

Creating Healthy Work Environments 2019

Transition of Novice Nurse Faculty Into the Academic Setting: A Qualitative Phenomenological Pilot Study

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological pilot study was to explore the lived experiences of novice nurse faculty during their transition into the academic setting. The importance of this study was to better understand the phenomenon of *transition* and experiences of novice nurse faculty. Meleis' (2010) *Transition Theory* provided a framework for the transition of novice nurse faculty by exploring the process and outcome of these experiences as told by those who experience it. By examining this role transition, nursing programs can impact the success of new faculty by identifying difficulties that may hinder the transition into the academic faculty role. In addition, recognizing strategies that currently build supportive environments for novice nurse faculty can assist in the transition of future nurse faculty.

Background

The nurse faculty shortage has plagued schools of nursing since it was first reported in 2005 (LaRocco, 2006). Now, thirteen years later, the outlook remains dismal with over one-third of current faculty projected to retire in the next ten years (Fang & Kesten, 2017). The nurse faculty shortage is a complex problem that extends beyond a lack of qualified candidates. Poor job satisfaction, alternative career choices, non-competitive salaries, debt due to obtaining a terminal degree and lack of formal preparation for teaching are frequently cited as challenges for nursing faculty (National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice (NACNEP), 2010). Due to the nursing faculty shortage, it is imperative that academic nursing programs foster positive organizational environments and implement strategies that attract and retain novice faculty.

For nurses who do choose faculty roles in schools of nursing, this transition is often laden with anxiety, stress which can lead to role strain and turnover (Goodrich, 2014; Lee, Miller, Kippenbrock, Rosen, & Emory, 2017). With the variety of graduate degrees and doctoral programs in nursing, many nurses lack experience with teaching and nursing education pedagogy. The deficit in knowledge of teaching, pedagogy, scholarship and service that are required in academe can create a knowledge gap that makes the transition into the faculty role difficult (Dreifuerst et al., 2016; Grassley & Lambe, 2015).

Methods

The settings were two schools of nursing in a large, Midwestern city: one in a medium-sized, private institution and one in large, research-based public institution. The study participants (n=3) include full-time faculty in academic programs of nursing that were recruited via email and word-of-mouth from nurse faculty and administrators. Inclusion criteria included: currently employed, full-time nurse faculty in their first academic clinical or tenure-track position; employed from six months to one year in the current faculty position. The faculty was interviewed regarding the phenomena of transition through the following interview questions: "What was it like for you when you first started in your role as a novice faculty member?" and "Reflect back on your expectations when you entered into the faculty role. How have your experiences influenced your role?". The study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board.

Results

The Colaizzi (1978) method of descriptive phenomenology was used for data analysis. Data analysis was completed within Colaizzi's seven-step process and clusters of themes were identified surrounding the transition of novice nurse faculty. Five themes were identified in relation to mentoring, orientation, support from colleagues, teaching pedagogy and new identities.

Discussion & Implications

Although there is empirical literature on mentoring, job satisfaction and intent to stay in the faculty role, existing studies focus on nurse faculty in general – and not novice faculty (Candela, Gutierrez, & Keating, 2015; Gage Gwyn, 2011; Lee et al., 2017; Roughton, 2013). A gap in knowledge exists in how exactly these programs create a positive transition for novice faculty. The importance of exploring the entire transition experience into the academic setting is imperative to begin to understand the lived experiences of new faculty. Implications for further research in this area will be presented.

Title:

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Keywords:

novice nurse faculty, nurse faculty shortage and role transition

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Abstract Summary:

Filling the nurse faculty shortage is a current priority with various stakeholders from the federal government to academic programs. Yet, increasing the numbers of nurse faculty is proving to be difficult as many novice nurse faculty experience stress and role strain with their transition into their roles in academe.

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Author Summary: Katie Busby is a PhD student at Indiana University School of Nursing and a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Future of Nursing Scholar. Busby's passion lies in nursing education and retention of nursing faculty to help teach the next generation of nurses. Prior to starting her doctoral program, Busby was a Lecturer at Indiana University School of Nursing where she taught baccalaureate students. Busby is a proud member of Sigma and the Alpha Chapter.