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## The art of Clinical Supervision Program for registered nurses

Kylie P. Russell

*The University of Notre Dame, Australia*

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**The Art of Clinical Supervision Program  
for Registered Nurses**

*Its implementation and influence on nursing staffs' knowledge and attitudes*

**Kylie Russell**

**20103191**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

School of Nursing and Midwifery  
The University of Notre Dame, Australia

2013

# Table of Contents

	Page Number
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>List of Tables</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>List of Graphs</b> .....	<b>xiii</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>xiv</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>xvi</b>
<b>Statement of Candidate Contribution</b> .....	<b>xviii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>xx</b>
<b>Prologue</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Background</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Health Workforce Australia</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3 Clinical Supervision</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1.3.1 Clinical Placement Models</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<i>1.3.1.1 Terminology</i> .....	<b>6</b>
1.3.1.1.1 Clinical Instructor/Facilitator Model .....	<b>7</b>
1.3.1.1.2 Preceptor/Mentor/Supervisor Model .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1.3.2 Clinical Supervision Programs</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<i>1.3.2.1 Preceptorship Programs</i> .....	<b>11</b>
<i>1.3.2.2 Mentorship Programs</i> .....	<b>12</b>
<i>1.3.2.3 Clinical Supervision Programs for Employees</i> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>1.3.3 Application to Student Clinical Placements</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>1.4 The Justification</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>1.5 Research Questions</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>1.6 Operational Definitions</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>1.7 Conclusion</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>2.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>2.2 Principles of Clinical Supervision</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>2.2.1 Deficits and Requirements</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>2.2.2 Supervisor Attitude</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>2.2.3 International and Australian Clinical Supervision Education Programs</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<i>2.2.3.1 UK</i> .....	<b>29</b>
<i>2.2.3.2 Australian Supervision Programs and Requirements</i> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>2.2.4 Clinical Supervision in Summary</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>2.2.5 Health Workforce Australia—Education Requirements</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>2.3 The Theories of Learning</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>2.3.1 Theories of Adult Learning</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<i>2.3.1.1 Behaviourist Theory</i> .....	<b>38</b>
2.3.1.1.1 Thorndike, Pavlov and Bandura.....	<b>39</b>

2.3.1.2 Cognitive Theory .....	40
2.3.1.3 Constructivism Theory .....	41
2.4 The Principles of Adult Learning .....	43
2.4.1 Pedagogy—‘The Art and Science of Teaching Children’ .....	44
2.4.2 Andragogy—‘The Art and Science of Teaching Adults’ .....	44
2.4.3 Pedagogy Applied with Adult Learners .....	45
2.5 Theory of Persuasion and Measurement of Attitude .....	45
2.5.1 Theories of Persuasion .....	46
2.5.2 Attitude Measurement Tools .....	47
2.6 Chapter Summary .....	49
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology .....</b>	<b>51</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	51
3.2 Social Sciences .....	52
3.3 Methodology of the CSP Research Project .....	53
3.3.1 Descriptive Study .....	53
3.3.2 Mixed Method Research .....	54
3.3.2.1 Quantitative .....	54
3.3.2.2 Qualitative .....	56
3.3.3 Application of Mixed Methods Research .....	57
3.3.4 Triangulation .....	59
3.3.4.1 Data Triangulation .....	61
3.3.4.2 Investigator Triangulation .....	62
3.3.4.3 Theory Triangulation .....	62
3.3.4.4 Method Triangulation .....	63
3.4 Research Techniques .....	63
3.4.1 Development of the Program .....	65
3.4.1.1 Program Content and Delivery .....	66
3.4.2 Application of HWA’s Publications and Literature .....	67
3.4.3 Application of the Theories of Learning and Principles of Adult Learning .....	69
3.4.4 Application of the Theories of Attitude and Attitude Change .....	75
3.4.5 Ongoing Learner Support .....	78
3.4.6 Development of the Research Tools .....	78
3.4.6.1.1 Online Reflections About the Experiences of Participants .....	82
3.4.6.1.2 Interview Statements About the Program’s Effect on Participants .....	82
3.4.7 Feedback from the Expert Group Regarding the CSP .....	83
3.4.8 Pilot Presentation of Program with Participant Feedback .....	84
3.4.8.1 Pilot Themes .....	85
3.4.9 Validity and Reliability Testing of the Knowledge Survey Tool by the Expert Group .....	86
3.4.9.1 Knowledge Survey .....	87
3.4.10 Modify the Program and/or Tools as a Result of Phase 2 .....	90
3.4.11 Implementation of the Program .....	91
3.4.11.1 Population Selection .....	91
3.4.11.2 Participant Selection .....	93
3.4.11.3 Recruitment .....	94
3.4.11.3.1 Recruitment Process .....	95
3.4.11.3.2 University Recruitment Process .....	95
3.4.11.3.3 DoH Recruitment Process .....	96
3.4.11.4 Program Implementation .....	98
3.4.12 Completion of the Pre-survey and Immediate Post-survey .....	98

