

Outcomes of a Structured Mentorship Program for Expert Clinicians in New Roles as Clinical Faculty

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Objectives

1. Describe the need for formal mentorship programs as part of an overall strategy in addressing the nurse faculty shortage.
2. Integrate the findings in light of current challenges in retaining novice faculty.
3. Discuss aspects of this mentorship as useful in your country or region.

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Purpose

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the structured, comprehensive, one-to-one mentorship experience. This qualitative study elicited the experiences of mentees and mentors who completed a structured training and mentorship program. IRB approval was obtained.

Background

- Internationally, we are losing nurse faculty due to aging and projected retirements (Fang & Kesten, 2017).
- Recruitment alone fails to provide the skills and expertise needed to be educators (Sorrell & Cangelosi, 2015).
- Carlson (2015) examined characteristics influencing part-time faculty to remain in academia. Mentorship was ranked fourth.
- Eastern Shore Faculty Mentorship Initiative (ES-FAMI) has a seven-year history transitioning/mentoring expert clinicians to faculty roles (Jarosinski, Seldomridge, Reid, & Hinderer, 2019).
- ES-FAMI is a hybrid educational program and collaboration between six nursing programs in rural Maryland, USA.
- The 30-contact hour educational initiative includes: face-to-face meetings, interactive online modules, and simulated teaching encounters. In 2017, as a result of feedback from Academy graduates, a formal, yearlong mentorship was added to provide ongoing support for novice clinical faculty.

Methods

All mentees and mentors were matched using a VARK questionnaire (Fleming, 2017;2006). Mentors attended a class training and submitted bimonthly reports. We invited those who completed the year-long mentorship to participate in focus groups.

After informed consent was obtained, focus group data were used to uncover mentee and mentor perspectives of this experience. A qualitative, thematic analysis elicited their experiences.

- Those who completed the year-long mentorship were invited to participate in focus groups facilitated by two expert consultants.
- Mentors and mentees were deliberately separated to allow for open expression about the successes and challenges associated with this model.
- Three mentor and three mentee focus groups were conducted at two sites. Two additional mentees participated thorough individual phone interviews.
- Questions followed a semi structured interview format
- Transcriptions of the focus groups, 12 mentors and 10 mentees, were analyzed qualitatively for thematic development.

Questions for mentors and mentees: A single qualitative question framed this experience: **Tell me about your experience as a mentor/mentee in this project? Follow-up semi structured questions followed.**

Findings

A qualitative approach using thematic analysis elicited their experiences.

Emergent themes for **Mentees:** 1) *Discourse is important*; 2) *Lessons learned*

I was so glad that I did it. My mentor was—we're opposites in terms of specialties, but our personalities are the same, and she—I thought this person would guide me, offer me some wisdom in terms of how I could facilitate instruction in the classroom...She exceeded my expectations.

Well, I was surprised that it went beyond the classroom. For me, it was not just teaching strategies and things like that, tips that she offered me, but she also talked about my professional development. Okay, you're on a tenure track. You need to do this.

Emergent themes for **Mentors:** 1) *Making it work*; 2) *Working through the missteps*; 3) *A thriving experience*

My first mentee, her expectations were much higher than mine.

It was more networking and professional development than actual teaching.

Conclusions and Implications

Since it takes one full-time faculty to produce six graduates yearly, who in turn provide \$704,000 in annual health care services (Kowalski & Kelly, 2013), assuring a successful transition to the role of clinical teacher is a sensible investment. A structured mentorship program is a necessary component in the preparation of expert clinicians transitioning as new nursing faculty and can be implemented in any nursing program. *Next steps.* These themes underscored the need and value of a year-long mentorship.

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