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# Nursing Student Mentoring. A Descriptive Review of Nurses Experiences.

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<p>Nurses teach nursing students clinical skills during nursing student's clinical practice in healthcare organizations. The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of nurses on the mentoring of nursing students. This study aims at providing information based on researches about the experiences of nurses in mentoring of student nurses. The research question for this study was to discover what kind of experiences nurses have with respect to mentoring of student nurses during clinical practices.</p> <p>The study was conducted using a descriptive literature review, a systematic literature search strategy implemented on the following electronic databases: EBSCOhost, MEDLINE, ERIC, CINHALL complete, Proquest central and Pubmed. The search was limited to peer review/scholarly articles and articles published from 2010-2020 in English language. The search words used included: nurses, nursing staff, nurse, experience*, or perspective* or view* or perception*, mentor* or preceptor* or supervis*. Ten papers were included after applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, thematic analysis was used to analyse data.</p> <p>The review showed the following as contributory to mentor's experience of mentoring nursing students: student preparedness an attitudes, collaboration and communication with educational institutions, collaboration and communication with colleagues and nursing department management, understanding of mentoring, reciprocity, mentoring positives, ambivalence, challenges of mentoring nursing student, encouragement and facilitating learning. The challenges experienced by nurses while mentoring students could be investigated by nursing schools through proper collaboration and adequate support from link teacher. The nursing department should consider looking into the challenges that arise from the department and nursing students could also support nurse mentors by being prepared and having a positive attitude to learning to make mentoring a rich and rewarding experience for all involved.</p>	
Keywords	Mentoring, experience, nurse education, nurse mentor, nursing students, nurse

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<p>Sairaanhoitajat opettavat ja ohjaavat sairaanhoitajaopiskelijoita klinisen harjoittelujakson aikana. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli kuvailla sairaanhoitajien kokemuksia opiskelijoiden ohjaamisesta kirjallisuuskatsauksen avulla. Tutkimuskysymyksenä oli selvittää, minkälaisia kokemuksia sairaanhoitajilla on sairaanhoito-opiskelijoiden ohjauksesta klinisen harjoittelun aikana.</p> <p>Oppinäytetyö toteutettiin kuvailevana kirjallisuuskatsauksena. Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin EBSCOhost, MEDLINE, ERIC, CINHAL complete, Proquest central ja Pubmed tietokannoista. Tutkimuskohteena olivat englanninkieliset, vuosina 2010 – 2020 julkaistut sairaanhoitajaopiskelijoita ohjaavien sairaanhoitajien ohjauskokemuksia käsittelevät tieteelliset tutkimukset. Aineisto koostui 10 tutkimuksesta ja aineiston analyysimentelmänä oli teemoittelu.</p> <p>Kirjallisuuskatsaus osoitti, että ohjaajien kokemukseen opiskelijoiden ohjaustyöstä myötävaikuttavat seuraavat tekijät: opiskelijoiden valmiudet ja asenteet, yhteistyö ja viestintä oppilaitosten, kollegojen sekä sairaanhoitoyksikön johdon kanssa, oppimisen tukeminen ja ohjaustyön vastavuoroisuuden, kaksijakoisuuden, sekä haasteiden ymmärtäminen.</p> <p>Sairaanhoitajien ohjaustyöhön liittyviä haasteita voitaisiin sairaanhoidon oppilaitoksissa selvittää riittävän yhteistyön ja opettajan tuen avulla. Hoitotyön oppilaitosten johdon tulisi tarkastella osastolähtöisiä haasteita; Myös opiskelijat voisivat oman positiivisen asenteensa avulla edesauttaa antoisan ja palkitsevan ohjauskokemuksen luomista.</p>	
Avainsanat	Sairaanhoitaja, hoitaja koulutus, opiskelijan ohjaaminen, kokemus, mentorointi.

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## 1 Introduction

Nursing education in Finland can only be obtained through study in universities of applied studies, the duration of study usually lasts between three and half years to four and half years with a required ECTS of 210 study credits. Upon completion of the nursing degree, it is expected that nurses be well grounded in the theory of nursing and other related disciplines, going further graduate nurses are expected to be able to translate the theoretical knowledge gained in school to the work place in caring for patients (Finnish Nurses Association: 2020).

Education at all levels falls under one of the responsibilities of the Finnish ministry of education and culture, with the universities of applied sciences act 932/2014 section 14, amendment 325/2015 states that universities of applied sciences determine the curricula to be used in different programmes; this includes the nursing degree. Considering, that different universities of applied sciences decide and implement curricula for nursing programmes, this increases the likelihood of differences in curricula of nursing programmes in Finland (Ministry of education and culture; Universities of applied sciences act 2014:6).

The adjustment from a student in the field of nursing to the professional role of a practicing nurse has been shown to be quite challenging. Quite a number, of freshly graduated nurses seem not to be fully ready to take up the role of a registered nurse in the absence of additional clinical practice. Recently graduated nurses are faced with quite a number, of challenging situations and are hugely pressured to fulfill the demands of the nursing profession. Users of health care services also have anticipations as to the manner, in which health care should be delivered, this may affect newly graduated nurses, many of whose nursing competencies have not fully developed. Furthermore, leadership demands a lot from nurses to deliver high quality care that is functional and gainful; increasing the demand on nursing schools to deliver graduate nurses who are prepared for work life (Benett 2017:96).

Interests in the standard of care and safety related issues in the field of health care have added to the call for a modification in the nursing education preparation of professionals in the health care sector, more attention is paid to objective analysis and evaluation of issues together with scientific based viewpoint. Furthermore, based on findings from studies on the disparity between accessible knowledge and present practices in the field of health care, effort has been made to upgrade the training of workers in the health care sector, by introducing core competencies (Ehrenberg, Gustavsson, Wallin, Boström & Rudman 2016: 454).

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of nurses on the mentoring of graduating students. This study was aimed at providing information based on researches about the experiences of nurses in mentoring of student nurses.

## 2 Theoretical Background

### 2.1 Nurse competence

The word competence is a frequent term globally in the field of nursing, competence has been defined in different ways by various professionals, there seems to be no uniformity in its definitions amongst, the term competence can be considered as ambiguous. Nurse competence is integral to the delivery of standard nursing care (Meretoja & Leino-Kilpi 2001: 346; Yanhua & Watson 2011: 832)

The Australian nursing and midwifery council (ANMC) started the use of competency standards for registered nurses as early as in the 1990s, it worked with the state and territory nursing and midwifery authorities (NMRA) to develop a guideline to deliver safer and more competent nursing care. With an official name change in 2010; the ANMC became the Australian nursing and midwifery accreditation council (ANMAC), this name change emphasized the role of the council in evaluating and approving competence standards in Australia. In the United Kingdom the standards for competence for registered nurses were issued in 2014 as a reference manual for nursing professionals for the length of their careers. In these standards are clearly specified the expectations that nurses should fulfill upon qualification. It also specifies what standards should be regularly maintained to continue practicing as a nurse (Nursing and midwifery council 2019; Nursing and midwifery board of Australia 2013).

