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Collaboration between working life and higher education in development of competency in patient rehabilitation and discharge

The aim of this presentation is to examine multiprofessional collaboration and development of competency as a part of the modelling of patients' active path of rehabilitation and discharge to home care. The participants of this development project are teachers and students of the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences health care and social services, and technology fields, as well as staff involved in nursing care, physical therapy and occupational therapy at the Espoo hospital's stroke rehabilitation ward, and Espoo city home care. The development project is part of the Collaborative Intensity project being carried out by Metropolia and the city of Espoo, the aim of which is to examine and produce a partnership model between higher education and working life.

The starting point of the university's and working life's development of multidisciplinary competency and partnership as part of the patient's rehabilitation and discharge to home care is the needs of working life. Lack of multiprofessional cooperation and competency has been seen as a problematic factor in the rehabilitation and discharge of patients. In addition, problems exist in cooperation between the hospital and home care.

The aim of the development project is to describe and organize the jobs and activities of different professionals into a service process guide for patient discharge and home care. In order to facilitate the development of multiprofessional competency, we have sought to construct an authentic learning environment produced through the collaboration of working life and the university. This will make possible the use of new courses of action and the strengthening of this partnership.

Development of multiprofessional competency is based on targets for cooperation and action, which are the subjects of multidisciplinary workshop activity. The activities are based on scales reflecting the aims of development and the procedures needed to achieve these aims in stages. Collaborative competency is thus based on competency in practice as well as on the sharing of expertise.

Realizing these developments in practice and acquiring the necessary knowledge has required research permission from the Espoo social and health care services. In addition an assessment has been requested from the board of ethics in the Helsinki and Uusimaa health care district. This research permit is an assurance that activities meet the ethical requirements for research and development.

The basis for practical work and development of collaborative competency is an initial survey done by the developer teachers together with actors from the students' working life. The survey contains information on discharge practices taken from the patient register as well as interviews with hospital ward staff and discharged patients.

Development of multiprofessional competency can be examined through the following practices. Students of nursing, social services, geronomi and physical therapy have completed the required practical training at a ward in the Espoo hospital or in home care. Teaching which has traditionally taken place at the university is also arranged in the workplace and some studies are completed as a part of practical work in the hospital. Students have also written theses which support the aims of this development work. Coursework has promoted multiprofessional work and competency.

Multidisciplinary guidance as a part of the work of a coach teacher has also been developed in conjunction with practical training. The coach teacher works at both the university and the hospital, acting as a contact person between the university, students and working life.

The staff at the hospital and in home care have together developed consultative tools for networks such as Connect pro-system. This has made possible new modes of action between different parties in the exchange of information and patient consultations. University staff have supported employees in working life in the use of these new practices.

A technology teacher has acted as consultant and, along with staff at the hospital and in home care, has analysed data management and hospital practices connected with discharge of patients to home care services. As a result of this analysis, the activities and division of labour between the employees in various fields have been clarified.

The sharing and development of competencies between developer teachers and hospital staff has also taken place in the hospital ward, in the activities of change support groups, in training in new methods, such as early intervention, as well as part of the already existing quality work taking place in Espoo. Cooperative action and sharing of competencies has promoted an understanding of others' mode of action as well as collaborative work and interaction. This is all required for the creation and strengthening of competency based on collaboration between working life and higher education.