CLINICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND MENTORING OF INTERNATIONAL NURSING STUDENTS

Kristina Mikkonen, Satu Elo and Maria Kääriäinen

NET2017 Conference
Introduction

- Internationalisation of Finnish education institutions is a part of the Government Programme.

- Finland has been facing a rapid increase in international migration, education, globalising labour markets and multicultural societies.

- As a member of the European Union, Finnish higher education institutions have been intensively involved in the implementation process of reforms required by the Bologna process as a part of European High Education Area (EHEA).
• Finland has eleven English-Language-Taught Degree Programs in nursing and physiotherapy in universities of applied sciences nationwide, which is an exceptionally high number for a non-English speaking country in Europe.

• The greatest challenges for English-Language-Taught Degree Programs for nursing students in Finland are in the area of clinical placements.

• The challenges related to students’ discrimination and social isolation, lack of trust, having to prove one’s competence to the staff, and lower life satisfaction.

• Since the emphasis of healthcare education is on the practical learning skills relating to working life situations, clinical learning plays a significant role.

The process of clinical learning involves several relevant parties:

- faculty teachers teaching theoretical knowledge and the practicing of clinical skills
- teachers/clinical facilitators responsible for the integration of the students’ clinical competence with clinical practice
- healthcare staff supervising and/or mentoring students within the clinical practice

Mentor’s roles include:

facilitation of students’ learning

creating an open and safe learning environment for the students

guiding students through their learning process

strengthening the students’ professionalism

The aim of this research was to explore the factors influencing international nursing students’ clinical learning environment.

The objective was to provide new evidence for educational degree programmes in international healthcare in order to implement new findings into the curricula and organizational structure of clinical placements.
Methods

- A cross-sectional study was conducted during the academic year 2015-2016 in eight universities of applied sciences in Finland.

- All students undertaking an English language degree program \( (N = 664) \) were invited.

- The data was collected with two instruments: Cultural and Linguistic Diversity scale (CALDs) and Clinical learning Environment, Supervision and Nurse Teacher scale (CLES+T).

- The data was analyzed with a descriptive, nonparametric and binary logistic regression analysis.
## Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Scale (CALDs)</th>
<th>Clinical learning Environment, Supervision and Nurse Teacher scale (CLES+T)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation into the clinical placement (4 items)</td>
<td>The content of supervisory relationship (8 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the student (7 items)</td>
<td>Pedagogical atmosphere (9 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural diversity in the clinical learning environment (10 items)</td>
<td>Role of the nurse teacher (9 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic diversity in the clinical learning environment (6 items)</td>
<td>Leadership style of the ward manager (4 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Premises of nursing care on the ward (4 items)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5- Likert scale rating in both instruments
RESULTS - Participants ($n = 323$)

- 30.63% Africa
- 15.31% Asia
- 7.19% North America
- 30.63% Finland
- 16.25% Europe
Participants \((n = 231)\)
Participants \((n = 231)\)

The language used in the supervision of students' clinical placement
Students’ perceptions of the clinical learning environment and mentoring ($n = 329$)

Factor 2 (CALDs): Role of student

Factor 6 (CLES+T): Leadership style of the ward manager

Factor 1 (CLES+T): The content of supervisory relationship

Factor 8 (CLES+T): Learning environment

Factor 3 (CALDs): Orientation into the clinical placement

Factor 3 (CLES+T): Premises of nursing on the ward

Factor 5 (CLES+T): Role of the nurse teacher-nurse teacher as enabling the integration of theory and practice

Factor 2 (CLES+T): Pedagogical atmosphere

Factor 7 (CLES+T): Role of the nurse teacher-relationship between student mentor and nurse teacher

Factor 4 (CLES+T): Role of the nurse teacher-cooperation between placement staff and nurse teacher

CALD students vs. Finnish students
CALD students’ perceptions of culturally and linguistically diverse clinical learning environment (n = 231)

Factor 4 (CALDs): Culturally diverse pedagogical atmosphere

Factor 1 (CALDs): Cultural diversity in the clinical learning environment

Factor 5 (CALDs): Linguistic diversity in the clinical learning environment

Mikkonen et al. 2017a
Background factors related to the clinical learning environment and mentoring

- The level of Finnish language proficiency related to the outcome of clinical learning environment and mentoring
  - Students at beginner and intermediate levels in Finnish evaluated the pedagogical atmosphere as worse ($OR = 0.26-0.28$, $P < 0.001$).
  - The role of nurse teacher as collaborator between the clinical placement and the university of applied sciences played a more significant role to students at beginner or intermediate levels in Finnish than for native students ($OR = 2.56-4.62$, $P < 0.001$, $P = 0.007$)
  - Both male and female students at the beginner level in Finnish and females at all language levels evaluated the reception of cultural ($OR = 2.22-4.62$, $P = 0.002$, $P = 0.008$) and linguistic diversity ($OR = 3.21$, $P = 0.013$) as lower when compared with male students at intermediate and advanced levels in Finnish.
Conclusions

- CALD students’ experiences of the clinical learning environment and mentoring differed when language skills were at the beginner or intermediate level.

- More than half of students evaluated their language skills in Finnish to be at the beginner level, but were nevertheless mentored mostly in Finnish.

- A strong emphasis on language education and language assessment is recommended prior to the clinical placements of CALD students.

- Nurse teacher’s involvement in the clinical placements of CALD students is seen as essential for providing support to the students and their mentors.
The topic of my dissertation is:

Clinical learning environment and mentoring of culturally and linguistically diverse nursing students

References for the dissertation


Mikkonen K, Elo S, Miettunen J, Saarikoski M & Kääriäinen M (201a7) Development and testing of the CALDs and CLES+T scales for international nursing students’ clinical learning environments. Journal of Advanced Nursing 00(0): 000-000. DOI: 10.1111/jan.13268.


Other references


Thank you for your attention!

kristina.mikkonen@oulu.fi