The International council of nurses defines competence as effectively applying a mix of knowledge, skills and judgement in practice or the performance one's duties, on a daily basis. In the field of nursing, there are different views as regards to the term competence however the following is agreed upon: know-how, a sense of understanding and decision-making skills; a set of skills such as intellectual, dexterity in practice and interpersonal relations; a set of personal features and disposition. Another school of thought considers competence through the viewpoint of transfer, in the utilization of the above components within a specific setting to generate best solutions based on resources available. It defines competence "intersection between knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, as well as the mobilization of said components in order to transfer them to a certain context or

real situation, hence coming up with the best action/solution possible to address all different situations and problems that can emerge at any moment, making use of the available resources". (Gómez del Pulgar cited in EFN Competency Framework:2015)

## 2.2 Nurse Mentoring

Nurse's clinical studies add up to about a half of nurse's pre-qualification studies, clinical practice hours sum up to about 2400 hours in all, this is governed by the European Union directive. Clinical practice takes place during nurse's study placements in specific units or departments. This training occurs in nursing or health care facilities as the case maybe. This presents true hands on experience and learning possibilities in a clinical setting, providing these students with an original learning environment. The legislation on nursing education in Finland and the United Kingdom mandates that clinical studies during studies should be mentored, however the mentorship of nursing students differs depending on the variations in guidelines (Jokelainen 2013:1).

Amongst the many roles of registered nurses, midwives and specialized community healthcare professionals, the overseeing and supporting of student nurse practitioners continues to be topmost (Casey & Clark 2011:933; Jokelainen, Tossavainen, Jamookeah and Turunen 2013:437). According to the nursing and midwifery council guidelines, emphasis is placed on registered nurse practitioners to mobilize students and others to enhance their competence (NMC, 2008b: p5 cited in Casey & Clark 2011:933). A mutual relationship between students and mentors is considered essential; in this regard, a mentor directs, encourages, admonishes and assists students during clinical placement and behaves as an example to be emulated (Wikes 2006; Moseley & Davies 2008; Myall et al. 2008 cited in Jokelainen et al 2013:437).

The description of who a good mentor as explained by students included someone who is enthusiastic, friendly, easily approachable, who is patient, emphatic and has a sense of humour. The students went further to describe a good mentor as a positive role model, one who acts in a professional manner, is well organized, cares for students and possesses self confidence. A good mentor communicates well, is quite knowledgeable about the subject matter, one whose expectations from his students are realistic, one who plans teaching to enhance moving from an observer to an implementor and gives constructive feedback. A good mentor involves students in learning activities, has time



for students, has a genuine interest in the student learning, believes and trusts in the students capabilities (Gray & Smith 2000:1546).

In an evaluative study carried out, the results indicated that nurse mentors get a large amount of satisfaction from mentoring nursing students, important in this dynamic is the transfer of knowledge, which appears to reinforce the nurse mentor and student relationship (Rylance, Barrett, Sixsmith & Ward (2017:408). Mentorship has been discovered to be a deep personal and meaningful encounter, the mentors reported unique methods of engaging with students, means of being an educator that gave the mentors a sense of direction and a unique identity Wilson 2014:314).

The change from the self-image of an uncompromising student to a true nursing professional, gives the nurse student a feeling of vulnerability. In this case the mentor could positively influence the mentee's transition experience and reduce the possibility of dropping out of nursing students. In this regard the duties, features and views of the mentors need to be elucidated, to allow mentors act efficiently (Huybrecht, Loeckx, Quaeeyhaegens, De Tobel & Mistiaen (2011:274).

Mentoring or precepting brings with it, clinical knowledge and transfer of skills, it is an essential part of the nurse practitioner's education. With constantly increasing nursing student enrolments, the need for qualified and knowledgeable mentors also increase. With increasing distant education in nursing programs, the role of mentoring cannot be over-emphasised. As the need for mentors increase, nurse mentors are under more work pressure causing them to have less time for mentoring or be unavailable to act as mentors (Roberts, Wheeler, Tyler & Padden 2017:484).

### 3 Purpose, Aim and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of nurses on the mentoring of nursing students. This study aims at providing information based on researches about the experiences of nurses in mentoring of student nurses. The research question for this study was to discover what kind of experiences nurses have with respect to mentoring of student nurses during clinical practices.

## 4 Method

A descriptive literature review attempts to find the extent to which a body of empirical studies in a particular research area gives credence or discovers explainable patterns or trends regarding pre-existing propositions, theories, methodologies or results (King & He 2005:667 & Pare, Trudel, Jaana & Kitsiou 2015:186). In order to ensure that the results can be generalized, a descriptive review usually involves a systematic search of relevant publications in the research area (King & He 2005: 667).

A literature review comprises of a detailed evaluation of scholarly articles and publications about a specific topic, it involves critically analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing findings about researches, theories and practices that are related to the area of interest (Efron & Ravid 2018:2). Literature review seeks to identify a specific research question and attempts to find answer(s) to the question by searching, critically appraising and comprehensively analyzing relevant literature through a careful systematic approach. This detailed search and analysis generates new insight that can only be obtained through a process of comprehensive literature review (Aveyard 2019: 2).

### 4.1 Search Strategy

A systematic search strategy requires identifying the types of publications that address the stated research question, it also involves generating search terms that are logical and related to the research question. The search words should also be derived from the research question(s). With the use of pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria a detailed literature search of search words is conducted in databases relevant to the research (Aveyard 2019:74).

A detailed search was conducted on the following electronic databases: (EBSCOhost MEDLINE, ERIC, Cumulative Index to Allied and Health Literature (CINAHL complete)), Proquest central and Pubmed. The strategy used to search comprised of a combination of terms: nurses or nursing staff or nurse in the title (TI) experience\* or perspective\* or view\* or perception\* in the title (TI) mentor\* or preceptor\* or supervis\* in title (TI/AB) and abstract. The search was limited to peer review/scholarly articles and articles published between year 2010 to 2020 in English language.

