ,I do not have much problems with the food. It quiet different from Nigeria. I can eat</p>	<p>One thing is in my guided practice, for me communication is the biggest problem cause english is not our mother tongue so some misunderstanding can happen.</p> <p>Language barrier make me fell isolated, in my guided practices some of staff they do not concern how I fell during my practice, like</p>	<p>so sometimes you find it is difficult to fell at home and you can not demonstrate yourself better. especially in my first and second year when I had no knowledge about Finnish language.</p> <p>I have had cultural different, communication and some misunderstanding in class and in my practice places so it has really affected my academic outcome.</p>	<p>I have my teacher in school if something I can not understand or I can not manage, they will give suggestions to me. I also have a tutor in school. She help me a lot in my studies. Because language problems I</p>	<p>When the staff saw foreigner students in Finland always they are missing home, it is good to help them fell comfortable.</p> <p>Finnish students should try to understand us. When we make mistakes they should correct us not going to talk</p>

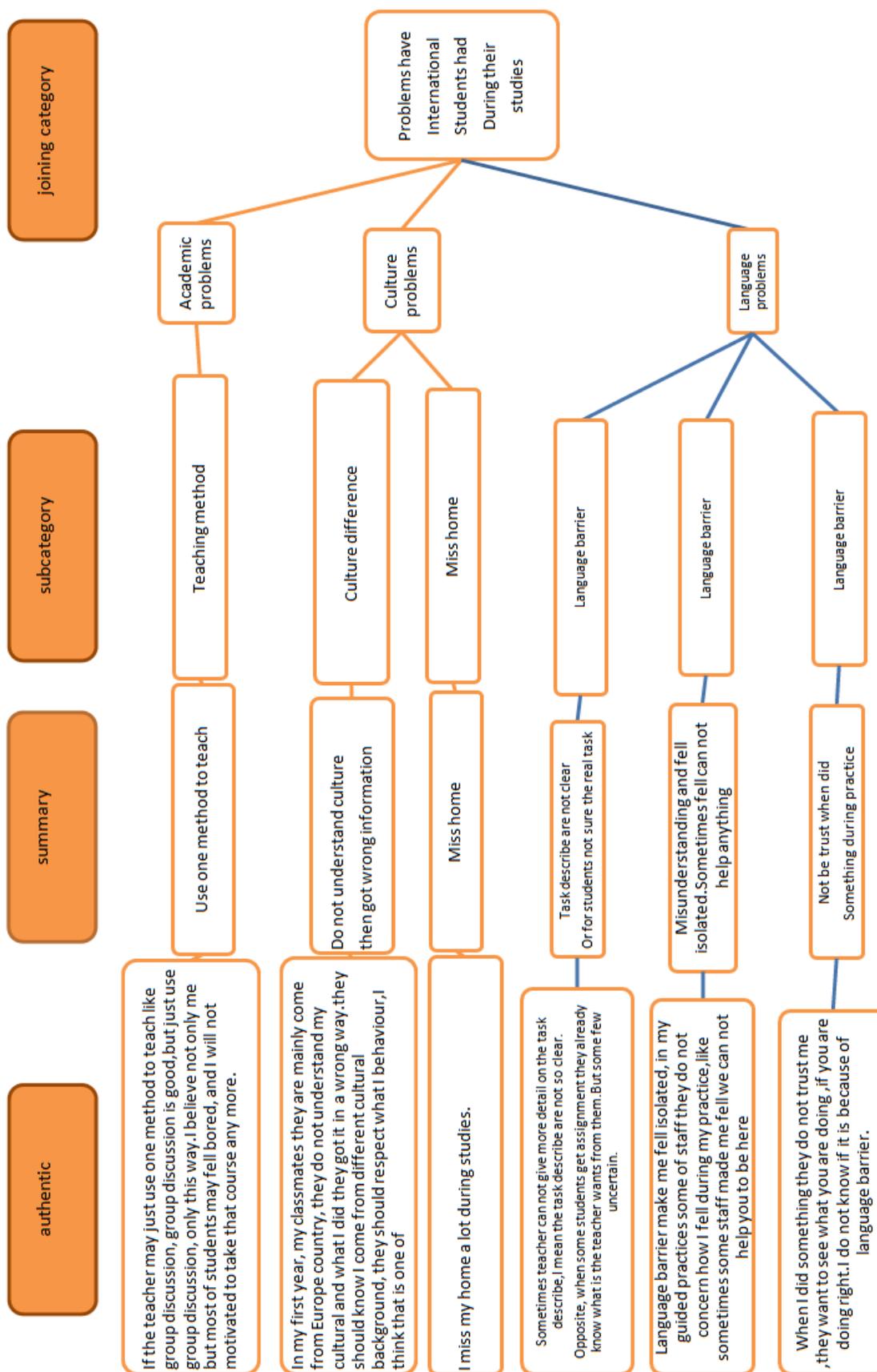
<p>anything except those thing i am allergic to, some meat i do not like to eat.</p> <p>There is one more thing about Finnish culture. You know they are very polite in a negative way. You may be do something wrong ,they will not would like correct you. In my country when you do something wrong, they will inform you immediatly. They are very polite in positive. In Finland the polite in negatively, they do not sure where you are wrong.</p> <p>The academic system in Finland is very different from what we have. In Nigeria the study is verry stressful, but the timetable is very flexible, unlike in Finland. the timetable is so</p>	<p>sometimes some staff made me fell we can not help you to be here if you can not cope with us.they must pay more attention to our foreigner students when I was in my practice places that</p> <p>When I did something they do not trust me ,they want to see what you are doing ,if you are doing right.I do not know if it is because of language barrier. But like mixing zinacef , you do not need so much language to take 15ml or 20ml aqua into zinacef. You just need to practice more.</p> <p>During the practice also, we do not get the equality education. If some of the teachers in public to speak good english. That easy for them pass information to us. And because the language so</p>	<p>They do not trust me,it makes me nervous when i doing some procedure.