3.4.12.1 Maximising Participant Involvement in the Data Collection Phases .....	99
3.4.13 Online Reflective Feedback.....	101
3.4.14 Post-program Survey After Eight Weeks .....	101
3.4.15 Interviews .....	102
3.5 Summary of Research Phases .....	104
3.6 Ethical Considerations .....	104
3.6.1 Ethics Approval .....	105
3.6.2 Informed Consent .....	105
3.6.3 Benefit and Risk.....	106
3.6.4 Privacy and Confidentiality.....	106
3.6.5 Conflict of Interest .....	107
3.6.6 Security of Data .....	108
3.7 Chapter Summary .....	108
<b>Chapter 4: Quantitative Data Analysis and Findings .....</b>	<b>110</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	110
4.2 Study Population .....	111
4.2.1 Surveys: Knowledge Survey and Stagg’s Attitude Survey .....	111
4.3 Analysis of Quantitative Data .....	111
4.3.1 Participant Demographics .....	115
4.3.1.1 Participant Numbers .....	115
4.3.1.2 Workplace Characteristics .....	115
4.3.1.3 Age and Gender .....	118
4.3.1.4 Speciality of Practice .....	119
4.3.1.5 Years of Nursing Experience .....	120
4.3.1.6 Reason for Attending the Clinical Supervision Program .....	121
4.3.1.7 Previous Clinical Supervision Education .....	121
4.3.1.8 Frequency of Providing Clinical Supervision.....	123
4.3.2 Quantitative Data Analysis—Knowledge Survey .....	125
4.3.2.1 Age of Participants.....	126
4.3.2.2 Area of Employment .....	127
4.3.2.3 Previous Education in Clinical Supervision .....	128
4.3.2.4 Frequency of Providing Clinical Supervision.....	130
4.3.2.5 Years of Nursing Experience .....	130
4.3.3 Comparison of Results—Knowledge Survey.....	131
4.3.3.1 Participants .....	132
4.3.3.2 Area of Employment .....	133
4.3.3.3 Age of Participants.....	135
4.3.3.4 Previous Education in Clinical Supervision .....	136
4.3.3.5 Frequency of Providing Clinical Supervision.....	139
4.3.3.6 Years of Nursing Experience .....	140
4.3.4 Quantitative Data Analysis—Attitude Survey Results .....	142
4.3.4.1 Stagg’s Attitude Survey Analysis by Themes .....	143
4.3.4.1.1 Time.....	143
4.3.4.1.2 Motivation.....	145
4.3.4.1.3 Knowledge .....	146
4.3.4.1.4 Professional Issues.....	148
4.3.4.1.5 Instructor–Student Relationship .....	150
4.3.4.1.6 Personal Issues .....	151
4.3.4.1.7 Background Comparisons .....	154
4.3.4.2 Stagg’s (1992) Attitude Survey Analysis by Mean Scores .....	156