## 4.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

In descriptive review of literature, it is pertinent that the literature review protocol specifies clear and straightforward inclusion criteria. These criteria should be defined objective, evident based and justified. These clearly defined criteria are used in the selection process to determine if an article is to be included in a literature review or not. It is assumed that the exclusion criteria are criteria opposite of the inclusion criteria, however, for clarity and to reduce the possibility of ambiguity it is advised that exclusion criteria be stated clearly. The PICO acronym representing, population or participants, intervention, comparator or comparison and outcome is also used as a framework to define inclusion and exclusion criteria based on the characteristics of the studies being reviewed (Tufanaru, Munn, Aromataris, Campbell & Hopp: 2020).

**Table 1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

PICOS	INCLUSION CRITERIA	EXCLUSION CRITERIA
Population	Nurses  Undergraduate Nursing students	Other health care workers and students
Intervention	Mentoring or preceptorship by nurses of nursing students.	Mentoring by other non-nursing related professionals.
Outcome	Experiences, perception, views and perspectives of nurses about mentoring nursing students	Experiences, perceptions and expectations not related to mentoring nursing students.
Study design	Qualitative studies  Quantitative studies  Mixed studies	Opinion papers, Letters  Editorials.  Literature reviews

Based on the PICO outlined in (Table 1), included in this literature review are publications from the year 2010 to 2020, peer reviewed scholarly articles relating to the experiences, perceptions views and perspectives of nurses on the mentoring of nursing students, published in English language.

### 4.3 Study selection process

The selection process used in this study was two phased, the first phase included selecting based on publication titles and based on the contents of the abstract published. The second phase involved a detailed evaluation of studies that have passed the first selection criteria. In the second phase, full text was read to select publications that are relevant to the research topic. The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flow chart (Figure1) was used to visually illustrate the selection process (Prisma 2015).

## PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram

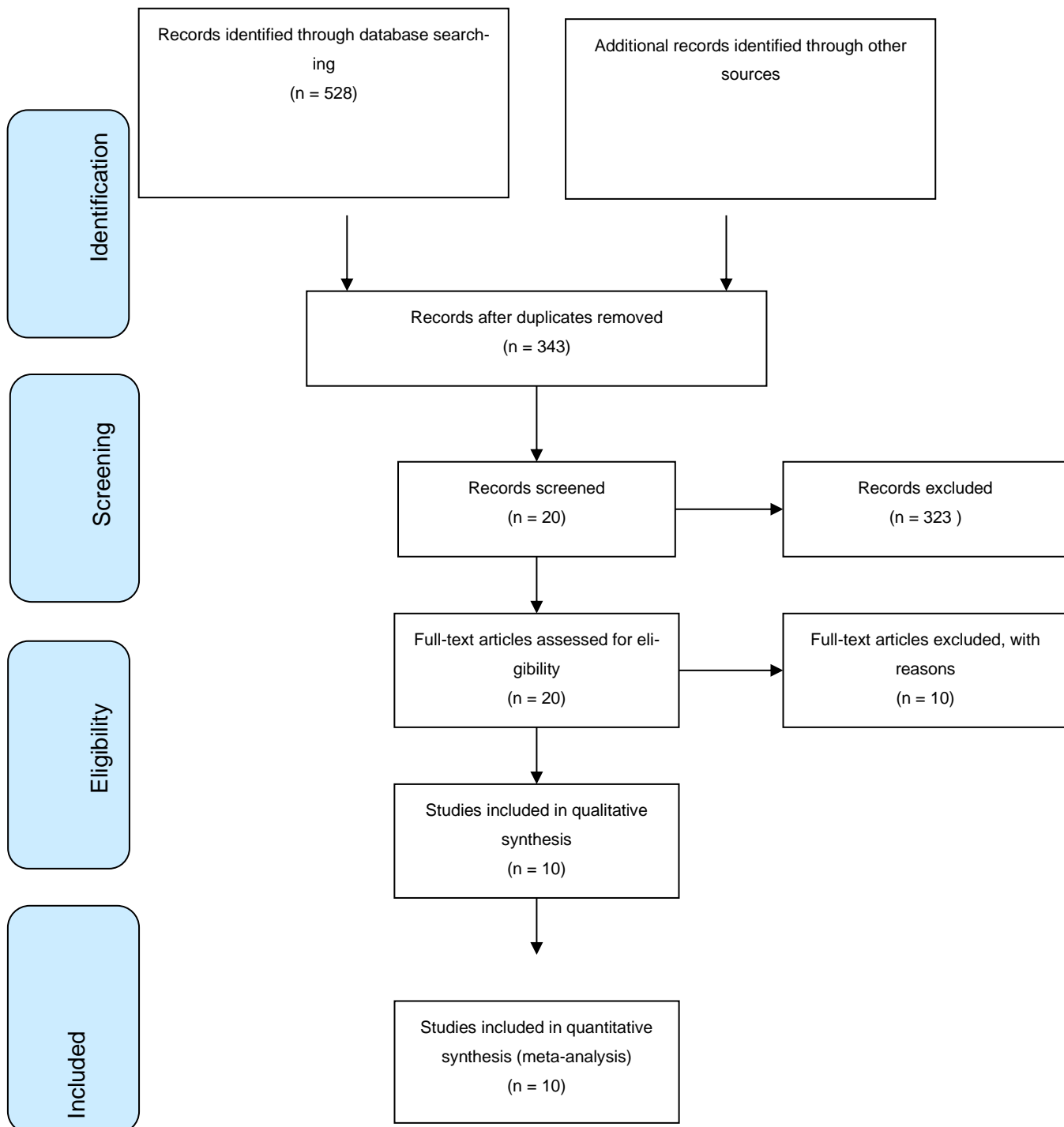


Figure 1: Prisma 2009 Flow diagram.

#### 4.4 Quality appraisal

The quality of the publications was critically evaluated by using the critical appraisal skills programme (CASP) qualitative checklist found on the (CASP 2020) The checklist was used in appraising the relevance of the selected journals based on the study's aim, the research design method, data collection and analysis method as well as the relevance of the study to the research at hand. All the selected studies based on the CASP checklist meet the requirements to be included in this systematic review. A tabular analysis that provides an analysis of the appraisal conducted on the selected articles (Appendix 1: 1-2).

#### 4.5 Data Extraction

Data was extracted after carefully reading the journal articles that meet the inclusion criteria highlighted above. The data extracted are title, author's name, year of publication, journal name, purpose of study, research method and findings. It will be presented in a table format (Appendix 2: 1 -4).

#### 4.6 Analysis

The thematic analysis was conducted using a simplified approach as stated in (Aveyard 2019: 141 -147) this method comprised of identifying themes, developing themes, discussing the strength of evidence, naming and comparing themes and writing up the themes. In identifying the themes, the researcher identified and read thoroughly the themes from the findings in the studies selected, some terms were selected from the original research papers, while the researcher also came up with own terms as considered relevant to the study. The words generated were compared amongst other words and this became the basis for the themes identified, these words were later summarised to form themes, these themes were considered based on relevance to the research question.

