Connecting theory and practice in physiotherapy education - challenges for the clinical educators

Presenting results and perspectives from the masterthesis "The clinical educators perspective on competency development in clinical education"

Larsen, Louise Landbo

Publication date:
2013

Document Version
Pre-print: The original manuscript sent to the publisher. The article has not yet been reviewed or amended.

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Download policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.
Objective: The purpose of this study is to contribute to the discussion about, how the relation between theory and practice in physiotherapy education can contribute to the student’s development of professional competences. This study aims to add the clinical educators perspective to this discussion.

Methods: 2 focus group interviews with clinical educators from the physiotherapy education in Denmark were conducted. There were 3 participants in each focus group. They all worked at larger hospitals. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed with an phenomenological approach. 6 main themes were identified through this process and they were then analyzed on the basis of the theoretical framework.

Results: The 6 main themes and their conclusions are presented in the boxes below:

Theoretical Framework: Pär Nygren & Halvor Fauske’s theory on the development of professional competence and Illeris’ competence formula which describes engagement, practice and reflection as key concepts in development of competence forms the theoretical framework for the analysis of the empirical data and the understanding of the clinical educators role in regard to the physiotherapy students development of professional competences.

Main conclusions and perspectives:

1. The clinical educators define their main objective as helping the students understand the relationship between theory and practice in the physiotherapy profession by supporting and facilitating the student’s ability to reflect in and upon their actions and develop competence in regards to being a reflective practitioner.

2. The clinical educators find it important to present the students to a broad variety of patients and practice at the level of the authorized physiotherapist”, since this would give enough time to reflect on one’s own practice and learn from it.

3. The clinical educators find that it is important that the clinical educators facilitate the students ability to reflect on their own practice. They see reflection as a important tool for the student to develop their own competence.

4. The clinical educators need to take into account the barriers that this setting presents in regard to the students socialization into the profession by being included in the professional community of practice.

5. The clinical educators find it important to facilitate the students ability to reflect on their own practice. They see reflection as a important tool for the student to develop their own competence.

Main conclusions and perspectives:

- The clinical educators define their main objective as helping the students understand the relationship between theory and practice in the physiotherapy profession by supporting and facilitating the student’s ability to reflect in and upon their actions and develop competence in regards to being a reflective practitioner.

- The clinical education is important in regards to learning the role as a therapist and being able to form professional relations with the patients. The clinical educators therefore find it important to present the students to a broad variety of patients and give them supervision on how they conduct themselves as therapists.

- The highly specialised hospital forms a challenge as a clinical setting within an education, which aims to give the students basic competences. The clinical educators need to take into account the barriers that this setting presents in regard to the students socialization into the profession by being included in the professional community of practice.

- The results of this study highlights the need for further research in how the relation between theory and practice can be enhanced through a closer collaboration between the theoretical educators and the clinical educators.