4.3.4.2.1 Age of Participants .....	158
4.3.4.2.2 Area of Employment .....	159
4.3.4.2.3 Previous Education in Clinical Supervision .....	161
4.3.4.2.4 Frequency of Providing Clinical Supervision .....	162
4.3.4.2.5 Years of Nursing Experience .....	163
4.4 Stagg's Attitude Survey .....	165
4.5 Quantitative Findings.....	175
4.6 Chapter Summary .....	177
<b>Chapter 5: Qualitative Data Analysis and Findings .....</b>	<b>179</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	179
5.2 Qualitative Data Collection.....	179
5.3 Qualitative Data Analysis .....	180
5.3.1 Knowledge Surveys .....	183
5.3.1.1 Effect on Participants .....	185
5.3.1.1.1 Improved Self-confidence.....	186
5.3.1.1.2 Renewed Enthusiasm and Attitude.....	187
5.3.1.1.3 Consolidation of Knowledge and Skills .....	188
5.3.1.1.4 Current Context of Nursing Education .....	189
5.3.1.2 Strategies for Improving Clinical Supervision .....	190
5.3.1.2.1 Embracing the Power of Belongingness.....	190
5.3.1.2.2 Empathy for Students' Experiences .....	192
5.3.1.2.3 Improving the Student Learning Journey .....	194
5.3.1.2.4 Improving Communication .....	197
5.3.1.3 Promoting Staff Knowledge and Culture Change.....	198
5.3.2 Online Reflections .....	200
5.3.2.1 Effect on Participants .....	202
5.3.2.1.1 Improved Self-confidence.....	203
5.3.2.1.2 Renewed Enthusiasm and Attitude.....	204
5.3.2.1.3 Personal Reward.....	206
5.3.2.2 Strategies for Improving Clinical Supervision .....	207
5.3.2.2.1 Improving the Student Learning Journey .....	208
5.3.2.2.2 Improving Communication .....	210
5.3.2.2.3 Embracing the Power of Belongingness.....	213
5.3.2.3 Perceived Lack of Staff Support .....	215
5.3.3 Interviews .....	217
5.3.3.1 Effect on Participants .....	220
5.3.3.1.1 Perceptions of Staff Knowledge and Attitudes .....	220
5.3.3.1.2 Current Staff Education .....	222
5.3.3.1.3 Consolidation of Own Knowledge and Attitude .....	223
5.3.3.1.4 Current Context of Nursing Education .....	224
5.3.3.2 Strategies for Improving Clinical Supervision .....	226
5.3.3.2.1 Embracing the Power of Belongingness.....	226
5.3.3.2.2 Improving Communication .....	226
5.3.3.2.3 Embracing the Power of Belongingness.....	213
5.3.3.3 Improving the Students' Learning Journey .....	229
5.4 Qualitative Findings.....	231
5.4.1 Extending Oneself and Others .....	232
5.4.1.1 Effect on Staff .....	232
5.4.1.1.1 Improved Self-confidence, Knowledge and Attitudes .....	233
5.4.1.1.2 Improved Understanding of the Current Context of Nursing Education .....	233

