

A method for analysing the learning environment in nursing and health care

Kristín Thórarinsdóttir, MSc, RN, Assistant Professor, University of Akureyri, Iceland, kristin@unak.is

ABSTRACT

Keywords— Cultural analysis, mentorship, learning environment

INTRODUCTION

Organisational culture is a central element in clinical nursing practice; it influences how practitioners think, what they say and what they do [1-2]. In clinical practice nursing students and nurses connect theory and practice, which is a fundamental issue in nursing education. In addition novice nurses develop their expertise in the clinical practice. Thus it is of utmost importance that the clinical learning environment fosters culture which supports nursing students' integration of theory and practice. This paper addresses cultural analysis of the learning environment in nursing practice according to Edgar Schein's who claims that culture can be analysed at three levels; level of artifacts, level of exposed values and level of basic assumptions [1].

PURPOSE

To develop a method for nurses and health care professionals for analysing the clinical learning environment.

METHOD

In a master's course in clinical mentorship in nursing, a method for cultural analysis of the learning environment was developed which was based on Schein's cultural analysis [1]. In the course all the 16 nurses in the course had to apply this method for analyzing the learning environment in their respective practices. This method for analysis was a final project in the course.

RESULTS

All the 16 nurses in the course could apply the method for analyzing the mentoring culture in their practices at three cultural levels in accordance with Schein's cultural analysis. Yet, it was clear that the third level of basic assumptions was the most difficult to analyse. Furthermore, the students proposed improvements of their practices based on their analysis.

CONCLUSION

Seemingly, a method based on Schein's cultural analysis is applicable for nurses and other health care professionals in analysing the learning environment in their clinical practice; upon which improvement of the environment can be based.

REFERENCES

- [1] E. Schein. *Organisational Culture and Leadership* (2nd ed.), San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2004.
- [2] L.J. Zachary, *Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organisational Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.