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Chapter 1: Introduction

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The competence of nurse educators and its recognition play an essential role in European nursing education. Teaching the profession of nursing to future student nurses requires excellence. Nurse educators have a significant role in developing nursing through their teaching. We must ensure that faculty are properly educated in the best pedagogical methods and technologies, with demonstrated clinical expertise in content areas (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). There are many global health issues, e.g. pandemics, environmental risks and increasing chronic diseases. Moreover, ageing populations, globalization and technological advancements are changing nursing and health care, and there is a need to consider this in the pre-registration nursing education. Quality of nursing depends on the quality of the nursing education and nurse educators have an important role in education.

The appropriate education for nurse educators is critical to the development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of student nurses and registered nurses. The education system alone cannot bring about the required changes in education. Ministries of health, national authorities, professional associations, health professionals and communities must be involved and support the education of nurses. European Union (EU) member countries have worked towards establishing nursing education in higher education institutions and creating comparable nursing degrees to ensure the quality of nursing education. EU directives for nursing education set the guidelines for nursing education, and they are applied in European countries, however, those documents do not describe the professional qualification requirements for nurse educators. At this moment, there is no consensus about nurse educators' education in Europe, although in some countries there are national defined

requirements for nurse educators, and in most of the countries, ministries are legal authorities that dictate the quality of education. In most of the European countries, the nurse educator must be a nurse, completed master' or doctoral level education and have some experience in nursing. (Campos Silva et al., 2022.)

A competent nurse educator should have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to adopt new approaches in planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating nurse education programs. The competence of nurse educators is multidimensional, and the roles and qualifications of the teaching faculty have been discussed for many years. Over the decades, the main role of nurse educators has been, and still is to promote students learning and professional development. Moreover, the educators have a significant role in promoting the educators own and also their students' occupational well-being.

This handbook is based on Erasmus+ funded project "A new Agenda for Nurse Educators in Europe (New Nurse educator)" conducted in the years 2020-2023 in five European countries (Finland, Malta, Scotland, Slovakia and Spain). The main outputs of the project were the research concerning the nurse educators' education, competence and continuing professional development needs. Nurse educator education varies in Europe. Furthermore, the systematic evaluation of nurse educators' competence has been scarce. According to our research results, educators evaluated themselves as having a good level of competence. The educators themselves evaluate their competence highest, but their students and their superiors evaluate their competence slightly lower. It has been also shown that the quality of nursing education is positively related to graduating nursing students' self-reported competence. Secondly, "Empowering the nurse educators in the changing world" - programme (30 ECTS) was created, piloted and evaluated. The feedback of the students was very good and, they appreciated studying and collaborating in international groups. Thirdly, the handbook for educators is written and produced here. The framework of this handbook is based on the document of the World Health Organization (2016) entitled "The core competencies of nurse educators". These core competencies comprise of following eight competence domains:

1. nursing practice,
2. pedagogical competence,
3. communication, collaboration skills,
4. monitoring and evaluating,
5. management and digital technology.
6. knowledge of teaching and learning theories,
7. the curriculum and its implementation, experience in research and gathering evidence,
8. having ethical principles and professionalism.

Nursing practice and pedagogical competence are regarded as essential competence areas for nurse educators. Still, not much research interest has been addressed to either the professional knowledge of nursing or the teaching and learning of nursing in educators' work. The nursing practice competence of nurse educators can be described as referring to their theoretical and clinical nursing knowledge and skills, and their attitudes towards nursing practice. Pedagogical competence is described as a process of facilitating students in their building of knowledge, skills and attitudes and conducting teaching and learning in a positive learning environment and atmosphere. It has been pointed out that learning in higher education should focus more on analytical knowledge and complex problem-solving, and educators need good pedagogical competence to teach those skills. In addition, the research carried out in this project strengthens the findings of the positive relationship between professional competence and occupational well-being, widening the evidence base within this scarcely studied area.

This handbook for nurse educators consists of three parts and in total eight chapters. The introduction is the first chapter and describes the theoretical framework for this book. In the second chapter we describe the common learning theories and principles of adult learning. We emphasise the importance of the active learning.

In the second part of the book, each chapter includes the theoretical description of the topic and some of our experiences in teaching the topics. In the third chapter, we present evidence-based teaching as a basis of nursing education. Nursing education must be based

on evidence for both the content and the teaching methods. There is quite a lot of research concerning the teaching strategies, but the results are contradictory. We can't say one teaching method is better than the others because it depends on the topic, the learners, the study year/phase, learning environments and educator's competence to use the method.

The fourth chapter we discuss of the digitalization of nursing and nursing education. The competence of digital pedagogy became increasingly important during the COVID-19 pandemic when all over the world the teaching and learning moved rapidly to remote teaching using a variety of e-learning environments. This requires some new ways of working for nurse educators. The "Empowering learning environments in nursing education" study unit was created to promote educators and educator candidate's digital pedagogy and how to use social media in education in the appropriate way. Digitalization offers many possibilities for enhancing teaching, but we need to know how it can be used in a meaningful way to reach the intended learning outcomes. The fifth chapter focuses on sustainability and the contemporary health issues which should be taken into consideration in nursing education. Nursing education needs to play a strong role in ensuring sustainability of programmes and ensuring that new nurses are equipped with an understanding of ensuring sustainability in their practice.

The sixth chapter focuses on ethics in nurse educators' work. In most of the countries in Europe the nurse educators follow common ethical principles and rules of teachers because only in a few countries do nurse educators' have their own ethical principles for teaching nursing. In the seventh chapter, we discuss the future issues in nursing education. Nursing and nursing education must change and develop according to the development of medical treatments and nursing possibilities. The nursing profession has changed and is changing due to internal and external factors such as the increase in the number of multimorbidity aged people and tasks shifting from physicians to nurses.

In the third part of this handbook we summarize, discuss the content, and present the recommendations for the future nurse educator competence and education requirements, continuous education, occupational wellbeing and evolvement of the profession. The

recommendations aim to enhance the field of nurse education and improve the nurse educator preparedness to respond the future issues and requirements in nurse education.

This book gives you an insight to modern teaching and learning strategies. All the authors have extensive experience in teaching nursing and their idea is to always develop student centred teaching.

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