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Developing Effective Strategies for Nursing Care: The learning process of Thai undergraduate nursing students

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ABSTRACT

Developing Effective Strategies for Nursing Care: The learning process of Thai undergraduate nursing students

The low average pass percentages in the Thai licence test of newly graduating nurses from the nursing college programmes has been recognised as a critical problem in Thailand for a significant period of time. There are many studies about conditions and strategies to improve the student nurses' competence. However, which teaching and learning strategies should be used, and when they should be applied in the process of learning had not been fully investigated. In this study, a grounded theory approach was used to explore the learning process of nursing students developing their nursing skills to become professional nurses. Thirty-two nursing students were interviewed individually about their learning in clinical situations. The main early emerging category in the study was **continuing practical studies**, which was based on two sub-categories: namely *attending to procedure training*, and *seeking case problems and how to provide nursing care*. The second main category, **learning how to provide nursing care**, emerged later, and supplied another two sub-categories: *modifying strategies for case learning*, and *discovering how to understand case conditions*. The main findings were that having enough learning opportunities and *willing supervision* develops the nursing students' self-confidence in practising and their learning motivation. Feelings of worry and fear, a sense of professional responsibility and *supervisors' expectations* are important influences that motivate nursing skill development of the participants. The ability of some students to transition from learning in order to meet *supervisors' expectations* to an internal *desire to learn* marked those students as successful adult learners who demonstrated critical thinking skills and the ability to integrate theoretical knowledge into the care planning for their patients. These students were able to transfer their knowledge to other nursing care situations, to develop effective strategies for nursing care and to pass the external registration exams. The findings from this study could be used to guide nursing instructors about how to enable the students to successfully integrate theory into clinical practice.

Keywords: undergraduate nursing students, learning process, learning motivation, Thai nursing education, grounded theory, teaching and learning strategies, learning environment, clinical supervision

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GLOSSARY: THE THAI COLLEGE PROGRAMMES

'Adult' is the previous paper name of the practical papers, Nursing care of Persons with Health Problems.

'BCPN': Basic Concepts and Principles in Nursing (the previous paper name of Principles and Techniques in Nursing)

B.E. means Buddhist Era. Some time periods are recorded in this thesis as 'Buddhist Era'; in Thailand, the use of the Buddhist calendar remains a common practice.

Case learning means the understandings of the students about their assigned patients' problems and how to care for them.

Content conferences are undertaken, normally once a month, by nursing care teams in each setting for nursing care activities of selected clients and their families. While placed in particular settings, the students have to join this conference. However, this frequency does not meet the requirement of the colleges. Therefore, students in two sub-groups of three to four are required to discuss one interesting case in every setting in the presence of an instructor, other students in the same group, and the participation of staff nurses, especially their preceptor if possible.

GPA: Grade point average is an internationally recognised calculation used to find the average result of all grades achieved for a given course. The GPA is usually calculated by dividing the total amount of grade points earned by the total amount of credit hours attempted. The grade point average may range from 0.0 to a 4.0.

'Persons with Health Problems' is the name of a group of practical papers that include Nursing Care of Persons with Health Problems Practicum I, II, and III.

Praboromarajchanok Institute for Health Workforce Development (PBRI) is administered under the Permanent Secretary's office at the Ministry of Public Health, Thailand.

Supervisors are instructors, preceptors, and qualified nurses or public health providers who supervised the students during their practical studies.

The 11 patterns of Gordon means Gordon's Functional Health Patterns. It is a method developed by Marjorie Gordon in 1987 to be used as a guide for nurses to establish a comprehensive nursing assessment of patients (Somantri, 2011).

The nurses are nursing staff who might or might not be qualified; they worked on the same shifts as the students, but often did not like to work with or teach students or were too busy to do this.

GLOSSARY: MEDICAL TERMS

A Bird respirator is a respiratory device using oxygen that was developed for breathing assistance.

Ammonia is a toxic substance that can form in the body when protein is broken down by bacteria in the intestines. Normally, the liver converts ammonia into urea, which is then eliminated in urine (Alchemistlab, 2012; WebMD: Digestive Disorders Health Center, 2011)

Crepitation is a soft fine crackling lung sound like that made by rubbing hair between the fingers close to the ear. It is caused by a build-up of fluid that associated with different medical conditions.

DM: Diabetes Mellitus

Extern is a medical student who is studying in the final year of study (6th year). An extern can treat patients under supervision of experienced physicians or medical instructors.

IICP: Increased Intra Cranial Pressure

Intern is a graduate medical student who is registered as licence physician and is working in the first year of internship, a period of time for working as physician in order to learn particular skills needed in medical field.

I/O: Intake/Output

"O" means objective data

PCU: Primary Care Unit

Radivac drain is one type of surgical closed drain. It is attached to an evacuated glass bottle providing suction used to drain blood beneath the skin or from deep spaces.

“S” means subjective data

SGOT: Serum Glutamic Oxaloacetic Transaminase means an enzyme that is normally present in liver and heart cells. SGOT is released into blood when the liver or heart is damaged. This means that if the blood SGOT levels are elevated, these organs are damaged (MedicineNet.com, 2013).

V/S: Vital Signs

WBC: White Blood Cells

GLOSSARY: THAI WORDS

Jubpid means to find faults.

Kamlang jai means will or willpower.

Khang means to be left unfinished or to remain stuck.

Krengjai means to be considerate.

Ku means I, me (personal pronouns).

Prachot means to be sarcastic**.**

Tea means to put on airs.

Thiphung means a supporter.

Ti means to hit.

Tumjai means to restrain one's mind.

Wai means paying respect by bringing the hands together to the face.

Xunci means to feel encouraged, to feel relieved.