



Strengthening and updating supervising staff nurses in educational workshops – An international partnership project

Anna Löfmark^{a,b,*}, Ingrid Thorell-Ekstrand^c

^a Department of Caring Sciences and Sociology, University of Gävle, Sweden

^b Department of Health, Stord/Haugesund University College, Postboks 5000, 5409 Stord, Norway

^c Red Cross University College, Stockholm, Sweden

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SUMMARY

As part of a collaborative project involving Tanzania and Sweden, workshops were arranged for staff nurses in order to develop a forum for discussing the raised demands for supervision of nursing students during their clinical education. The aim was to meet nurses in educational workshops to initiate a dialogue on their views and experiences of supporting and supervising nursing students in their clinical studies. Their experiences of the workshops were also requested. Two groups of nurses in Tanzania ($n = 30$), and six groups in Sweden ($n = 60$) participated. The content, which was agreed between the project leaders in Tanzania and Sweden was carried out either on a whole day workshops or divided at three different occasions. Questionnaires were given before and about two months after, and workshops were also evaluated with an open-ended question immediately after. The nurses both in Tanzania and in Sweden appreciated the workshops as a possibility to create a dialogue and to discuss challenges in the supervision of students. Their views and experiences of the supervision role showed awareness of staff nurses as role models and teachers. Accomplishment of this partnership co-operation through arranging workshops has shown to be an easy and simple way of giving support to staff nurses for the supervision task.

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Introduction

Educational partnerships between institutes of higher education are crucial to strengthen collaboration between countries and to identify new ways of working (Tlou, 1998; Girot and Enders, 2004). One such partnership was established in 1998 between one university college for nursing in Tanzania and one university college in Sweden regarding theoretical and clinical nursing education. The aim of the collaboration was exchange of ideas, experiences and research (Sandin et al., 2004). The collaboration was extended in 2003 to embrace two other university colleges, one in Tanzania and one in Sweden. The Tanzanian–Swedish collaboration also embrace student and teacher–faculty exchange programme, meaning that some students and teachers from each country spend some weeks in Tanzania respectively in Sweden. This means that the differences as well as the similarities have become clear – the problems are very alike.

Through the years a frequent issue in the collaboration discussions has been supervision of students during clinical education and how staff nurses were prepared for their role. Both countries have been moving into a system with university educated nurses,

although with different prerequisites and speed, a journey similar to many other countries in the world (Watson and Thompson, 2000). A small-scale study was therefore designed by teachers involved in the collaboration to find out if and how the raised educational demands for the supervision of students during clinical nursing education was experienced and handled by the staff nurses.

Background

Tanzania is one of the least urbanized countries in sub-Saharan Africa with around 38 million people (Nationalencyklopedin, 1996; SIDA, 2008). Education to become a nurse is through a 4-years integrated curriculum towards a diploma in nursing and midwifery. Since late 1990s also a Bachelor in Science (B.Sc) degree programme is possible and with gradually increasing intake (3-years). The history of nursing education has to a large extent been based on apprenticeship training model, and the linkage between nursing education and the hospitals are very close (Sandin et al., 2004; Karungula, 2006). Approximately 40–60% of the students' time in education is spent in clinical practice.

Nursing education in Sweden, today only given at bachelor level, has been subjected to considerable changes during recent decades considering aspects as length and academic content. The

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +46 26 625473.

E-mail addresses: anna.lofmark@telia.com (A. Löfmark), ingrid.thorellekstrand@gmail.com (I. Thorell-Ekstrand).

directives from the European Union (Ds, 1992:34) state that the clinical education should make up at least half of the time, which is 3-years. Traditionally clinical education has been supported by an apprentice system, replaced by models similar to preceptorship (Henderson et al., 2006; Gleeson, 2008). A great number of nurses who supervise the students only have a diploma in nursing and therefore often lack academic training, as nursing programmes were incorporated into the university system from 1993 (SFS, 1992, 1993).

