Peer Teachers: Learning in the Nursing Skills Lab

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Purpose: The purpose of this research is to determine how serving as peer teachers in the nursing skills lab impact the students in that role. Peer teachers are senior nursing students who are selected by faculty based on their nursing skill proficiency and communication abilities. The peer teachers were unpaid volunteers who helped students practice nursing skills in the skills lab setting.

Methods: Students who served as peer teachers give informed consent to participate in one-to-one structured interviews. This qualitative data is coded and analyzed to determine themes identified by peer teachers.

Results: Preliminary results show that serving as a peer teacher was a universally positive experience, with participants sharing details of professional and personal growth. Peer teachers feel increased confidence, believe their critical thinking skills have improved, and develop leadership skills in serving as a teacher and role model for underclassmen. Participants shared that working as a peer teacher required them to think more deeply and critically in preparing to serve as a peer expert. Peer teachers relate that their abilities in communication, teamwork and socialization are enhanced. They noted that the role required them to be reflective in their communication and led to a greater self-awareness. Peer teachers report a greater feeling of connection with underclassmen as a result of the experience. They provide a supportive environment for students in the nursing skills lab and are able to empathize with the anxieties experienced by students learning nursing skills. Peer teachers discussed a new interest in working as a nurse educator as well as a greater appreciation for the complex work of educators. Minimal negative comments have been noted.

Conclusion: Serving as a peer teacher is beneficial to senior nursing students in promoting personal and professional growth. Peer teachers believe that the experience was very positive and helped better prepare them for the nursing practice role they will soon be assuming.

Title:
Peer Teachers: Learning in the Nursing Skills Lab

Keywords:
Nursing skills lab, Peer mentor and Peer teacher
Abstract Summary:
Senior nursing students serving as peer teachers in the nursing skills lab develop increased confidence, leadership skills, and a better understanding of teamwork. The experience piques their interest in nursing education, something they had not previously considered.

Content Outline:
Peer Teachers in the Nursing Skills Lab
I. An innovative approach using peer teachers in the skills lab
   A. Senior nursing students assist underclassmen in learning and practicing skills
   B. Students are unpaid volunteers identified by faculty for their skill proficiency and ability to interact well with underclassmen
   II. Benefits of being a peer teacher
A. Professional development

1. Develop leadership skills
2. Serve as role model
3. Improve time management skills
4. Expand critical thinking skills
5. Piques interest in working as a nurse educator

B. Personal development

1. Experience personal reward in developing relationships with underclassmen
2. Develop increased confidence
3. Enhance communication skills
4. Greater self-awareness

III. Student nurses working as peer teachers grow professionally and personally.

A. This experience may prompt students to consider a future career as a nurse educator

B. Future research: how does the peer teacher experience impact role transition from student to practicing nurse?

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Author Summary: Kathleen has a doctorate in nursing practice, specializing in health innovation and leadership. She has worked in nursing education for almost twenty years and has a special interest in the power of human relations to improve nursing and nursing education. Peer teaching is a pedagogy with great potential for improving the education and practice of nurses.

Second Secondary Presenting Author

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Author Summary: Kolby is a lecturer in the School of Nursing at North Dakota State University in Fargo, ND. She works with nursing students in the nursing skills and has implemented a program with senior nursing students working as peer teachers with underclassmen. She has enjoyed seeing the peer teachers grow personally and professionally.

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