</p>	<p>have no idea to cope problems in my guided practice. Some of staff they are very shy to speak english and some of them can not speak english. My teacher in school they always come to see me then I will talk to them about my problems.</p> <p>When i get nervous i try to control myself. And it can not stop me from studying very hard and can not stop me making good credits.I know that I am here to study,whate ver the challenge i have.I have to deal with</p>	<p>about us at our backs.</p>
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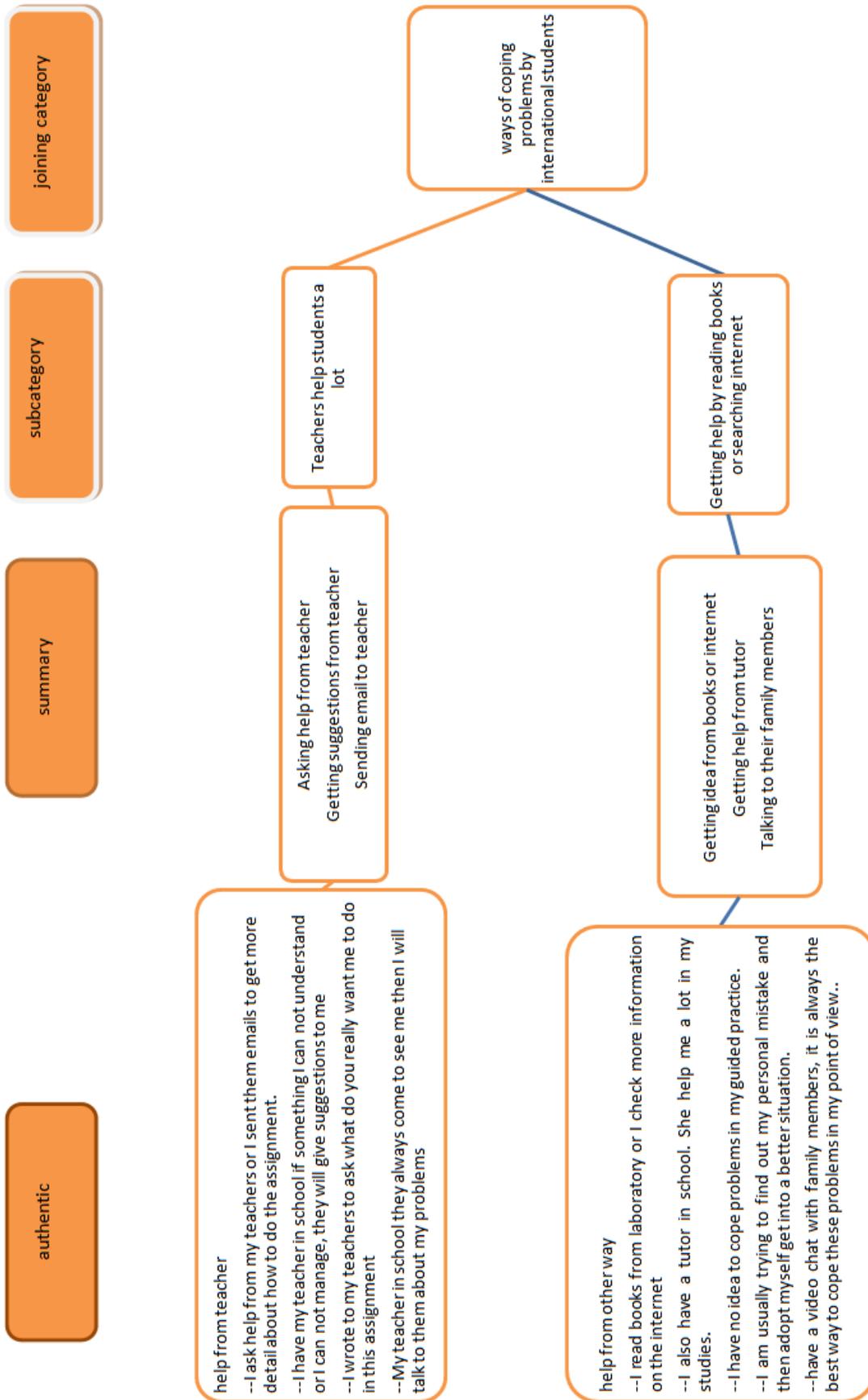
<p>tight.</p> <p>In Finland it is very easy going, and if you do not have time to do the exam. You can do it at your own base. Unlike Nigeria, we do everything just have once. For example, the exam, if you miss the exam, you have to wait for the next year for you to reserve the exam.</p>	<p>they do not have more materials they use to teach us.</p> <p>When i get assignment i already know what is the teacher wants from me. But some few uncertain</p>		<p>them as much as i can.</p> <p>I wrote to my teachers to ask what do you really want me to do in this assignment.</p>	
<p>About learning ways, I think in my country the teacher gives you almost all the information you need about particular lessons in class. But here i do not know if it is because the language problem, i usually learn more by myself.</p> <p>3 Less entertainment activities than my hometown. Also Finnish are really shy.</p>	<p>3 In first year, the biggest problem is about English skills, but it is most relates the behavior of Chinese students, for example, we do like to communicate with others, but it is a bit hard to “bother” others if they are not firstly coming to talk with us. Maybe because culture difference.</p> <p>I miss my home a lot during studies,</p>	<p>Maybe it could have some negative affections , but I know why I am being here, so it is not a big problem in my case.</p>	<p>I am usually trying to find out my personal mistake and then adopt myself get into a better situation.</p> <p>Mainly I was trying to contact my friends in here and trying to find someone who possibly has same feeling as I do, then after talk with each other, and then it could be getting better. Or have a video chat with family members, it</p>	<p>As we know, at the first year, the students had some lessons about guiding studies and have enough time to get used to study and life in Finland. As a transfer student, we do not have those lessons .I think it is better to give us 1 or 2 weeks to understand Finland and education system of school as well. Therefore, More activities could be organized in order to increase the communication s between different international</p>