5.4.1.1.3 Concerns Regarding Current Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Education .....	234
5.4.1.2 Strategies for Improving Clinical Supervision .....	234
5.4.1.2.1 Embracing the Power of Belongingness .....	234
5.4.1.2.2 Improving Communication .....	237
5.4.1.2.3 Improving the Student Learning Journey .....	238
5.4.1.3 Perceived Lack of Support.....	239
5.5 Qualitative Findings in Summary .....	240
5.6 Program Evaluation .....	240
5.6.1 Program Content and Presentation .....	242
5.6.2 Potential Availability of Program .....	245
5.6.3 Consequences for Recruitment and Retention.....	246
5.6.4 Application for Graduates and Staff .....	248
5.6.5 Taking Back to the Team .....	249
5.7 Chapter Summary .....	251
<b>Chapter 6: Comparison of Findings .....</b>	<b>252</b>
6.1 Introduction .....	252
6.2 Nursing in Australia.....	252
6.3 Comparison of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings .....	255
6.4 Comparison of Findings to the Literature .....	256
6.4.1 Improved Self-confidence, Knowledge, Attitudes and Enthusiasm.....	256
6.4.1.1 Eight-Week Survey Results .....	257
6.4.1.2 Stagg's (1992) Attitude Survey Findings Across Research Projects .....	260
6.4.2 Improved Understanding of Current Context of Nursing Education.....	264
6.4.3 Concerns Regarding Current Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Education .....	264
6.4.3.1 Role Theory .....	265
6.4.4 Perceived Lack of Support .....	268
6.4.5 Embracing the Power of Belongingness .....	270
6.4.6 Improved Communication.....	274
6.4.7 Students' Learning Journey.....	275
6.5 Program Evaluation Findings and Implications .....	277
6.5.1 Principles of Adult Learning .....	278
6.6 Salient Outcomes of This Research.....	279
6.6.1 Research Questions .....	280
6.7 Limitations .....	284
6.8 Chapter Summary .....	284
<b>Chapter 7: Implications and Recommendations of Findings.....</b>	<b>286</b>
7.1 Introduction .....	286
7.2 Clinical Implications.....	287
7.3 Education Implications .....	288
7.3.1 Considerations .....	288
7.4 Research Implications.....	289
7.5 Recommendations .....	290
7.6 Conclusion.....	290
<b>Epilogue .....</b>	<b>292</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>293</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Ethics and Research Committee Approval Letters and Approval from the Department of Health.....</b>	<b>305</b>

<b>Appendix 2: Clinical Supervision Program—Study Day Agenda .....</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Clinical Supervision Program, Teaching Plan .....</b>	<b>310</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Attitude Survey—Stagg .....</b>	<b>324</b>
<b>Appendix 5: Permission from Stagg to Use Survey .....</b>	<b>327</b>
<b>Appendix 6: Pre-program Knowledge Survey .....</b>	<b>328</b>
<b>Appendix 7: Post-program Knowledge Survey .....</b>	<b>333</b>
<b>Appendix 8: Online Reflection Feedback Instructions for Research Participants ...</b>	<b>339</b>
<b>Appendix 9: Interview Questions for Research Project Participants.....</b>	<b>340</b>
<b>Appendix 10: Information Sheet for Research Expert Group, Validation of Program, Participants .....</b>	<b>342</b>
<b>Appendix 11: Attachments for Validation Expert Group .....</b>	<b>349</b>
<b>Appendix 12: Clinical Supervision Program Work File .....</b>	<b>350</b>
<b>Appendix 13: Expert Group for Program Validation, Participants’ Details .....</b>	<b>351</b>
<b>Appendix 14: Pilot Presentation Feedback Form .....</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>Appendix 15: Pilot Project Participants’ Feedback .....</b>	<b>353</b>
<b>Appendix 16: Request to Participate in Reliability Expert Group .....</b>	<b>355</b>
<b>Appendix 17: Expert Group, Reliability of Knowledge Survey, Feedback Form and Feedback .....</b>	<b>356</b>
<b>Appendix 18: Email to Expert Group, Reliability of Knowledge Survey, to Complete Second Survey for Reliability Testing .....</b>	<b>357</b>
<b>Appendix 19: Reliability Testing Results, Feedback and Participants’ Details .....</b>	<b>358</b>
<b>Appendix 20: Marking Tool for Knowledge Surveys .....</b>	<b>362</b>
<b>Appendix 21: Reliability of Knowledge Survey Results.....</b>	<b>365</b>
<b>Appendix 22: Email to Health Care Facilities to Promote the Clinical Supervision Program for Registered Nurses.....</b>	<b>366</b>
<b>Appendix 23: Program Details/Logistics for Health Care Facilities .....</b>	<b>369</b>
<b>Appendix 24: Participants’ Consent for Online Reflections .....</b>	<b>370</b>
<b>Appendix 25: Example of Weekly Email for Online Reflection Participants .....</b>	<b>371</b>
<b>Appendix 26: Letter of Appreciation for Research Program Participants .....</b>	<b>372</b>
<b>Appendix 27: Information Sheet for Program Participants .....</b>	<b>373</b>
<b>Appendix 28: Research Program Participants’ Consent .....</b>	<b>375</b>
<b>Appendix 29: Letter Sent to Program Participants with Eight-week Survey and Certificate .....</b>	<b>376</b>
<b>Appendix 30: Conference Presentations of Research Project .....</b>	<b>378</b>
<b>Appendix 31: The Art of Clinical Supervision Advertising Poster.....</b>	<b>379</b>



