

Towson University Collaborative Partnership Program (CaPP) Improving Nursing Students Experience and Confidence with Opportunities



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Background

Summer Extern programs, in which nursing students work full time for 6-8 weeks in acute care settings are common in many areas. Despite the existence of these programs for many years, there is a paucity of research on their impact on nursing students' confidence levels and clinical competence. The need for nursing education programs to collaborate with clinical agencies has never been more critical. Patricia Benner called for a radical transformation of academia that connects clinical and classroom education to better prepare entry level nurses to enter the workforce. In addition, the contemporary complexity of patient care, expansion of degree completion programs; and faculty shortages; all substantially influence the need for an innovative approach for education and collaborative practice partnerships. Summer externships for nursing students represent a joint effort between academia and acute care facilities to breach the academic/practice gap. Data is crucial to substantiate program efficacy.

Purpose

The purpose of this Collaborative Partnership program is to determine if nursing extern programs at an acute care institution will increase students' clinical confidence and knowledge.

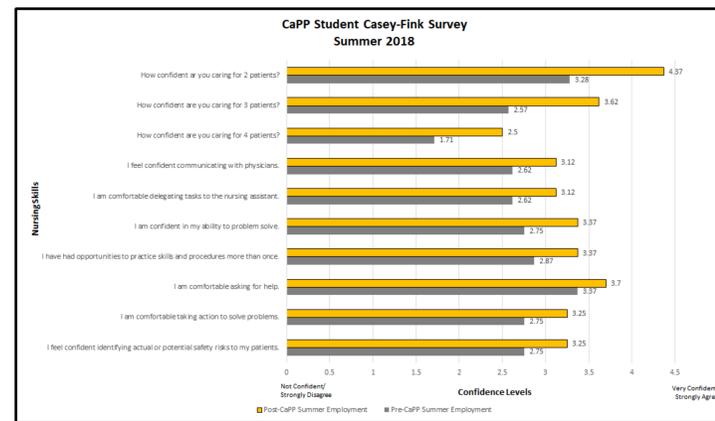
Methods

Setting: Five area health systems: Howard County General Hospital, The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Sinai Hospital, University of Maryland Medical Center and University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center.

The aforementioned health systems provide additional clinical experiences for students as full time hospital employees during the summer. Some students continued to work part-time during the academic year following their summer externship. Using the Casey-Fink Readiness for Practice survey, CaPP student externs self-reported their clinical confidence and competence. Analysis indicates these student summer externships had a positive impact on clinical confidence and competence.



Findings



Upon completion of the summer externship program in an acute care setting, student externs completed the Casey Fink survey. Results consistently indicated that after completing their summer extern positions, students self-reported more confidence in caring for multiple patients. Additionally, students showed increased confidence communicating with physicians, delegating tasks to nursing assistants, critical thinking and problem solving. They also reported feeling welcomed and valued at their externships. Finally, they indicated that their preceptor considered their learning style and education needs.

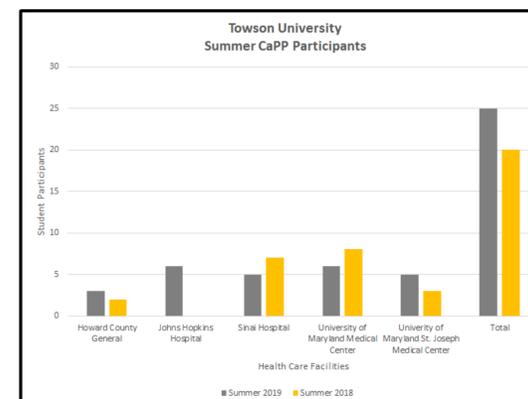
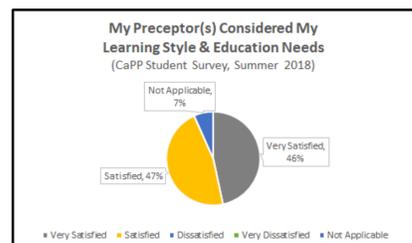
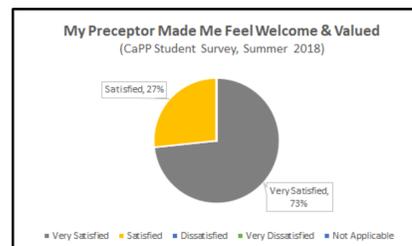


MY FAVORITE EXPERIENCES DURING MY STUDENT NURSE SUMMER RESIDENCY PROGRAM INCLUDED:

- Working with the staff at the hospital
- Practicing nursing skills, critically thinking and establishing relationships with my co-workers and patients.
- Gaining confidence when talking with patients
- Learning so many new things and finally understanding concepts that I struggled with prior to my internship.

Getting to truly see what it's like to be a nurse

The new skills I was able to learn and perfect (foley, blood draws, EKGs, bladder scans, heart monitors). And I like that I am a lot more comfortable with patient interaction after this experience.



Discussion

The extra support and experience student externs experienced as part of the CaPP program can potentially play a valuable role for students' success completing their nursing education and passing the NCLEX. Twenty-one students participated in the 2018 CaPP program. These students had a higher overall first time NCLEX pass rate (95%) than the non-CaPP students enrolled in the same nursing program at Towson (91%). Additional data is necessary to determine whether this higher NCLEX success rate is replicated in future cohorts and whether this increased pass rate is attributable, in part, to CaPP participation. Since 2018 is the first year for which we have data, Towson University will continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of CaPP on student success. Many of the CaPP student externs were offered permanent positions after residency. Even CaPP students not offered a permanent position on the floor of their residency gained valuable insight from the externship. These students indicated they now had a better understanding of that unit's patient population and what they, themselves, are looking for regarding a permanent position.

Nursing schools and Hospitals should have a collaborative working environment. Such collaboration will provide employment opportunities for students, thereby helping students to become more confident and prepared to care for patients safely. The results of the CaPP partnership indicate that students and hospitals will benefit from such collaboration.



Limitations

While this study provides potentially positive indications regarding influencing factors for passing the NCLEX-RN. Other possible significant predictors were not included in the model. In addition, study results are a reflection of students in this particular program and may be difficult to generalize to other programs. Some limitations for this study include the small number of students included in the program and possible lack of randomization.

Acknowledgments

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