

ABSTRAKTI

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Information literacy - from individually centered skills to sociocultural approach: Creating the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in health information literacy teaching

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In my thesis I want to increase understanding concerning information literacy teaching. Especially, I explore how nursing students' health information literacy skills develop during studies from novices to experts. To do that I use the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky 1978). The process of ZPD consists of two (or more) persons working together, one of whom is more knowledgeable than the other: a teacher and a student, an expert and a novice. I also study the relations between the concepts of information literacy (IL), health literacy (HL) and health information literacy (HIL).

Today the emphasis of IL varies with the content and context in which it is situated. Therefore it should be seen as a complex social practice and should be understood through the social aspect rather than as a set of individual skills. (Tuominen, Savolainen & Talja, 2005; Sundin & Francke, 2009; Lloyd, 2010a).

In health care good HIL skills are important. We should manage to teach nursing students so that they will be able to use their skills to include research appreciation and application which are a prerequisite to evidence-based practice. Also nurses must be able to assist those with inadequate

health literacy and promote ways in which individuals can become health-literate. (Institution of Medicine 2004).

Many studies show that nursing students' IL skills as well as HIL skills are at the novice level and, moreover, the students' awareness of the actual level of their skills is not realistic (Ivanitaskaya, O'Boyle, and Casey 2006). Also based on research (Ek et.al. 2008) a considerable part of the population of Finland lacks general health literacy skills. In the Finnish population aged 18-65 years, over 50 % were assessed to be weak or intermediate-low level in mastering health information. It means that these people are unable to fully understand official health promoting programs.

Part of my study is to explore first year nursing students' perceptions of their ability to recognize health information needs, to find and use suitable information sources, and to obtain, evaluate, understand and use health information. Nursing students' health information literacy is measured by the modified (Eriksson-Backa et. al.) eHEALS scale which consist of 9 statements to be answered on a five-grade scale ranging from totally agree to totally disagree. The questionnaire has already been distributed to 80 nursing students who had started their studies in autumn 2012. The results will be published this year.

The purpose of my research is to gain knowledge for developing methods for IL-teaching. The study especially concentrates on the changing phenomenon of IL from individual skills to shared understanding in a specific field.

The main concepts of the thesis are IL, HL, HIL and ZPD.

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