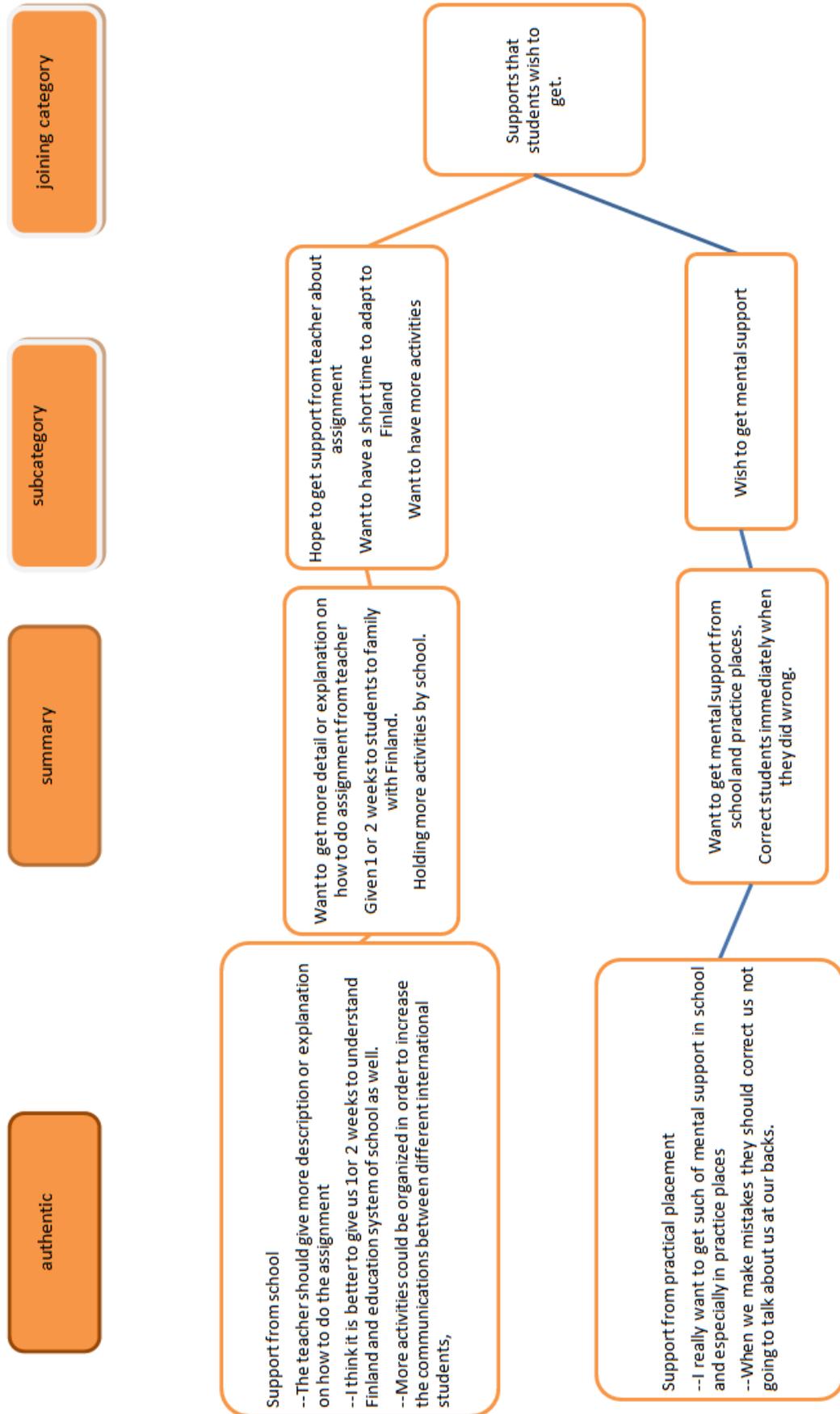
<p>in Chinese culture people never saying something directly because our tradition tells it will be hurts to others or make others feel losing face, concern with this kind of culture shock, the communicating method is more direct in Finland.</p> <p>In China, it is polite to shake hand when we meet someone, but in Finland it is most common that they would like to have ritual of stick face or hugs, and in China it is not polite to refuse someone but in here it is most common situation.</p> <p>The teaching by teachers are totally different between China and Finland, in our country, teachers prefer to provide more examinations in order to check</p>			<p>is always the best way to cope these problems in my point of view..</p>	<p>students, and sometimes give a bit time to students and ask them to present their culture, in order to make classmates know each other better, something like this</p>
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<p>how students studies in their classes. In other hand, it seems Finnish teachers are more concern with assignments, activities during class, or interaction between students and teachers.</p>				
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Kemi-Tornion ammattikorkeakoulu ja alla mainittu toimeksiantaja sopivat tällä sopimuksella opiskelijatyönä tehtävän hankkeistetun opinnäytetyön tekemisestä.