## List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Clinical facilitator model for clinical practicum .....	8
Figure 1.2: Clinical supervisor model for clinical practicum .....	10
Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework for the development of the CSP .....	21
Figure 2.2: Negative and positive influences on students' perceptions of clinical placements .....	34
Figure 2.3: Kolb's Experiential Learning Model, adapted with suggested learning strategies (Knowles et al., 2011, p. 197) .....	42
Figure 3.1: Research methodology for the CSP research project .....	52
Figure 3.2: Application of 'convergent parallel design' to CSP research project .....	59
Figure 3.3: Application of 'triangulation methods' to the CSP research .....	60
Figure 3.4: Phases of the research process .....	64
Figure 3.5: Application of HWA's four key points to the CSP .....	68
Figure 3.6: Theories of learning applied to the CSP .....	70
Figure 3.7: Theories and principles of learning and attitude applied to the CSP .....	77
Figure 3.8: Pearson's correlation coefficient results for the pre-knowledge survey reliability test .....	89
Figure 3.9: Process of participant recruitment for research program—university .....	96
Figure 3.10: Process of participant recruitment for research program—DoH .....	97
Figure 5.1: Concept map of the open-ended survey themes and subthemes .....	183
Figure 5.2: Concept map of the online reflection themes and subthemes .....	201
Figure 5.3: Concept map of the interview themes and subthemes .....	218
Figure 5.4: Overall qualitative themes of the CSP research project .....	232
Figure 5.5: Effect of belongingness on CSP participants .....	235
Figure 5.6: Strategies for belongingness by CSP participants .....	236
Figure 5.7: Relationship of effective communication skills to clinical supervision .....	238
Figure 5.8: Influencing factors on improving students' learning journeys .....	239
Figure 6.1: CSP's study findings .....	256
Figure 7.1: Implications of the findings of the CSP research project .....	287

## List of Tables

Table 3.1: Pedagogy and andragogy principles of learning, application to CSP, according to the core principles of learning by Knowles et al. (1998). .....	72
Table 3.2: Application of the theories of persuasion to the CSP .....	76
Table 3.3: Data collection tools .....	79
Table 4.1: Number of completed knowledge and attitude surveys .....	111
Table 4.2: Total number of research participant according to area of employment .....	116
Table 4.3: Description of participants' health care facilities .....	117
Table 4.4: Characteristics of employment sites and attendance numbers for university attendees .....	117
Table 4.5: Characteristics of DoH sites with attendance numbers.....	118
Table 4.6: Age and gender .....	119
Table 4.7: Area of employment and speciality of practice .....	120
Table 4.8: Years of nursing experience .....	120
Table 4.9: Summary of years of nursing experience.....	121
Table 4.10: Previous education related to clinical supervision.....	122
Table 4.11: Previous education in clinical supervision cross-tabulated with area of employment .....	122
Table 4.12: Frequency of clinical supervision cross-tabulated with area of employment	123
Table 4.13: Pre-program knowledge survey mean score with mode, median and standard deviation .....	126
Table 4.14: Pre-program knowledge survey mean scores and standard deviations for age of participants .....	127
Table 4.15: Pre-program knowledge survey mean scores for area of employment .....	128
Table 4.16: Pre-program knowledge survey mean scores and standard deviations for previous education in clinical supervision .....	129
Table 4.17: Pre-program knowledge survey mean scores for area of employment cross-tabulated with previous education in clinical supervision .....	129
Table 4.18: Pre-program knowledge survey mean scores and standard deviations for frequency of clinical supervision.....	130

