

Essentials of a BSN Education and Students with Physical Disabilities: Faculty Perceptions

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PURPOSE/AIM

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of BSN faculty regarding the ability of persons with physical disabilities (PWPD) to gain the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities necessary to complete a nursing education.

Results help fill the gap in the literature regarding the academic barriers PWPD encounter while pursuing, or attempting to pursue, a professional nursing education.



METHOD

- TOOL – Online Likert-scale survey developed from the AACN BSN Essentials Standard IX (Generalist Practice) identifying the necessary cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities for BSN graduates
- SAMPLE – 19 didactic & clinical faculty in a large urban BSN program

BACKGROUND

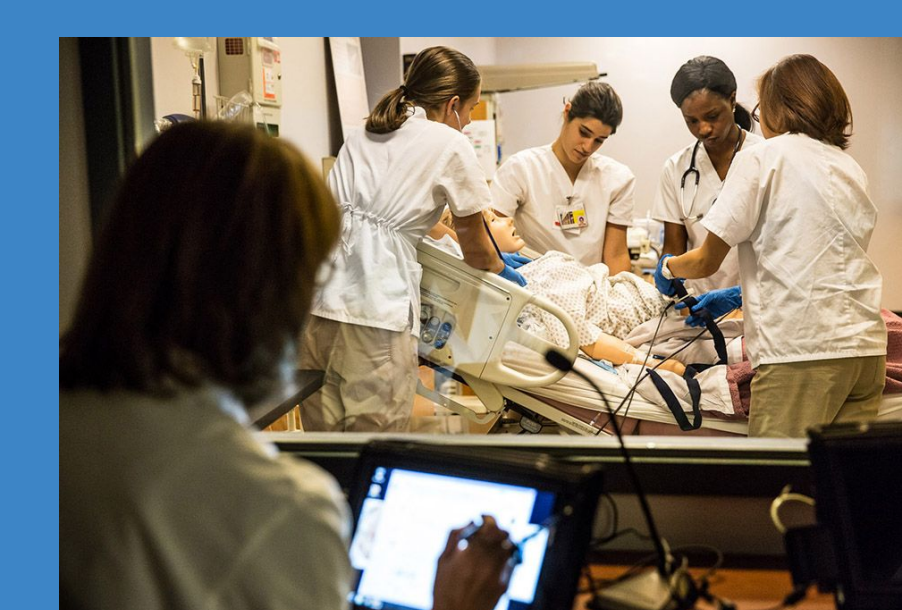
Nurses must possess certain physical abilities to provide safe, high quality bedside care in inpatient settings. Community and outpatient settings offer different opportunities for nurses of most physical ability levels to work in their chosen profession.

Nursing education continues to have a bedside care focus even as more nursing roles move away from the inpatient setting. If a student cannot complete these prescribed bedside clinical and lab experiences he/she is evaluated as unable to 'be a nurse.'

RESULTS

Participant nursing faculty agreed (85–100%) that students in wheelchairs could achieve 15 of the 22 cognitive and affective domain outcomes for Nurse Generalist Practice (Essential IX of the BSN Essentials).

For the seven predominantly psychomotor domain outcomes, 20–45% of faculty expressed disagreement that these students would be able to provide a safe care environment and high quality patient outcomes.



DISCUSSION

The Americans with Disabilities Act has empowered individuals to pursue careers previously closed to them, including professional nursing.

The majority of BSN Essential IX: Generalist Practice outcomes are in the cognitive and affective domains, and are achievable by all traditionally qualified students. Physical barriers may prevent PWPD from attaining psychomotor skills as traditionally defined.

In the current educational environment, concerns of faculty were understandable regarding students in wheelchairs being unable to meet psychomotor outcomes. However, as a profession, we owe each student the same individualized attention and accommodations we give our patients.

Nurse educators and leaders must be willing to explore possibilities that expand the traditional bedside nursing educational foundation in order to create rigorous and appropriate clinical education for students with physical disabilities.

IMPLICATIONS

An inevitable collision is occurring between the traditional clinical nursing educational approach, where PWPD may face barriers providing safe patient care, and a new perspective which embraces the vast array of potential accommodations and nursing clinical care setting options where PWPD may succeed.



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FULL ABSTRACT, RESULTS,
& REFERENCES

