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

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing

at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

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2014
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
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Even though conducting of this study and writing my thesis was challenging and sometimes made me exhausted, I feel much satisfied and am grateful for the contributions of many persons who helped me in a variety of ways throughout the journey of this research. This motivated me to find useful strategies to solve the difficulties encountered. Now I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all of them, as well as acknowledge their help and support.

I am well aware that I could not finish this study without the dedicated guidance of experienced supervisors. First of all, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to Professor Julie Boddy, Professor of Nursing, my main supervisor, for her assistance and encouragement. She paid a lot of attention to revising and discussing several methods to investigate the study’s focus for developing my proposal and preparing for human ethics approval. Her insightful discussions and generous suggestions during data analysis and thesis writing, as well as her careful reading of multiple drafts of my work have helped me clarify the learning processes of my participants. I was more able to develop explanations and additional lines of enquiry. Her consistent supervision motivated me to make an effort to complete my thesis as soon as I could. I was happy to work with such supervisor and value her supervision as a role model for my future work.

I would like to extend my special thanks to both of my co-supervisors. Associate Professor Annette Huntington, head of the nursing school who worked with me during the early stage of this study. She reminded me to not forget about the ‘connection’ of grounded theory and Thai ways of developing, sharing, or constructing knowledge as this study informs practice in Thai context. Later, Dr. Martin Woods, a senior lecturer at the School of Nursing became my co-supervisor. I perceived that he paid more attention to help and support me to complete my study than what was required for a general co-supervisor. He not only consistently took part in discussions, he also provided me with practical guidance during both the process of data analysis and thesis writing. Moreover, his deep interest in validating all quotes supported in this study made me
confident I was providing the nearest meanings to what my participants said. His careful reading and generous comments, including continuous encouragement helped me to rewrite my work. When having unclear issues, I could go to his office and ask for help. This guidance and support was very appreciated.

I also wish to express my sincere thanks to my fieldwork supervisor, Assistant Professor Dr. Quantar Balthip at Prince of Songkla University, Thailand. She provided me with the opportunities to learn the skills in data collection. She offered several meaningful directions which facilitated theoretical sensitivity and theoretical sampling, leading to the variety of concepts that were sufficient for generating theory. I could talk to her on any issues I found in the field.

The rich learning experiences of my nursing student participants lead me to be able to generate a valued theory that is grounded in data. They made me so proud of them and would like to offer my great gratitude to all of them who spent their worthy time to reflect on their experiences. As well, I am indebted to the nursing college that was the setting and the related regional and community hospitals for permission to use necessary information and providing the great opportunities to conduct this study. I still remember the generosity of staff there and would like to express my sincere thanks to all who were involved in this study.

Furthermore, I wish to express my indebtedness to the following individuals and committees for their generous assistance in facilitating this study. I was grateful to my director, Arjarn Nimastura Wae for her endless support, both related to my study and my personal life, especially while living in New Zealand, as well as making it possible to provide some funding for my study, and to Arjarn Atchara Musigawan, vice-director of my department, for her kind assistance with my college business and my family over the time I have been far away from my home town. All of my colleagues, including Thai and international friends infinitely gave me encouragement. In particular, Dr. Preeyanuch Chaikongkiat, Dr. Achara Chunpetch, Dr. Doungjai Plianbumroong, Arjarn Pootsanee Keawmanee and her assistants who also gave me information relating to the background of this study and Arjarn Chainarong Artarsa and Arjarn Rawat Khongphasuk who provided me with IT help. Arjarn Sakarin Suwanvaha, an instructor at Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Songkhla, helped me to search some Thai
documents for my study background and literature review. Dr. Tapanan Prateepko, an instructor at education faculty, Prince of Songkla University, gave me and my family support and general assistance. The staff of Turitea campus, Massey University: Mrs. Lois Wilkinson, a senior tutor at the Centre for Teaching and Learning has steadily edited and revised my English writing. Her assistance made my study report more clearly understandable for readers. Ms. Alison L. Wallbutton and Ms. Nicola McCarthy, library staff, trained me with the EndNote programme, and IT staff helped me at any time, especially when my laptop had problem(s). The Massey University Human Ethics committee aided me about how to protect participants’ rights, and the proposal confirmation committee suggested additional ideas for data access and collection.

In addition, I am indebted particularly to my family. I would like to give my deepest gratitude and love to my parents who always told me to be strong and patient with any goals I need to accomplish although I might face some problems. In particular, my mother always encouraged me with the sentence, “You are a good person, so your merit will protect you.” I am also grateful to both of my brothers who give me endless support and encouragement. All of these made me endure any difficult situations encountered, either related to my study or personal life, and to continue the effort in order to graduate with my PhD and then come back to Thailand with the value of the degree that can be fully applied in my work.
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Taking more opportunities to learn

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Being more able to match problems and nursing care
Using opportunities to apply plans to care for cases
Becoming happier with case learning
More confidence to provide nursing care
Beginning preparations for the licence test

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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
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.