Table 4.19: Pre-program knowledge survey mean scores and standard deviations for years of nursing experience .....	131
Table 4.20: Knowledge survey mean scores with standard deviations across the phases of data collection.....	132
Table 4.21: Return rates with mean scores for the knowledge survey at the pre-program and immediate post-program phases for all participants, and eight-week group only (across pre-program, immediate post-program and eight-week surveys), according to area of employment .....	134
Table 4.22: Knowledge survey mean scores for age of participants across the phases of survey completion.....	136
Table 4.23: Knowledge survey mean scores for previous education in clinical supervision across the phases of survey completion .....	137
Table 4.24: Knowledge survey mean scores according to previous education in clinical supervision cross-tabulated with area of employment, both pre- and post-program attendance .....	139
Table 4.25: Knowledge survey mean scores for frequency of clinical supervision across the phases of survey completion .....	140
Table 4.26: Knowledge survey mean scores for years of nursing experience across the phases of survey completion .....	141
Table 4.27: Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey theme of ‘time’ across the phases of survey completion .....	145
Table 4.28: Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey theme of ‘motivation’ across the phases of survey completion.....	146
Table 4.29: Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey theme of ‘knowledge’ across the phases of survey completion.....	148
Table 4.30: Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey theme of ‘professional issues’ across the phases of survey completion .....	149
Table 4.31: Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey theme of ‘instructor–student relationship’ across the phases of survey completion .....	151
Table 4.32: Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey theme of ‘personal issues’ across the phases of survey completion.....	1533
Table 4.33: Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey theme of ‘background comparisons’ across the phases of survey completion.....	155

Table 4.34: Study group mean scores with the standard deviation for Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey.....	157
Table 4.35: Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey mean scores and standards deviations relating to the age of participants across the phases of survey completion.....	159
Table 4.36: Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey mean scores and standard deviation relating to area of employment across the phases of survey completion.....	160
Table 4.37: Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey mean scores and standard deviation for previous education in clinical supervision across the phases of survey completion .....	161
Table 4.38: Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey mean scores and standard deviation for frequency of clinical supervision across the phases of survey completion.....	163
Table 4.39: Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey mean scores and standard deviation relating to years of nursing experience across the phases of survey completion .....	164
Table 4.40: Overall comparison of findings of Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey—score allocation with the CSP .....	167
Table 4.41: Overall mean score of Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey divided between low, moderate and high—comparison of finding between Aghamohammadi-Kalkhoran et al. (2010) and the CSP .....	168
Table 4.42: Comparison of Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey for the theme of ‘time’ for Stagg, AKKA and the CSP.....	169
Table 4.43: Comparison of Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey for the theme of ‘motivation’ for Stagg, AKKA and the CSP .....	170
Table 4.44: Comparison of Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey for the theme of ‘knowledge’ for Stagg, AKKA and the CSP.....	171
Table 4.45: Comparison of Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey for the theme of ‘professional issues’ for Stagg, AKKA and the CSP.....	172
Table 4.46: Comparison of Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey for the theme of ‘instructor–student relationship’ for Stagg, AKKA and the CSP.....	173
Table 4.47: Comparison of Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey for the theme of ‘personal issues’ for Stagg, AKKA and the CSP.....	174
Table 4.48: Comparison of Stagg’s (1992) attitude survey for the theme of ‘background information’ for Stagg, AKKA and the CSP .....	175
Table 5.1: Criteria for interviews .....	180

