Title: Clinical Compass: Navigating the Relationship Between Clinical and Didactic Learning

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Abstract Describes: Ongoing Work/Project

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Abstract Summary:
A consistent framework is necessary to guide students, classroom faculty, and clinical instructors. The purpose of this quality improvement project is to create a new tool which would provide consistency for students, guidance to clinical faculty, improve clinical decision making, and integrate classroom and clinical.

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Abstract Text:

Purpose: Evidence demonstrates there is a need for innovation and further investigation on how to best prepare students for practice (Ironside, McNeils, & Ebright, 2014). Clinical faculty also report needing more guidance and development in their roles (Dahlke, O’Connor, Hannesson, & Cheetam, 2016). According to the Institute of Medicine (2011), revamping the education of healthcare professionals is necessary to improve outcomes. The gap between classroom learning and the clinical setting is well documented. Both students and faculty have proposed solutions to bridge this gap. There is a need for collaboration between the clinical and theoretical environments (Akram, Mohamad, & Akram, 2018). A consistent framework is necessary to guide students, classroom faculty, and clinical instructors. Collaboratively creating clinical assignments to be utilized in both the classroom and clinical setting is a practical way to address the classroom-clinical dissonance. The purpose of this quality improvement project is to create a new tool which would provide consistency for students, guidance to clinical faculty, improve clinical decision making, and integrate classroom and clinical.

Methods: A tool was created to transform our students’ learning experience. The creation of the Clinical Compass included utilizing evidence from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, the Joint Commission, National Institute of Health, Quality and Safety Education for Nurses, clinical faculty and student course evaluations, input from clinical partners, data collected from clinical site visits, and teaching/learning literature. The Clinical Compass provides opportunity to better integrate didactic knowledge within the clinical experience. Utilizing the same tool within each clinical course in the curriculum allows consistency in the students’ experience.

Results: Creation of the Clinical Compass is the first phase of a quality improvement initiative. The Clinical Compass is a component of clinical education requirements. The tool is being piloted this semester. Evaluation of the tool will be done by creating a questionnaire for both students and faculty who were exposed to the former requirements. This will be an ongoing project with IRB approval being sought.

Conclusion: Ongoing