Finnish Doctoral Education Network in Nursing Science

Nursing Science: Perspective of Action Research in Nursing Science, 6 ETCS

Time and place: Lectures and seminars at the University of Eastern Finland, Department of Nursing Science 3.-4. April, 2014; studies in web-based learning environment (Moodle).

Course leader: Professor Kerttu Tossavainen University of Eastern Finland, Department of Nursing Science

Teachers: Dr. Famke van Lieshout, Fontys University of Applied Sciences, Department of Health and Nursing
Dr. Marjorita Sormunen, UEF

Purpose: The purpose of the course is to give students the prerequisites for undertaking action research within the range of methodological approaches used in health science fields. This course will explore different epistemological and ontological perspectives and the implications of these in the conduct of action research. It focuses on action research design and the range of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods that can be used within the cyclical and reflexive principles of action research. Particular attention is given to the utilisation of the methods in relation to clinical problems in health services and on the integration of critically creative approaches to addressing these problems.

During the course, a student will
1) orientate with approaches of different kinds of action research,
2) train to find the main points of action research and discuss together the appropriateness of action research approaches applied in nursing research, and generally, health sciences,
3) choose an approach of action research for deeper review with critical reflection, and
4) apply the chosen approach into own study design or investigate and analyse how the approach has been applied in scientific literature (nursing / health) previously

Credits: 6 ECTS

Learning methods: Lectures (16h / 2 study days), including seminar hours with collaborative group works / workshops and facilitated discussions. Three learning tasks: one before, one during, and one after seminar. The last, individual learning task will be evaluated.

Literature: Reference list is provided in Moodle environment, which is available to students four weeks before seminar days, starting 3.3.2014.

Outcomes and evaluation: Having completed this course, a student is:

1) acquainted with main approaches of large amount of action research methodology, and
2) able to practice applying action research in research proposal.

The course will be assessed in scale: passed / failed

Students evaluate the course according to the evaluation form of the Finnish Doctoral Education Network in Nursing Science.
Famke van Lieshout (RN, Msc, PhD)

Lecturer Master of Advanced Nursing Practice (MANP) and member Knowledge Centre ‘Implementation and Evaluation of Evidence Based and Person-Centred Practice’, Department of Health and Nursing, Fontys University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands.

Famke finished her PhD in 2013 at the Institute of Nursing Research at the University of Ulster (UK). Her PhD is a study about the interplay between contextual and facilitator characteristics in facilitating participatory action research in a Dutch clinical setting. This study was innovative as it integrated a mix of creative, cognitive and reflective methods and adds a greater clarity to the existing body of knowledge about how facilitators of PAR can be helped to engage with the complexity of culture in different contexts. She also teaches research methodology, in particular participatory action research and qualitative-orientated research methodologies, and develops and facilitates a clinical leadership programme within the MANP. Moreover she supervises Master students in their final thesis. As a member of the knowledge centre, Famke together with stakeholders, takes on the challenge of working in innovative and systematic ways on the development of an evidence-based, person-centred culture in health care and education, through using creative and critical processes and, at the same time, using, testing and generating knowledge. For more information see http://www.fontys.nl/ebp/. Famke is one of the coordinators of the Collaborative Action Research Network in The Netherlands (CARN-NL) and also an editorial member of KWALON, a Dutch Methodological Journal for Qualitative Research. She likes to encourage and support others to present and to write about their research and to stimulate discussions with a wider audience. Other interests include person-centered ways of working, facilitation in practice development, systems of support in facilitating transformation of practice, creative arts, reflection and narrative methodology.
Learning tasks

First learning task (before seminar days) orientates you with approaches of different kind of action researches.

1) Please, orientate yourself with the action research literature (reading list and other appropriate references).
2) Identify the main principles and characteristics of action research. You may think about how different authors and researchers have described action research. Make a summary of the main common features and compare also possible differences.
3) Furthermore, find out how these action research approaches have been applied in nursing and in health research. You may use additional literature to complement the reading list.
4) Describe briefly how your own study relates to action research. If your study does not include any action research approach, choose one approach for deeper review and reflect it critically.
5) Finally, write your own learning objectives (1-2) for the course AND write down possible questions that you would like to get an answer, or you would like to be discussed about.

Prepare a short paper (about 2-3 pages) to be discussed on the first seminar day and send it to Moodle, on 26.3, at the latest. If you are familiar with mind mapping, you may also want to use it to clarify and describe the content. Be prepared to present your work to others.

Second learning task (during the seminar) trains you further to find out main points of action research and discuss together with the group about the appropriateness of action research approaches applied in nursing and generally, health research.

Accordingly, participate actively in group discussions and contribute to the overall productivity of the group. Be prepared to raise questions relating to seminar themes.

Third learning task (individual written paper for assessment after the seminar) allows you to apply action research to your own study OR deepen your understanding of a one action research approach with appropriate examples and critical analysis.

1) Apply by arguing the appropriate action research approach into your own study design OR, if your study does not contain AR, choose by arguing one approach of action research for deeper review using the preliminary information you have collected in the first learning task.
2) Describe what kinds of data collection methods and possible analysis methods you will use (or can be found from literature) in your chosen action research approach. Describe by arguing your choices. Then, reflect on the possible strengths and weaknesses of your methodological choices. Cite appropriate references in giving evidence for your thinking.
Alternative third learning task, related to researcher’s role as a facilitator in action research process will be specified soon.

Prepare a paper with a title page, table of contents, and a reference page and send it to Moodle by 16th of May, 2014. Papers are to be written according to APA standards and are to be between 10 and 15 pages long.

Your paper will be assessed critically for integration of information and ideas from a sufficient number of sources, depth and accuracy of description, reflection, and critical analysis, and the clarity of the paper. The paper will be assessed in scale passed / failed.