Toimeksiantaja			
Nimi	Kemi-Tornion AMK / sos. ja terveystieteiden tiedekunta		
Osoite	Mennupuuskatu 26, 94100 Kemi		
Puh.		Sähköpostiosoite	
Yhdyshenkilö/työelämäohjaaja			
Nimi	Anne Vähänen		
Osoite	Mennupuuskatu 26, 94100 Kemi		
Puh.		Sähköpostiosoite	anne.vahanen@tokeam.fi
Oppilaitoksen tiedot			
Kemi-Tornion ammattikorkeakoulu			
Opinnäytetyön ohjaajan nimi	Eila Heikkinen		
Nimi			
Osoite	Mennupuuskatu 26, 94100 Kemi		
Puh.	0400 695 908	Sähköpostiosoite	eila.heikkinen@tokeam.fi
Opinnäytetyön tekijä(t) (nimi, koulutusohjelma, yhteystiedot)			
Ming Gao, Joint Degree Program Mingxia Liu, Joint Degree Program			
Opiskelijanatyönä tehtävän opinnäytetyön tiedot:			
Opinnäytetyön nimi/aihe	Praxis during the studies experienced by international nursing students		
Työn aikataulu	Valmistuu huhtikuun 2012		
Opinnäytetyöstä aiheutuvista kustannuksista vastaa			
Tulosten salassapidosta sovitaan seuraavaa			

