

**Factors Affecting Assessment of Student Nurses' Clinical Practice:  
A Phenomenographic Exploration of the Experiences and  
Understanding of Mentors of a Mental Health Service in England****Peter T. Sandy**

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**ABSTRACT** Clinical learning is an important aspect of pre-registration nursing programmes. It enables students to acquire skills and knowledge required for quality care provision. Newly registered nurses do not always have adequate practical skills. This is attributed to inconsistencies in assessments. Yet, research relating to factors affecting clinical assessments of students is limited. This study explored mentors' experiences and understanding of factors that may affect students' assessments. The study utilised a phenomenographic methodology and was conducted in a mental health Trust. Thirty mentors participated in the study. Data were collected using five focus group interviews of six participants each. Data were analysed using Sjostrom and Dahlgren approach to analysis. There are multiple factors that may affect assessment of students' clinical performance. Examples of these include anxieties of assessment and placement duration. Mentors need ongoing training and support to improve the quality of students' assessments.