

**A pilot study:**

**Nursing Students'  
Perceptions of the clinical  
learning environment  
during a fast-track nursing  
degree**

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## Background:

- Clinical education provides opportunities for students to consolidate and apply their theory-based knowledge to clinical practice



## **Factors to be considered in clinical education:**

- Clinical education is often less structured with many unplanned events eg. patient deterioration (Chan 2004)
- Psychological impact on students regarding sudden changes in clinical setting (Chan 2004)
- Unsure of their role as student nurses in the event of patient deterioration or a medical emergency
- Availability of clinical supervision



Therefore, students' perceptions of the clinical learning environment are valuable for the future development of clinical education.



## Bachelor of Nursing (Fast track) program at University of Tasmania

- 3 semesters (trimesters) a year
- BN program can be completed in 2 years full time





## Darlinghurst, Sydney Campus

- Over 75% of the enrolled students are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- The majority of students are mature age students



## Objectives:

An exploratory study:

- to identify factors that impact student learning in the clinical setting using the Student Evaluation of Clinical Environment (SECEE) inventory developed by Sand-Jecklin (2009)
- to investigate student perceptions of interactions with hospital and university staff and perceived support in applying newly acquired clinical skills



## Methodology:

- Quantitative approach
- SECEE inventory (Sand-Jecklin 2009) was used with permission





## SECEE was originally developed to:

- investigate students' perception of the quality of the clinical learning environment
- assist clinical agencies, nursing academics and clinical coordinators to identify clinical sites that best promote student learning

(Sand-Jecklin 2009)





- A total of 32 items in the inventory
- 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1)
- It has been validated by 2,700 student evaluations and the coefficient alpha was 0.94

(Sand-Jecklin 2009)

## SECEE – Three subscales:

1. Instructor facilitation of learning scale
2. Preceptor facilitation of learning scale
3. Learning opportunities scale

Subscale alphas range from 0.82 to 0.94

(Sand-Jecklin 2009)



## Sample & Data Collection:

- Target group – 2<sup>nd</sup> year BN students at Darlinghurst, Sydney campus
- Students were asked to evaluate their most recent clinical placement
- Data collection was conducted in March 2013



## Results:

- A total of 47 questionnaires were distributed and 42 (n=42) were returned
- Response rate was 89%





## First subscale of the SECEE: Instructor (clinical facilitator) facilitation of learning

- Aimed at evaluating the faculty expectations of students and promotion of independence and collaborative learning (Sand-Jecklin 2009)



## Highly valued by the student:

- Students preferred facilitators to provide adequate clinical supervision in applying new skills and knowledge (mean = 4.22)
- To receive constructive feedback in the early stage of their clinical placements for corrective action (4.22)

## Least valued by the student:

- Facilitators encouraged students to learn together (3.73)



## Preceptor facilitation of learning

Aimed at:

- evaluating preceptor workload
- the responsibility of patient care
- perceived preceptor attitude about being a student resource

(Sand-Jecklin 2009)



## Highly valued by the student:

- Preceptor retained ultimate responsibility for patient (mean=4.40)
- Preceptors supported them in applying new knowledge (4.15)
- Students felt comfortable asking questions (4.15)
- Preceptor being a positive role model for nursing (4.10)
- Preceptor's availability to the student (4.10)



## Least valued by the student :

- Preceptors informed the student about issues in patient care (mean = 3.67)





## Learning Opportunities of the SECEE study

Assessing the availability of learning opportunities in:

1. the context of direct care
2. communication skill development
3. technical skill development
4. knowledge application and ability to utilize the availability of learning opportunities

(Sand-Jecklin 2009)



## Highly valued by the student:

- adequate number and diversity of patients (mean = 4.17)
- opportunities to practice communication skills (4.12)
- wide range of learning opportunities (4.10)

## Least valued by the student:

- Multiple students at site (results in lack of clinical support and availability of clinical supervision) (3.22)





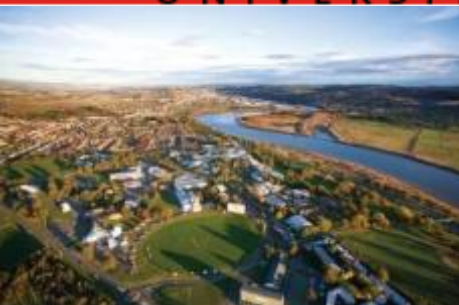
## Remark:

- The sample size of this quantitative study was relatively small
- Limited to the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students at the university.
- Plans in place for a larger scale study

## Acknowledgements:

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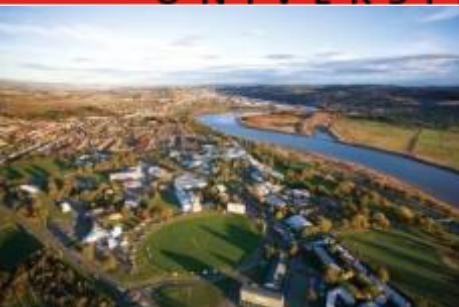




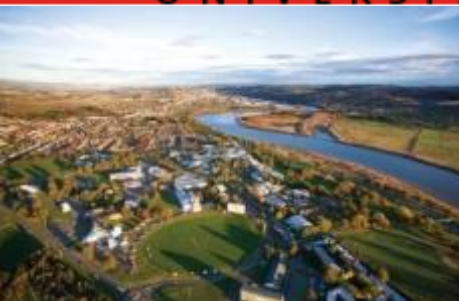
## Reference:

Chan, D.S. (2004). Nursing students' perceptions of hospital learning environments-an Australian perspective. *International Journal of Nursing Education Scholarship*, 1(1), 1002-1007.

Sand-Jecklin, K. (2009). Assessing nursing student perceptions of the clinical learning environment: refinement and testing of the SECEE inventory. *Journal of nursing measurement*, 17(3), 232-246.







Inventory items	<i>n</i>	Mean score	Range
<b>Instructor Facilitation of Learning (IFL) Scale</b>			
Instructor supported me in applying new knowledge	41	4.22	3.31 – 5.13
Instructor provided feedback in time for corrective action	41	4.22	3.28 – 5.16
Instructor encouraged students to learn together	41	3.73	2.61 – 4.849
<b>Preceptor Facilitation of Learning (PFL) Scale</b>			
Preceptor retained ultimate responsibility for patient	42	4.40	3.63 – 5.17
Felt comfortable asking questions of preceptor	41	4.15	3.27 – 5.03
Preceptor supported me in applying new knowledge	41	4.15	3.16 – 5.14
Staff were positive role models for nursing	40	4.10	3.26 – 4.95
Preceptor informed me about issues in patient care	42	3.67	2.62 – 4.72
<b>Learning Opportunities (LO) Scale</b>			
Adequate number/variety of patients at site for learning	41	4.17	3.28 – 5.06
Site provided practice with communication skills	42	4.12	4.01 – 5.06
Wide range of learning opportunities available at site	42	4.10	3.25 – 4.95
No negative impact due to multiple students at site	41	3.22	1.93 – 4.51