Upon identification of themes, the results with similar themes were merged together and studied extensively, as the study proceeded with grouping of similar findings, and considering of the relevance of the selected studies to the research question, labels or



names began to emerge, the names were considered provisionally as the themes were re-evaluated to ensure thoroughness, eliminate duplicates and reduce the risk of omission or wrong grouping of themes.

## 5 Result

### 5.1 Characteristics of studies

The studies included in this descriptive review were published between year 2010 to 2020, the researches were carried out in different continents, one study was carried out in Sweden, one in the United states of America, one In South Africa, one in Mauritius, one in New Zealand, two studies were conducted in the United Kingdom and three studies were carried out in Australia. The participants for all the studies selected were nurses involved in the clinical mentoring of nursing students (Appendix 2: 1-4), (Bos et al. 2015, Bowen et al. 2019; Devlin & Duggan 2020; Foolchand & Maritz 2020; Halcomb et al. 2012; Lienert-Brown et al. 2018; Newton et al. 2018; Raines 2012; Rylance et al. 2017 & Setati & Nkosi 2017).

The studies were carried out using varying approaches including: a qualitative and hermeneutic phenomenological approach, qualitative exploratory and descriptive analysis, descriptive exploratory research approach, qualitative holistic case study approach and qualitative analysis using focus groups. The total number of participating nurses was 360, one study did not indicate how many nurses participated in the study. The participants in the studies worked in different health care sectors like in municipal hospitals, specialist mental health service, mental health settings, adult settings, children department and learning disability setting from a single NHS trust, resource-limited public regional hospitals, general practice, rural hospitals, acute care, hospice facilities, community settings, metropolitan hospitals and primary health care units.

The methods of data collection included use of focus groups, individual interviews and group interviews and questionnaires were used in some of the studies. The data analysis method ranged from thematic analysis, hermeneutic data analysis method, descriptive thematic analysis, qualitative content analysis, inductive content analysis and use of quotes was employed.

In answer to the research question on the experience of nurses in mentoring nursing students, a detailed literature search was conducted to retrieve publications that could answer the research question, this resulted in 10 publications that met the earlier stated inclusion criteria.

## 5.2 Results

Upon careful study of the findings in the selected researches, the following themes were identified: student preparedness and attitude, collaboration and communication, understanding of student mentoring, experience of ambivalence, reciprocity in learning and the challenges of student nurse mentoring (Table2).

Table 2. Result table with themes and sub-themes.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>
Student nurse preparedness and attitudes	Preparedness of students Interested and or motivated students Willingness and enthusiasm from students Student engagement and learning culture Student knowledge of service, placement and theory
Collaboration and communication with educational institutions	Knowledge of course curriculum/practice goals Feedback on student performance Support from schools Poor or insufficient communication with schools Information on school contact person Assessment methods Abandonment
Collaboration and communication with colleagues and nursing department management.	Support from colleagues Attitude of colleagues Communication Shift planning
Understanding of mentoring	Professional pride and dignity

	Complexity and dynamism of mentoring Rewarding and fulfilling Commitment. Professional continuity
Reciprocity	Reciprocal learning between mentors and students Feedback and evaluation Reflection
Mentoring positives	Pride Skill and competence development. Involvement in professional development Sense of satisfaction
Ambivalence	Joy and disappointment
Challenges of mentoring student nurse	Student skill deficits Unclear role expectations Lack of support Time constraint Lack of training for nurse mentors Absence of incentives
Encouragement and facilitating learning	Identifying and teaching skills Reflective practice Using appropriate interventions to ensure learning

(Bos et al. 2015, Bowen et al. 2019; Devlin & Duggan 2020; Foolchand & Maritz 2020; Halcomb et al. 2012; Lienert-Brown et al. 2018; Newton et al. 2018; Raines 2012; Rylance et al. 2017 & Setati & Nkosi 2017).

### **Student nurse preparedness and attitudes.**

The experiences of nurses on student preparedness and attitude was highlighted clearly in five studies; one study highlighted nurses' frustrations about nursing student's poor attitude to learning, lack of initiative and the competence level of final year students (Bowen et al 2019:6), nurse mentors mentioned the importance of student preparedness, knowledge of nursing services, knowledge of practice objectives and adequate theoretical knowledge base in positively influencing nurse mentor's experiences. The nurses also mentioned how preconceived negative ideas and notions affect the experience of nurses mentoring nurse students (Lienert-Brown et al. 2018: 163). Student's engagement and learning culture during clinical studies was reported as essential in enabling a shared goal during clinical practice (Devlin & Duggan 2020:310). Nursing student's personal qualities had a huge influence on the experiences nurses had during mentoring of student nurses; qualities such as enthusiasm, interest, desire to learn were considered desirable while qualities such as: laziness, lack of motivation, lack of interest, students hooked on mobile appliances and overconfident nursing students with no desire to listen made mentoring unfulfilling (Raines 2012: 78 & Rylance et al. 2017: 5-6).

### **Collaboration and communication with educational institutions.**

Nurses reported that unclear expectations about clinical studies from the educational institutions, inability to participate or share in student evaluation, absence of communication with nursing education faculties affected the experiences nurses had during nurse student mentoring (Raines 2012:78 & Devlin & Duggan 2020:311). This absence of communication or unclear communication between education institutions and nurse mentors created a sense of abandonment during clinical practice and reduced considerably nurse mentor's understanding of clinical study expectations for nursing students. (Bos et al. 2015:6, Bowen et al. 2019: 5 & Newton et al. 2018:535). Concerns about communication between nursing schools and nurse mentors was also identified in Setati & Nkosi (2017: 135). Support from educational institutions was reported by 61% of nurse mentors as essential in mentoring of student nurses (Lienert-Brown et al. 2018: 163). Absence of monitoring or follow-up by the central nursing school of Mauritius (Foolchand & Maritz 2020:4) further points to the need for collaboration between nursing schools and clinical nurse mentors to ensure effective learning.

### **Collaboration and communication with colleagues and nursing department management.**

Mentoring of nursing students is not an individual task; it is a team responsibility by nurses and other professionals Setati & Nkosi (2017:134). Interesting to note is that proper rostering of nurse mentors to allow mentors time for mentoring nurse students, support from colleagues and management, informing nurse mentors ahead of time of mentoring duties were crucial to how nurse mentors experienced mentoring (Bowen et al. 2019: 6, Devlin & Duggan 2020: 310 -311 & Lienert-Brown et al. 2018:163). Recognition for mentoring duties was considered important in nurse mentor's experience of mentoring (Devlin & Duggan 2020:311). The importance of support from colleagues was considered very important in promoting a healthy atmosphere for all including nursing students (Bos et al. 2015:4). The need for support from supervisors was considered essential even though nurse mentors participated in mentoring out of own motivation and desire to give back to the profession (Raines 2012:78). The importance of management support and collaboration for nurse student mentoring was further re-emphasised (Foolchand & Maritz 2020:4).