Students often identify staff nurses as having a pivotal role in providing links with theory and practice in the clinical teaching environment (Condell et al., 2001; Gleeson, 2008; Jackson and Mannix, 2001). The preparation of nurses for the supporting and supervisory role varies and most nurses learn on-the-job (Wilson-Barnett et al., 1995; Andrews and Wallis, 1999). For students inadequate preparation may result in reduced time in education-related activities and too much time working on their own and not being supervised (Grey and Smith, 1999; Jones et al., 2001). Different ways have been used to support the students learning in practice. It has been to support the staff nurses education, training and ongoing facilitation that allows them to function effectively in the demanding role (Andrews et al., 2006; Pollard et al., 2007; Watson, 2000). Also increased co-operation between universities and practice e.g. through establishment of lecturer practitioner is used. This new role is seen to frame an important collaboration role between education and practice especially in the shift of nurse education into higher education (Burns and Paterson, 2005; Pollard et al., 2007; Williamson and Webb, 2001).

It is a well known problem that the clinical parts of health care educations are difficult to modernize according to new knowledge and scientific principles. The greatest part of the workforce still have an education according to older systems where evidence-based practise has no meaning and where regular searching for the latest knowledge is rare. The issue of knowledge and insight regarding usefulness of research has been discussed for many years in nursing education and in nurses' professional work (Nilsson Kjeremo et al., 2000; Björkström and Hamrin, 2001).

During clinical education students are expected to learn procedures, skills and to deepen their knowledge, critical thinking and problem-solving (SFS, 1993). Organizations as World Health organisation (WHO) stipulate that graduates must be well-educated,

accountable and be able to demonstrate the skills of safe and competent decision-making practitioners (WHO, 1999). These facts put demands on the nurses as supervisors. Literature has identified some key aspects of quality in clinical placements. Practice learning environments with highly quality care, positive role models, evidence-based practice and a multiprofessional focus are of importance. Other aspects are support for students that encourage self-directed learning and guidance in identifying learning. A recent study reports that the students generally are satisfied with their education and the objectives for the education are reached (Lauder et al., 2008).

When both in Tanzania and Sweden few nurses who supervise the students have a bachelor education, and few have supervision training courses, one joint way in the Tanzanian–Swedish collaboration project was to find easy and practicable ways, as in a workshop, to meet nurses where we could pay attention to the expectations in the supervision role. The aim of this study was therefore to meet staff nurses in educational workshops to initiate a dialogue about their view and experiences of supporting and supervising students. Their experiences of the workshops were also requested. Few studies about educational workshops for staff nurses concerning supervision of students have been found (Henderson et al., 2006). The aim of this small study was to describe a project that most likely will continue.

Method

The workshops

The project leaders from the two countries met for planning of the workshops and were supported by travel grants. As a basis for the collaboration and planning of the workshops, overall goals for clinical nursing education was formulated outgoing from recent empirical studies and guidelines for academic clinical nursing education (SFS, 1992, 1993; Bunch, 2002; Lord, 2002; Lambert and Glacken, 2005).

In their clinical studies the student should be encouraged to

- acquire knowledge, which means that they should ask questions and use, support from text books, articles and reports to stimulate their own, reflection, parallel to taking part in daily patient care,

Table 1

Results from answers to the open-ended question: "What will you remember from the workshop/s?" The answers were analysed qualitatively.

Categories	Stance towards students	Examples of activities together with students	Comments about abilities or competence needed in contact with students
'To be a nurse is to be role model'	<i>As a role model:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – be friendly – be kind to students – meet the students' expectations – have patience with students 	<i>As a role model:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – introduce to the ward – help – handle – assist – direct – manage – discuss traditions demands assignments 	<i>As a role model:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – knowledgeable – responsible – up-to-date
'A nurse has teaching tasks towards student'	<i>As a teacher:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – communicate – solve problems together – create relations – cooperate 	<i>As a teacher:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – plan the time – supervise – teach – instruct – assess – check and control – ask student to read about a certain topic – ask student to present a topic or report from literature 	<i>As a teacher:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – participate in seminars and workshops

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