Expert Clinicians as Clinical Educators: A Collaborative Study to Overcome the Nursing Faculty Shortage

Christina Ryan Scott, RN, MSN and Kathy Tatum, RN, MBA: Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
Becky Shabo, PhD, RN: Kennesaw State University

Introduction

- Current nursing faculty shortage continues to increase
- Economic climate means cost is important factor for nursing education
- Alternatives to the traditional clinical education needed to increase quality of student learning in the pediatric rotation

Background

- Use of Dedicated Education Units (DEU's) in adult medical surgical clinical rotation resulted in
  - Reduced need for adjunct faculty
  - Effectively taught nursing students professional, competent and safe nursing care
  - Cost positive program for university
  - Cost neutral program for hospital
- Review of literature did not identify examples of the use of DEU for students in pediatric clinical rotation

- University of Portland DEU Model Basic Information.
- University of Tennessee Health Science Center Nursing Magazine, Office of Alumni Affairs. Memphis, TN. Spring, 2009.

Study Purpose

- To determine the quality of student learning outcomes (as determined by the student);
- To determine the cost-effectiveness of a dedicated education unit.

Implementation Strategy

- Recruit RN's meeting Georgia Board of Nursing requirements for clinical educator;
  - Provide education regarding the strategies in clinical educator role
  - Provide MSN oversight available on site and by phone.
- Recruit eligible students to participate (volunteer)
- Create a one-to-one learning experience for four 12-hour shifts.

Mixed Methods Study Design

- Descriptive Design (Quantitative)
  - Provided accurate assessment of perceptions of this non-traditional educational format from the nurse preceptor and student perspective.
  - Evaluated participant level of satisfaction with outcomes of non-traditional teaching and learning.
- Phenomenological Perspective (Qualitative)
  - Described the preceptor and student experience as they engaged in the teaching and learning process in response to the question: "Tell me about your experience on the DEU."
    - Data Analysis: Responses from individual interviews and group discussions were coded into clusters or themes.
- Individual and group interviews of all participants seeking their personal experience in response to: "Tell me about your experience on the DEU."
  - Responses were coded into clusters or themes.

Descriptive Analysis

- Weekly self evaluation of the clinical experience;
- End of clinical experience evaluation;
- Weekly self evaluation identified
  - Performing skills repetitively in single day
  - Providing complete care along side an RN
  - Acquiring an understanding of what they are becoming.

Clinical Experience Evaluation

- End of clinical experience evaluation completed by 85% of all students
  - Traditional clinical format and DEU format
- Feeling supported by the clinical instructor (or assigned RN educator)
- Feeling supported by the staff
- Overall experience was positive
- Course objectives were met through the clinical

Student Perception

Topic	Study Participants (N= 19)			Traditional Format (N= 22)		
	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
Clinical Educator Support	85% (n=16)	15% (n=3)	-	68% (n=15)	32% (n=7)	-
Nursing Staff Support	100% (n=19)	-	-	78% (n=17)	13% (n=3)	9% (n=2)
Overall Positive Experience	100% (n=19)	-	-	91% (n=20)	9% (n=2%)	-
Met Course Objectives	100% (n=19)	-	-	82% (n=18)	18% (n=4)	-

Qualitative Themes

No more "watchful waiting"

- "Nurses are more patient and explain things more… unlike the professor who has to be pulled in too many directions…."
- "…didn't have to rush, allowing time to think and absorb…I learned more today than any other day in a previous clinical."
- "…in the traditional format you have to wait for your instructor and you could miss out on an opportunity or skill if the instructor is not available."
- "…the nurse was there for my learning needs, she didn't have to run off to 6 other students."
- "…I have more support with the RN because the RN is always there, where you are left alone a lot in the traditional clinical format."

What is a nurse?

- "…I have a more accurate understanding of what a full shift is…like for a nurse."
- "…I am able to listen to the RN's train of thought on the patient's and the rationale for what they are doing."

Practice makes Perfect

- "I have practiced more patient care in 3 days with this program than all my other clinicals combined."
- "…a full shift allows me more time to gain skills and confidence, build rapport with the patient and family, and implement interventions."

Part of the Team

- "I am able to interact with my staff nurse on a more intimate level and can really receive from her, as well as assist her (I hope) in providing her care for our patients."
- "I felt like I was wanted by the staff, something that I had not experienced before."
- "Coming in today, I felt like I was coming in for a job. This experience isn't like school where I go through the motions and can't wait to get out of clinical. I wanted to work and learn right along side of my RN."

Educational Outcomes

- Weaker students flourished due to more focused education;
  - ↑experience led to↑confidence
- Students identified the steps of the nursing process;
  - Less task oriented
  - Learned to ask who, why, how and when
- Students felt enculturated in the nursing unit.

Educator Comments

- I would do this again! I loved it.
- Parents didn't refuse the students bedside care!
- Nurses believed:
  - Students were more professional,
  - Students benefited from learning in "real time",
  - Wish they had this experience as students.
- When are we implementing the program?!!
- Nurses liked being responsible for one student
  - "I got to maintain 100% control of my patients",
  - "There were no questions as to what was and was not done at the end of the day".

Challenges for Implementation

- Assure all BSN staffing for student assignments
- Maintaining educators on unit during low census
- Students not meeting course objectives:
  - Arrive late to clinical
  - Communication of poor performance to professor
    - Clarify timing of notification to the professor
- Students want more days in clinical in this format!
- Animosity from ADN nurses who did not meet educational requirement to be clinical educators.

Recommendations for Future Study

- School of Nursing holds seminar on campus to address how to translate clinical experience to classroom learning
- Provide guidelines to staff for students who call in sick
- Provide guidelines to staff when they call in sick or have shift cancelled due to low patient census

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