### **Understanding of mentoring.**

The essence of mentoring nurse students can be related to how nurse mentors understood mentoring, it is related to enhancing the future of the nursing profession, promoting nursing profession to nurse students with pride and dignity as well as guiding students through the different fields of nursing (Halcomb et al. 2012: 7-8 & Bos et al. 2015:5) Mentoring is identified as not only complex and hard to explain but as a process also; words like leading, guiding, teaching and supervising of students came up in explaining how mentoring is understood. (Setati & Nkosi 2017:133).

Being a role model, teaching ... (Bowen et al. 2019: 7). Helping students to achieve goals, transfer of knowledge and skills, guiding and building competence (Rylance et al. 2017:5) In Lienert-Brown et al.'s study, it presents mentoring nursing student as perceived positively and rewarding (2018: 163 -164). The nature of the complexity of mentoring is further highlighted in (Newton et al. 2018: 536) with nurse mentors feeling unsure about the effectiveness of their mentoring skills and hence causing a sense of loss

of confidence. It is worthy to mention that the complexity of mentoring can be seen in this study participants who stated that the system of mentoring being used does not correspond to formal mentoring as stated in definitions, the study however agrees that general support, supervision and coaching does occur (Foolchand & Maritz 2020:4).

### **Reciprocity in Learning**

Nurse mentors reported experiencing mentoring as; been mutually beneficial for both mentors and mentees, mentoring provided students with learning opportunity for clinical skills and provided mentors with updated and evidence-based information in nursing. It also provided nurses with the opportunity to review own clinical practice (Halcomb et al. 2012: 10 – 11). Most of the participants reported in one study reported that mentoring was beneficial to both mentors and mentees in the form of professional and personal development Setati & Nkosi (2017:134). Mentoring of nursing students provided nurse mentors with the opportunity of learning from the students, nursing students' feedback and appreciation was also important in how nurses experienced mentoring (Bowen et al. 2019:9). By mentoring nursing students, nurse mentors are kept up to date, and are able, to practice reflection, review own attitude by listening to student's fresh perspectives (Rylance et al. 2017:5).

### **The positive side of mentoring**

Nurse mentors reported that mentoring nursing students was associated with some benefits or rewards, this benefit could be in the form of satisfaction derived from watching a student's clinical skill improve over time (Bowen et al. 2019: 9). Nurse mentors considered mentoring of nursing students in a positive light, as being enjoyable and rewarding. Feedback from students was appreciated and considered positively (Lienert-Brown et al. 2018:163 -164). Mentoring of nursing students provided nurses the opportunity to develop professionally by reviving their knowledge of theory and practice, gave nurses a sense of pride and dignity (Halcomb et al. 2012: 8 & 10; Rylance et al. 2017: 5 & Setati & Nkosi 2017: 134).

## **The experience of ambivalence**

Nurse mentors experienced nursing students as extra pair of hands and in some cases, nursing students are considered as a burden that tags around all the time (Halcomb et al. 2012: 9). Clinical nursing supervisors reported experiences of ambivalence with respect to mentoring nursing students; being in support of mentoring students as well as being against it; nursing students were considered as resources as well as burdens. Nurses reported being secure and confident in role as nurses, and yet feeling insecure in assessing students based on learning goals. Conflicting views on how time spent doing student work could be used to attend to patients amongst other instances came up as contributing to how nurse mentors experienced mentoring (Bos et al. 2015: 4 - 5).

## **Challenges of student nurse mentoring**

Nurse mentors reported that having unprepared or disinterested students affected the experience of nurses mentoring nursing students (Raines 2012:78; Rylance et al 2017: 6; Bowen et al. 2019: 6 & Setati & Nkosi 2017: 135). Less than expected skill levels of nursing students was considered challenging in the experience of nurses during mentoring (Halcomb et al. 2012: 9). Lack of adequate support and information from educational institutions and unclear role expectations was also indicated as a challenging factor (Bos et al. 2015: 3; Bowen et al. 2019:5; Lienert-Brown et al. 2018: 163; Raines 2012:77; Setati & Nkosi 2017: 135; Foolchand; Maritz 2020: 4 ; Newton et al. 2018: 534 & Devlin & Duggan 2020: 311).

The challenges reported in reviewed studies includes; lack of recognition for mentoring (Devlin & Duggan 2020: 311), lack of support from management and colleagues (Bos et al. 2015: 4; Devlin & Duggan 2020: 310; Foolchand & Maritz 2020: 4 & Rylance et al 2017: 7). Time constraints (Rylance et al 2017: 6; Bos et al. 2015: 5; Bowen et al. 2019: 5 & Setati & Nkosi 2017: 135). The pressure of a nurse mentor being the only registered nurse rostered on ward (Bowen et al. 2019:6). Absence of incentives and recognition of effort (Rylance et al 2017: 7 & Raines 2012:78). Little or no of knowledge of curriculum (Lienert-Brown et al. 2018: 163). Skill level of nurses rostered together with nurse mentors (Bowen et al. 2019:6). Lack of resources such as staff and materials (Setati & Nkosi 2017: 135).



## Encouraging nursing students and facilitating learning

Nurse mentors experience different strategies employed to support nursing students this involved getting to know one's student, looking for clinical situations that met the student's learning need, demonstrating a clinical skill first and encouraging the student to practise after observing, nurse mentors used past experiences as students to enhance learning and also by observing experienced nurses as they mentor own students (Bowen et al. 2019: 6 – 7) Using innovative ways to allow nursing students reflect on learning activities (Bos et al. 2015:5 & Lienert-Brown et al. 2018: 164), relate theory to practice (Lienert-Brown et al. 2018: 164) and devising own strategy to promote communication and enhance learning (Newton et al. 2018: 537).

## 6 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of nurses on the mentoring of nursing student, a detailed understanding of the experiences of nurses could help bridge the gap between nursing schools and nurse mentors. This review found only ten studies that fulfilled the strict inclusion criteria. Nine of the includes studies were conducted using a qualitative approach, while one study was conducted using descriptive exploratory research using online questionnaire. It is acknowledged that the size of the literature reviewed in this study restricts its generalizability, however this review provides a point from which this phenomenon can further be studied, and a basis for discourse in the future.

