

Exploring First-Year BSc Nursing Students' Expectations of Support During Their Initial Clinical Placement

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Aim and Objectives

- **Aim:**
- To explore first-year BSc Nursing students' expectations of support during their first clinical placement
- **Objectives:**
- Identify key concerns and expectations prior to placement
- Explore expected support from academic and practice staff
- Inform improvements in placement preparation and support systems

Introduction



First clinical placement is a **key transition point** in nursing education



Marks students' **first experience of practice-based learning** as a student nurse



Commonly associated with **mixed emotions**, including excitement and anxiety



Early placement experiences influence **confidence, engagement and professional identity**

Background



Students often experience **anxiety, fear of mistakes and reduced confidence** due to limited clinical experience (Suarez-Garcia et al., 2018)



Perceived quality of support during this transition affects **learning, retention and**



workforce sustainability (Rodrigo et al., 2017)



Structured and supportive learning environments help students prepare for professional standards (NMC, 2023)



Academic Assessors, Link Lecturers, Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors play key roles in bridging theory and practice



High-quality supervision and positive learning environments enhance **clinical competence and learning outcomes** (Pitkänen et al., 2018)

Why This Study Matters



First placement shapes professional identity



Poor support can impact confidence and progression



By understanding expectations early, we can proactively improve placement preparation and support systems



Contributes to sustaining the nursing workforce

Study Design



Descriptive qualitative study



Pre-placement phase of a longitudinal design



Semi-structured interviews conducted via MS Teams



Participants and Data Collection

Six first-year adult nursing
students

Diverse backgrounds and prior
experiences

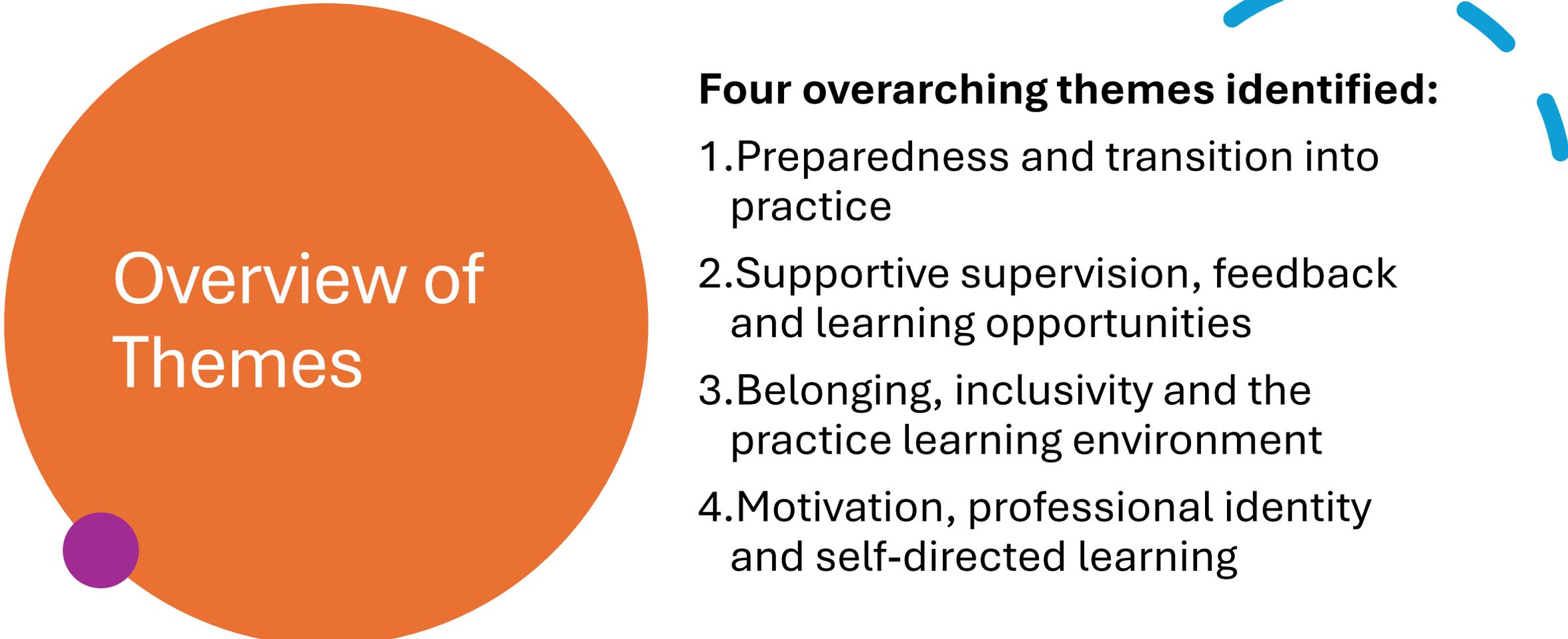
Interviews focused on
expectations, concerns, and
perceived support needs

Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis

Familiarisation, coding, theme development and refinement

Rigour ensured through reflexive discussion and transparency

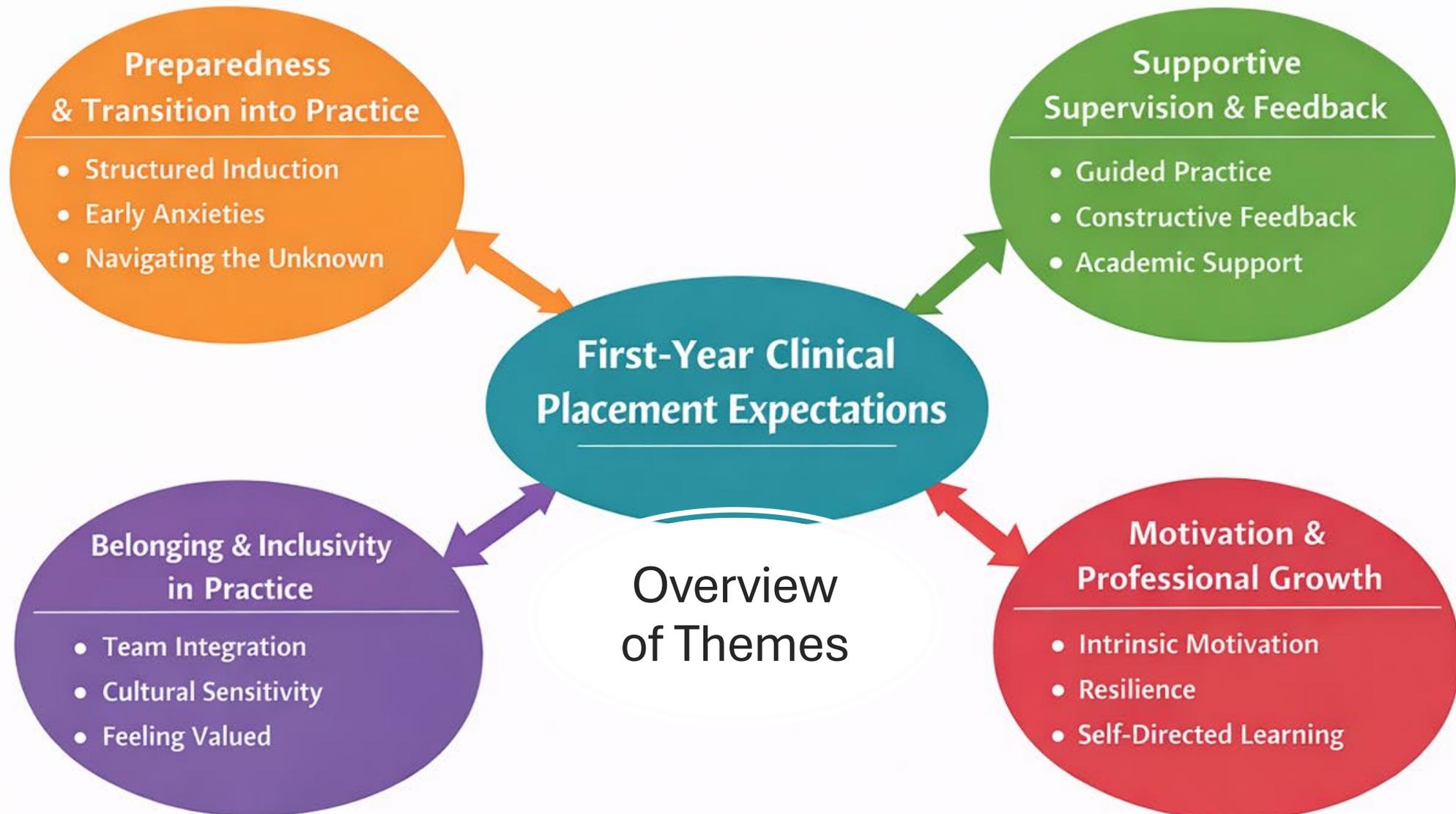


Overview of Themes

Four overarching themes identified:

1. Preparedness and transition into practice
2. Supportive supervision, feedback and learning opportunities
3. Belonging, inclusivity and the practice learning environment
4. Motivation, professional identity and self-directed learning

First-Year Nursing Students' Expectations of Initial Clinical Placement



Theme 1: Preparedness and transition into practice

- Need for structured induction and orientation
- Anxiety about making mistakes and patient safety
- Navigating unfamiliar environments and expectations

----Illustrative quote:

“Need induction in advance to know what is expected of me.”

Preparedness & Transition into Practice

- Structured Induction
- Early Anxieties
- Navigating the Unknown

Theme 2 – Supportive Supervision, Feedback and Learning Opportunities

Supportive Supervision & Feedback

- Guided Practice
- Constructive Feedback
- Academic Support



Expectation of guided, supervised practice



Importance of timely and constructive feedback



Academic presence seen as reassuring



Illustrative quote:

“Allow us to try, but under supervision.”

Theme 3 – Belonging, Inclusivity and the Learning Environment



Feeling welcomed and valued within the team



Importance of teamwork and approachable leadership



Communication and cultural inclusivity



Illustrative quote:

“I want to be treated fairly and feel part of the team.”

Belonging & Inclusivity in Practice

- Team Integration
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Feeling Valued

Theme 4 – Motivation, Professional Identity and Self-Directed Learning

Motivation & Professional Growth
Intrinsic Motivation
Resilience
Self-Directed Learning

Strong intrinsic motivation to succeed



Awareness of personal responsibility for learning



Early formation of professional identity



Illustrative quote:
“My own involvement is important for my success.”

Key Findings Summary



Students value preparation,
inclusion and feedback



Support is both relational and
structural



Motivation alone is insufficient
without supportive environments

Implications for Practice and Education



Structured induction and clear expectations



Consistent supervisory engagement



Inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environments



Strong academic–practice collaboration

Conclusion and Next Steps

Early support shapes
confidence and learning

Findings inform placement
preparation strategies

Phase two will explore post-
placement experiences



Limitations

Sample Size: There were only 6 participants

Generalisable concerns: Volunteer bias may skew samples- those participating might not represent the broader student cohort

Sensitive content: Topics related to personal behaviours, or emotional well-being may deter participation due to concerns about privacy or discomfort

Lack of incentives: Without tangible compensation, course credits, students may deprioritise research participation.

Need for co-design: Empowering senior students through involvement in study design can boost ownership and engagement



Thank You and Questions



Key References

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