Table 6.1: Age of registered nurses in Australia according to the ABS (2001), AHPRA (2013) and the CSP (2012).....	253
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## List of Graphs

Graph 4.1: Frequency of clinical supervision cross-tabulated with area of employment .	125
Graph 4.2: Pre-program knowledge survey's mean scores for area of employment .....	128
Graph 4.3: Knowledge survey mean scores for area of employment across the phases of survey completion.....	135
Graph 4.4: Knowledge survey mean scores for age of participants across the phases of survey completion.....	136
Graph 4.5: Knowledge survey mean scores for previous education in clinical supervision across the phases of survey completion .....	138
Graph 4.6: Knowledge survey mean scores for frequency of clinical supervision across the phases of survey completion.....	140
Graph 4.7: Knowledge survey mean scores for years of nursing experience across the phases of survey completion .....	141
Graph 4.8: Attitude surveys' mean scores with standard deviation and range across the phases of survey completion .....	158
Graph 4.9: Stagg's (1992) attitude survey mean scores relating to the age of participants across the phases of survey completion .....	159
Graph 4.10: Stagg's (1992) attitude survey results relating to area of employment across the phases of survey completion .....	160
Graph 4.11: Stagg's (1992) attitude survey mean scores for previous education in clinical supervision across the phases of survey completion .....	162
Graph 4.12: Stagg's (1992) attitude survey mean scores for frequency of clinical supervision across the phases of survey completion .....	163
Graph 4.13: Stagg's (1992) attitude survey mean scores relating to years of nursing experience across the phases of survey completion.....	164

## List of Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AHPRA	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
AKKA	Aghamohammadi-Kalkhoran et al.
ANMC	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council
CINAHL	Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPAT	Clinical Placement Assessment Tool
CSP	Clinical Supervision Program
CSSP	Clinical Supervisor Support Program
CSSPDP	Clinical Supervisor Support Program Discussion Paper
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
DNCSCF	Draft National Clinical Supervision Competency Framework
DoH	Department of Health
FHHS	Fremantle Hospital and Health Service
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
HWA	Health Workforce Australia
HWS	Health Workforce Series
IP	immediate post-program survey
JDF	Job Description Format
MET	Medical Emergency Team
NCSSF	National Clinical Supervision Support Framework
ND	Notre Dame
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NMBA	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
OT	occupational therapist
PCA	patient care assistant
RCN	Royal College of Nursing
RN	registered nurse
SA	strongly agree

SD	strongly disagree
SDN	staff development nurse
SOM	sign-off mentor
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SWOT	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
UK	United Kingdom
VET	vocational education and training



## **Abstract**

Nursing students' clinical placements should provide an environment in which they can apply their nursing education in the fast-paced world of health care and develop a framework for practice. Students rely on effective teaching and supportive clinical supervisors to provide a placement in which they are not only encouraged to practice, but also to learn from this practice. This is achieved through welcoming students into the health care team by valuing their input and contributions, and consolidating their clinical practice through activities such as critical thinking and reflection.

The role of the clinical supervisor is therefore complex and often constrained by time because of the need to prioritise patient care. The role is also distant to that of providing clinical care; therefore, staff require specific education and guidance to understand and implement the role's requirements.

This research aimed to develop, implement and evaluate a new education program for nursing staff. This process was guided by the current literature in relation to the role of the clinical supervisor, the theories and principles of adult learning, and the theories of attitude and attitude change.

The effect of the program was determined using a descriptive methodology involving the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data using a triangulation approach. This involved the use of pre- and post-program attendance (on the day and after eight weeks) knowledge and attitude surveys, online reflective statements for up to eight weeks after attending the program, and individual interviews.