After reviewing the available literature, the findings reported here support previous research and provides further insights into the factors that affect the experience of nurse mentors. The most important factor identified is that nurse mentors require support, in order to be able to mentor nursing students effectively (McIntosh, Gidman & Smith 2014:363 -364; de Fulvio, Stichler & Gallo 2015:24). Preceptors need appropriate support from nursing school contact lecturers and educational institutions, more importantly link lecturers and nursing schools should be reachable when necessary. Adequate collaboration is essential to gain an understanding of student's learning needs, curriculum and assessment documentation. (Douglas, Garrity Shephard & Brown 2016: 5; Martin, Brewer & Barr 2011: 4)

Another important aspect identified is the challenges of mentoring nursing students, this factor which includes time constraints, absence of proper space, absence of employer support, inadequate staffing, inexperienced staff amongst others, documentation, inadequate preparation of nursing students before clinical practice; this supports previous studies that reinforce this issue (McIntosh, Gidman & Smith 2014:363, Roberts et. al. 2017: 488; McInnes, Peters, Hardy & Halcomb 2015:446 & Mubeezi & Gidman 2017:98 - 99). Nurses ought to be supported in their roles as mentors, nurses request trainings and classes in order to mentor nurse students. Nurses also require the support of management, with consideration to the additional task of mentoring students (Ryan, Ellem, Heaton, Mulvogue, Cousins & De George -Walker 2018: 186). Nurses role as mentors

need to be acknowledged to show that their efforts are recognised, this affirms previous study findings (de Fulvio, Stichler & Gallo 2015:24).

The attitude and character of nursing student was found to be fundamental in influencing the experiences of nurses mentoring nursing students, this was further confirmed in (Mubeezi & Gidman 2017:97 & McIntosh, Gidman & Smith 2014:363). Nurse mentors expressed that motivated students were of high value during mentoring of nursing students (McInnes, Peters, Hardy & Halcomb 2015:446). The theme of ambivalence corresponds with previous study, the feeling mentors felt about teaching nursing students, with emotions such as excitement at the opportunity to teach and being frustrated with eagerness and the reality of the real situation (extra workload), worries about teaching as well as carrying out nursing care duties simultaneously (de Fulvio, Stichler & Gallo 2015:24).

The studies reviewed further confirm that the understanding of mentoring varied, however the major concepts included being a role model, guiding, teaching, transfer of knowledge and counselling students (Mubeezi & Gidman 2017:97). Encouraging learning was found by most studies as the major responsibility of mentoring (Halcomb et al. 2012: 7-8; Bos et al. 2015:5; Setati & Nkosi 2017:133; Bowen et al. 2019: 7 & Rylance et al. 2017:5). This corresponds with the findings of McIntosh, Gidman & Smith (2014: 362) where 57% of mentors who responded saw their main role as fostering learning. The data gathered from the focus group also confirms that mentors acknowledge their roles as encouraging learning.

Nurse mentors mentioned in a previous study that mentoring nursing students brings with it the mutual benefit of both parties learning from each other (Ryan, Ellem, Heaton, Mulvogue, Cousins & De George -Walker 2018: 186) This same study's findings also highlight the concept of ambivalence, as beneficial as it is to mentor nursing students there are challenges associated with precepting nurse students.

The studies reviewed have indicated that nurse mentors report a pleasant mentoring experience when nurse student are well prepared and have positive attitudes (McInnes, Peters, Hardy & Halcomb 2015:446), this means that nurse students could enhance the experience of nurses during clinical practice by familiarizing with department, study goals

and have a teachable attitude (McIntosh, Gidman & Smith 2014: 363). Nursing departments should plan work shifts and workloads, to reduce the excess workload of nurse mentors and give room for nurse mentors to be able to teach nursing students extensively (de Fulvio, Stichler & Gallo 2015:24).

The findings in this review re-affirm the importance of the support from nursing schools and contact lecturers (Douglas, Garrity Shephard & Brown 2016: 5), this requires that lecturers as well as school contact persons be active and accessible to nurse mentors to provide support when and how needed. The nurse mentors felt unsure of their teaching abilities (Mubeezi & Gidman 2017:98), this requires both nursing departments as well as nursing schools to organize and facilitate continuous education to keep nurse mentors adequately trained to carry out the responsibility of mentoring (Bowen et al. 2019: 9) that has been associated with professional pride and dignity (Halcomb et al. 2012: 8). Amongst the types of support nurse mentors wish for, is some form of appreciation or acknowledgement for job well done, nursing schools as well as nursing department should consider an acceptable means of recognising the tiring efforts nurse mentors put into training nursing students with the huge workload, time constraints and shortage of resources (Raines 2012:78).

## 6.1 Limitations

The limitations encountered in the course of this study includes time constraint, a busy schedule working full-time within the context of the current pandemic, limited mobility due to restrictions on public service usage; as it relates making use of library services, replacement of meetings with supervisor with the use of digital services. The search for publications were limited to English language and this can also be considered a limitation as studies in other languages could have provided additional information relevant to the study. The time frame for the selected materials was 10 years, hence limiting the data collected to mentoring experiences in recent times. Worthy of mention is that the whole process of searching, selecting, reading and extracting data was carried out alone, this may have given rise to errors of omission, oversight, or bias.

## 6.2 Ethics

Literature texts normally forms the base for making clinical and policy decisions, it behoves on persons who contribute to literature to make sure that it is correct and without bias as much as possible. Considering the fact, that literary publications are used to assess the productivity of persons as well as teams, publications are also used to choose suitable persons for academic positions. Owing to this, it is essential that the right persons receive due credit for their work(s). Systematic reviews being a form of research ought to be conducted in a responsible manner ensuring integrity and avoiding misconduct (Wager & Wiffen 130).

This descriptive review was conducted according to the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012:30), that states, that the basis for the responsible conduct of research includes the following: That the research is conducted according to the principles acceptable by the research community; these principles are integrity, carefulness and correctness in the conduct of the research, documenting, presenting and reviewing of the results of the research. The methods used in the acquisition of data/literature search conforms to the acceptable criteria and are sustainable ethically. The result presented in this study is also according to acceptable standard as highlighted above (Varantola 2013).

In this study, the researcher gives credit to the works of other researcher by citing their works according to acceptable standards. During, the course of this research; the researcher followed the standards set for scientific research from the planning phase to the presentation of the results. As this research did not require permits no permits were sought and no ethical review was required. This research did not require any form of research right or agreements; as such none was agreed upon. This research work did not receive funding from any party as such there was no conflict of interest in the conduct of this research (Varantola 2013)

### 6.3 Conclusion

This systematic review describes the experiences of nurses on the mentoring of nursing students, after reviewing the selected studies on the experience of nurses on mentoring nursing students, it was evident that the nurses derived a sense of fulfilment and joy from mentoring nursing students, the nurses felt a sense of pride in carrying out their mentoring duties. Nurse mentors experienced mentoring as a two-way process in which students as well as mentors learn from each other.