Opinnäytetyön hankkeistusta koskevat tiedot:

- Toimeksiantaja maksaa joko ammattikorkeakoululle tai opiskelijalle työn tekemisestä ja tästä on kirjallisesti sovittu ennen opinnäytetyön aloittamista.
- Opinnäytetyön ohjaukseen osallistuu nimetty työelämän edustaja ja tästä on kirjallisesti sovittu ennen opinnäytetyön aloittamista.
- Toimeksiantajan tarkoituksena on alusta lähtien hyödyntää opinnäytetyön tuloksia ja tästä on sovittu kirjallisesti ennen opinnäytetyön aloittamista.

Jos tähän sopimukseen tulee muutoksia, on se jokaisen osapuolen uudelleen hyväksyttävä ja allekirjoitettava.

Tämä sopimus on tehty kappaleena, yksi jokaiselle sopijaosapuolelle.

Paikka

Aika 4/5 2012

AMK:n edustaja

Toimeksiantajan edustaja

Ming Gao

Mingxia Liu

Opinnäytetyön tekijä(t)

6/12

KEMI-TORNION AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
Sosiaali- ja terveysala

OPINNÄYTETYÖN AINEISTON KERUUN LUPA-ANOMUS

1. Luvan anoja	Kemi-Tornion ammattikorkeakoulun terveysalan koulutusyksikön opiskelija/t Mingxia Liu Ming Gao
2. Opinnäytetyön aihe	Problems during the studies experienced by international & nursing students
3. Opinnäytetyön tarkoitus	to map studies' problems experienced by international nursing students
4. Opinnäytetyössä tarvittava aineisto	international students experiences
5. Aineiston keruumenetelmät	Students' interview
6. Aineiston keruun suunniteltu ajankohta	February 2012
7. Opinnäytetyön arvioitu valmistumisaika	May 2012
8. Opinnäytetyön suunnitelma on hyväksytty	KEMI-TORNION AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU, terveysalan koulutusyksikkö 30 päivänä marras kuuta 20 11
9. Allekirjoitukset	Opinnäytetyön ohjaaja Anja Mikkola Tuula Sykkö Zita Heikkinen Opinnäytetyön tekijä/tekijät, osoite ja puhelinnumero Mingxia Liu Sammonkatu 4 B2 0465561263 Ming Gao Sammonkatu 4 D3 0465932986

Lupa tutkimustyöhön

myönnetty hakemuksen mukaisena
myönnetty korjauksin
hakemus hylätty

päiväys

17/4 2012

allekirjoitukset

Siniikka Kätkölä
SINIikka KÄTKÖLÄ
VS. TOIMIALAVOIMIA