Analysis of the data determined that participants improved both their knowledge and attitude towards students and clinical supervision. Participants viewed the program as a positive strategy for improving their attitude towards students and student clinical supervision, while also being supported with realistic strategies for promoting a welcoming environment conducive to student learning. Participants also articulated their concerns related to perceived organisational barriers to providing effective clinical supervision.

There are multiple implications of this research. The Clinical Supervision Program (CSP) for Registered Nurses is confirmed as a strategy for providing effective education for nurses involved in the role of clinical supervision. The study also articulates the importance of health care facilities and education providers in ensuring ongoing support and recognition of the role, as well as facilitating a workplace that is supportive of student placements.

# Statement of Candidate Contribution

## Declaration of Authorship

This thesis is the candidate's own work and contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other institution.

To the best of the candidate's knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Kylie Patricia Russell

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25.11.2013

In memory of Drew

Thank you for believing in me, guiding me and for always loving me.

*'They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them'* (Laurence Binyon, 1914)

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To all of my nursing colleagues, you have all, at some time in some way, shaped the nurse that I am today. We have created bonds through shared laughter, tears, successes and losses. These memories remind me of how nurses can change and affect people's lives. And also to all of the research participants, without you, this journey would simply have not been possible.

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## Prologue

As an educator, I have been involved with the facilitation of preceptorship and clinical supervision training for over 12 years. As a young educator who had recently completed my Masters in Health Science (Education), I presented many of the sessions included in this Clinical Supervision Program (CSP), albeit in a very different manner to my current teaching style. My sessions were individual sessions, heavy in theory, PowerPoint-orientated, and with little, if any, practical application of the material or connection to other topics and sessions of the day. Each time I presented, I received positive feedback from my participants, but I could not help but wonder how their understanding of concepts and theories—such as Kolb’s Learning Model and the principles of pedagogy—really helped them when they had a graduate or student nurse to supervise. I began to question others about their study days and was surprised to find that many hospitals did not provide any education about supervising students; instead, their programs focused on supporting graduates and newly employed nurses.

At the same time that I began this journey of reflection, I transferred into the Undergraduate Coordinator role with a well-respected colleague who was passionate about students and also concerned by the deficits in nursing staff knowledge regarding student clinical supervision. In the previous year, she had been asked by the nursing executive to increase the student numbers within the hospital, and she asked if I would work with her to achieve this goal. We agreed that implementing this increase would require providing intensive support to the ward managers, staff and students. Thus, I began to rethink my approach to preceptorship education, and we rewrote the program offered to nurses at the time. Our new program focused on a team approach, with practical ideas, less theory and the implementation of ideas such as the Team Leader Model and Student Liaison Nurses to facilitate student population growth. Within two years, we had doubled the student intake, with a philosophy that there would be a student for every staff member. With this change in teaching clinical supervision, maintaining a visible presence on the ward to support staff and students, and providing ward areas with strategies to manage the increase in student numbers, we noticed that the most influential factor for staff to accept this increase in student numbers, and for students to have a positive experience, was based on attitude. If

the staff had a positive attitude towards the students and their placement, they accepted more students and the students had a better placement. We confirmed these findings in our research project, 'The Team Leader Model: An Alternative to Preceptorship'.

After leaving the role and commencing as the Clinical Coordinator at the University of Notre Dame Australia School of Nursing and Midwifery, I soon realised the differences in health care sites in relation to the acceptance of student placements and the attitude towards students and student learning.

I wondered if we could develop the same culture created at one hospital across all health care sites to assist with reducing the shortfall of student placements and improve the learning experiences of students. The outcome of this was the development of the CSP, which encompassed my 12 years of experience in facilitating preceptorship study days and managing undergraduate and graduate placements. Now the time has come to implement the program and determine whether years of supporting a change in attitude in one hospital can be similarly sparked by participants attending just one day.