The study also highlights that nurse mentors considered support from nursing schools, colleagues and nursing department management as essential for successful mentoring. Nurse preceptors experienced conflicting emotions as to mentoring and carrying out nursing tasks; mentoring as beneficial as well as tedious. Nurse mentors also mentioned the challenges encountered while mentoring nursing students, this includes time constraint, lack of acknowledgement and recognition, poor skills of nursing students, lack of training, unclear expectations from nursing schools amongst others.

The challenges highlighted in this review calls for nursing schools, and link lecturers to co-ordinate and collaborate with nurse mentors. This collaboration is needed to offer support to nurse mentors in a way that best enhances the quality of mentoring offered to nursing students; this will reduce the conflicts associated with conflicting feelings during student mentoring. Nursing department management should also look for means to support nurse mentors in their roles to improve the experiences associated with mentoring

nursing students. In the same light nursing students should be well prepared and willing to learn as this plays a significant role in affecting the experience of nurse mentors.

Further studies should be conducted to determine what kind of support nurse mentors require from nursing schools to enable them precept nurse students professionally, additional studies should be considered on how nursing team and nursing department management could make mentoring more attractive for current nurse mentors as well as intending nurse mentors. In the same vein additional studies should be carried out to identify the factors that enhance student preparedness and willingness to learn during clinical practice.

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2 (2)

Halcomb et al. (2012)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	C	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bowen et al. (2019)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lienert-Brown et al. (2018)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	C	Y	Y	Y	Y
Newton et al. (2018)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bos et al (2015)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Y represents Yes, N represents No and C represents Can't tell.



Table 4. Data extraction

Number	Author(s) Year	Purpose of study	Methodology	Study population	Data analysis method	Findings	Limitations
1	Raines, D.A. , (2012)  United States of America	To identify the factors that enhance nurse mentors' willingness to mentor before licensure nursing students.	A qualitative study	37 Nurse mentors participating in a nationwide mentor's programme.	Analysis of transcript for similar themes as required in phenomenological studies.	1: Being carried along in the expectations of the school. 2: Recognition of nurse preceptor's efforts. 3: Mentoring experience depends on the nursing student.	Not stated.
2	Devlin, N. and Duggan, S. (2020)  United Kingdom	1.To get an insight into nurse preceptor's experiences during mentoring of pre-registration students. 2. To assess nurse mentor's perception of support received in practice during student mentoring. 3. To bring to the notice of stakeholders, how preceptors adapt at work whilst mentoring nursing students.	A qualitative study	6 Nurse mentors who work in the hospital in different units such as adult care, children care and mental health care.	Six stage thematic analysis method	1. Engagement (Challenges versus methods). 2. Support (Inclusion versus exclusion). 3. Absence of recognition (Strategically and organisationally).	Limited number of participants in study, inability to get mentors from all fields of specialization and researcher's involvement with mentors. As respondents may have had similar views with the researcher.
3	Setati, C.M. & Nkosi, Z.Z. (2017)  Limpopo Province South Africa	To study the views of nurses on nursing student clinical mentorship	A qualitative and hermeneutic phenomenological study.	All professional nurses working at operational management level, working in accredited hospitals in South Africa.	Hermeneutic data analysis	1. The mentoring challengeon. 2. Mentoring perceptions 3. Success in mentoring 4. Challenges of mentoring.	Study limited to only 2 hospitals, and participants being only from operational manager level can be seen as a limiting factor. Exclusion of other units were students undergoes clinical training, tight schedule of respondents and small sample population.

4	Rylance, R. et al. (2017)  United Kingdom	To report the opinions of nurse mentors about mentoring nursing students	A qualitative analysis	A total of 169 level 2 nurse mentors across four fields of nursing	Descriptive thematic analysis	1. The mentor versus student relationship 2. Clinical atmosphere.	Study limited to only one trust, hence may not be a general representation. Disproportionate sample in terms of parity amongst the four fields of clinical practice. Result's non-generalisable as mentoring is not related to only nursing.
5	Foolchand, D. & Maritz, J.E., (2020)  Mauritius	To study and report findings on the experiences of qualified nurse mentors with respect to mentoring of nursing students in settings with limited resources	A qualitative, exploratory and descriptive method.	8 Qualified nurses who had completed top-up diploma studies, with over 25 years work experience from different hospital wards.	Thematic analysis	1. Absence of proper mentoring/ ineffective mentoring system. 2. Recommendations for clinical mentoring.	Lack of generalizability due to small sample size.
6	Halcomb, E.J., et al. (2012)  Australia	To study the experiences of nurses mentoring nursing students in clinical practice in general practice.	Qualitative design	12 Practice nurses with experience in mentoring undergraduate nursing students in general practice.	Thematic analysis	1. Encouraging general practice nursing; need for more students. 2. Mentoring future colleagues requiring patience and reassurance. 3. Reciprocal learning in both ways.	None stated.

7	Lynette Bowen, et al. (2019)  Australia	To provide a description of the experiences of licensed nurses involved in mentoring undergraduate nursing students in rural settings.	A qualitative descriptive approach.	9 Nurse mentors from 2 hospitals in rural areas in the mid-northern coast of New South Wales Australia.	Qualitative content analysis.	1. The challenges associated with mentoring. 2. Encouraging nursing students and enhancing learning. 3. Providing support to licensed nurses who mentor nursing students. 4. The gains of mentoring nursing students.	Small sample size limits transferability of findings. Self-selection/response bias as a result of method of recruitment.
8	Lienert-Brown, M. et al. (2018).  New Zealand	To discuss the views and experiences of mental health nurses who work with undergraduate student nurses and the factors influencing these experiences.	Descriptive exploratory research approach using online questionnaire.	89 Registered nurses in New Zealand.	Descriptive statistics. Spearman's correlation and Kruskal-Wallis tests for testing significance of associations amongst responses. Quotes were also included.	1. Sufficient knowledge of nursing curriculum. 2. Adequate preparation by students. 3. Support from nursing schools and colleagues. 4. Positive perception of preceptor role. 5. Promoting learning. 6. Feedback from students.	Study limited to only 1 specialist mental health service. Low response rate, limiting ability to generalise findings.
9	Newton, L., et al. (2018).  Australia	To study the experiences of nurses mentoring international nursing students in clinical practice.	Qualitative holistic case study method	6 Registered nurses. Australia.	Thematic analysis	1. Effective communication 2. The task of mentoring international student nurses. 3. Differences in culture and language skills. 4. Mentor's views about responsibility.	Non generability of findings, possible limitations due to subjectiveness of data and sample size. Possibility that mentor's may not have totally discussed mentoring experiences owing to cultural sensitivities.

10	Bos, E., et al. (2015).  Sweden	To understand nurse supervisors' experiences of mentoring undergraduate nursing students at primary healthcare centres.	Qualitative study using focus groups.	24 nurse mentors.	Inductive content analysis	Theme 1: Abandonment. Theme 2: Ambivalence Theme 3: Passing on the holistic approach within the primary healthcare unit.	Limitation to local context. One nurse mentor's knowledge about study giving room for possibility of research been undermined. Small focus groups provided experiences limited to the groups only as such no general conclusions can be made.
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Table 5. Thematic Analysis

S/No	Themes	Key Phrase	Quotes
1	Student nurse preparedness and attitudes.	<p>Qualities or Characteristics of nursing students.</p> <p>Attitudes of nursing students.</p> <p>Lack of Initiative.</p> <p>Under skilled nursing students.</p> <p>Communicating learning needs.</p>	<p><i>“When student is good, it is no big deal...”</i></p> <p><i>“I had two of them (nursing students) who had never given an injection...”</i></p> <p><i>“Students dodge and absent themselves, giving reasons like being sick...”</i></p> <p><i>“.. there are many things (nursing procedures) they (the students) just don’t want to do.”</i></p> <p><i>“A student who is mobile-phone happy”</i></p> <p><i>“I’m not here to do washes...”</i></p>
2	Collaboration and communication with educational institutions.	<p>Information from nursing schools about curriculum and course expectation(s).</p> <p>Support from school.</p>	<p><i>“...then she (the clinical facilitator) ..., show the students how to do it ...”</i></p> <p><i>“I think the university should be more involved ...”</i></p> <p><i>“Communication with college is poor ...”</i></p> <p><i>“A nurse teacher never contacted me ...”</i></p>

		<p>Information about assessment method.</p> <p>Acknowledgement of efforts.</p> <p>Difference in curriculum from different schools.</p> <p>Unclear communication.</p>	<p><i>“What is expected of me? I feel insecure.”</i></p> <p><i>“What students do .... Not monitored”</i></p> <p><i>“Some faculty are appreciative ...”</i></p>
3	<p>Collaboration and communication with colleagues and nursing department management.</p>	<p>Support from colleagues.</p> <p>Lack of interest from management and colleagues.</p> <p>Shift planning.</p> <p>Sharing of workload.</p> <p>Skill level of staff rostered with mentors.</p> <p>Communicating of mentoring duties in advance.</p>	<p><i>“I mean for me the ward manager is key to that to make sure it's properly done”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, whenever your colleagues help out ....”</i></p> <p><i>“I think the management does not give due attention to mentoring in the ward.”</i></p> <p><i>“I'm often the only senior RN on ...”</i></p> <p><i>“I get to work and .... that's when you'll get allocated a student.”</i></p> <p><i>“peers expect that I take the heaviest workload as well as the students”.</i></p>

4	Under- standing of mentoring.	<p>Mentoring is complex phenomenon, also a process.</p> <p>Mentoring is highly important for continuity.</p> <p>Transfer of knowledge and role modelling.</p> <p>Sense of responsibility to students.</p> <p>Enjoyable and rewarding</p> <p>It requires team effort and commitment.</p> <p>Sense of pride.</p>	<p><i>“Personally I love working with the students ...”</i></p> <p><i>“... we’re getting older and I think it’s wonderful to be able to have young people in...”</i></p> <p><i>“and all through ... they are guided, supervised and coached by experienced nurses”</i></p>
5	Reciprocity in learning.	<p>Mentors teach and learn new things from students.</p> <p>Feedback</p> <p>Students provide fresh perspective.</p>	<p><i>“I think we’ve been enriched by it all (supervising students)”</i></p> <p><i>“I always learn something from the student.”</i></p> <p><i>“... It makes me sort of watch what I’m doing ...”</i></p>

		<p>Nurses being revived theoretically and practically.</p> <p>Provides room for reflection.</p>	<p><i>"... it is an excellent way to keep my clinical skills up to date, and learn from students as well"</i></p> <p><i>"... it goes hand in hand, we're teaching them and they're teaching us"</i></p>
6	The positive side of mentoring.	<p>Sense of pride.</p> <p>Development of skills and competence.</p> <p>Observing the transition from a student to a colleague.</p> <p>Satisfaction in supporting learning.</p>	<p><i>"When I feel like I've taught them (the students) something, it feels good".</i></p> <p><i>"Working with the students and observing them progress"</i></p> <p><i>"Generally, very enjoyable".</i></p> <p><i>"Some of the students after completion come and work with us in our hospital and they are changed, and they are from our hands."</i></p>
7	The experience of ambivalence.	<p>Nursing students as a resource or a burden.</p> <p>Sense of security and insecurity</p> <p>Difference in expectations between ward and school.</p>	<p><i>"... I love working with students..."</i></p> <p><i>"It is extra stress, pressure when working with students..."</i></p> <p><i>"Time is a challenge"</i></p>



		Time for mentoring job and nursing task.  Demanding and rewarding	
8	Challenges of student nurse mentoring.	<p>Mentoring is demanding.</p> <p>No training for nurse mentors.</p> <p>Unclear role expectations.</p> <p>Below expected student skill level</p> <p>Lack of efficient communication.</p> <p>Time constraint.</p> <p>Overload of task for mentoring nurse.</p> <p>No incentive.</p> <p>Lack of support from colleagues, management and nursing school.</p>	<p><i>"it's better to have a lesser amount of patients if you are going to have a student."</i></p> <p><i>"Lack of time for discussion/reflection"</i></p> <p><i>"Lack of space, computers."</i></p> <p><i>"No extra increment for mentoring students"</i></p> <p><i>"I would like to ask the teachers about placement objectives."</i></p> <p><i>"... extra stress, pressure ..."</i></p> <p><i>"I would like to be asked for my evaluation of the student."</i></p> <p><i>"I just get on with it. You don't get paid any more for doing it ..."</i></p> <p><i>"... low staff affects morale and that affects teaching and, you know if you are feeling undervalued ..."</i></p>

9	Encouraging nursing students and facilitating learning.	<p>Identifying student skills</p> <p>Reflective practice</p> <p>Ensuring that learning occurs</p> <p>Sourcing interventions that meets student's goals</p>	<p><i>"I try and always ask them to tell me what I've said ..."</i></p> <p><i>"You'd spend that first half hour or hour ... getting to know ... their (learning) needs ..."</i></p> <p><i>".. if you've got IV's (the student and I) can come and do that"</i></p> <p><i>"...what are you (the student) going to do, why did you do that"?"</i></p>
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