Good Work in Nursing: A Comparison of BSN Graduate Perceptions on Entry into Practice and One Year Later

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Good Work
Based on Good Work Project, Harvard University
goodworkproject.org

Work that is
• Skillful
• Moral and socially responsible
• Ethical
• Excellent
• Engaging
Objectives

- Identify characteristics and applications of good work in nursing that broadly influence preparing the BSN graduate for practice settings and assisting with work place adaptations.

- Discuss the global implications for applications to work place settings and practices of BSN graduates at two comparable points in their early careers.
Research Question: A Comparison

What are the perceptions of United States BSN graduates regarding good work in nursing when interviewed as they enter their first professional positions and one year later?
The typical respondent was

- Female
- Aged 22
- Single
- Unemployed at time of interview
- Earning a first degree
Methodology

- Exploratory qualitative study
- Purposive sample of 12 graduates
  - Fewer than three months of RN-work experience
  - Recommended by faculty
- Semi-structured interview protocol adapted from the GoodWork Project©
- Content analysis of verbatim transcripts, open coding, search for themes, descriptor development, cross-validation by team
Beliefs and Values

Upon entry into practice

- A foundation of ethics, honesty, integrity and teamwork
- A passion for lifelong learning

One year later

- Generation gap but staying true to one’s own beliefs and values
- Ongoing learning to provide quality care
Beliefs and Values

Voice* on Entry

- “Making a difference, doing the right thing, taking the best care of people...holistically, their physical, emotional parts of them as we’re taught in school”

Voice One Year Later

- “not take short-cuts” and to be “honest”, “caring” and “compassionate”, the need to “respect and treat the patient with dignity” and as one would personally “want to be treated”

*In the interest of time, one voice was selected for each among numerous choices.
Goals and Responsibilities

Upon Entry into Practice

- **Altruism** and compassion to “do the right thing”
- **Advance one’s education**
  - In the current work setting day-to-day
  - In a formal way in academia

After One Year

- Holistic, safe, quality care with “patient” as the first priority
- The desire to continue to develop their nursing knowledge base
Goals and Responsibilities

Voice on Entry

- “Just providing the best care I can and hoping to maybe even advance to an advanced practice role at some point.”

Voice One Year Later

- “you make sure things are done correctly and that – you’re able to follow up with things and make sure that, ...things are consistent and how they should be and they don’t get left by, like sliding by or anything like that.”
Opportunities and Supports

Upon Entry into Practice

- Multi-contextual, engaged support at unit level
- Leaders - engagement, accessibility, and approachability

One Year Later

- Perspective is still more from the unit level
- Informal leadership and mentorship
Opportunities and Supports

Voice on Entry

- “A leader...very positive energy, very helpful and supportive and basically just a big cheerleader and motivator for people”

Voice One Year Later

- “...the group of nurses that work on the floor, there are certain nurses that really take control, and you can go to them, ask anything. They make really good leaders as well.”
Obstacles and Pressures

Upon Entry into Practice

- Work Domain
  - Shift work
  - Difficult patients
  - Colleagues
  - Role performance

- Personal/professional domain
  - Health
  - Finances
  - Loss of faculty support system

One Year Later

- Work Domain
  - Unable to make another colleague understand
  - Creating cohesive team
  - Specific obstacles: insufficient staffing

- Personal/professional Domain
  - Less evident
Obstacles and Pressures

Voice on Entry

• “When drawing blood, I counted 10 seconds for cleaning and then saw the nurse [a few minutes later] quickly swipe over the port, not even counting”

Voice One Year Later

• Nurses “who don’t want to work” and would “rather sit around and gossip, are rude, and don’t help you”...“sink or swim attitude” toward new nurses
Comparison Between ‘Entry’ and ‘One Year Later’ Results

- **Work Domain**
  - Represents participants’ experiences with everyday work-life.

- **Personal/Professional Domain**
  - Represents participants’ abilities to meet their personal needs and to grow professionally.
Work Domain

- Embodies –
  - Organizational culture
  - Structural issues with the work setting

- Bottom line – setting the stage for
  - Role Stress
  - Role Ambiguity
  - Role Overload
Personal/Professional Domain

- First year experience – Outcome – Professional Resilience
- Supportive feedback and guidance
- Life-long learning
Global Implication for Application

- Nursing Education and Practice Settings
- Sustaining Values and Beliefs
Implications for Nursing Education and Nursing Practice Settings

- **BSN educational program**: Primary focus –
  - Developing core values and beliefs

- **Practice settings**: Primary focus –
  - Sustaining values and beliefs
  - Advancing professional development
Sustaining Values and Beliefs

- Model excellence
- Mentor the new graduate
- Create positive work environments
Conclusion

- Impact of an environment that includes and supports:
  - Communication, collaboration, collegial relationships, research, education, reward and recognition of nursing excellence, and resource utilization

- Also supports:
  - Nurse Satisfaction
  - Nurse Engagement
  - Nurse empowerment
Special Thank You

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Enjoy Prague and STTI International Congress 2013
Audience Q&A

- 10 minutes
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- Literature review of 32 articles, identifying such values in nursing as responsibility, honesty, compassion, teamwork, making a difference, altruism, integrity, sound knowledge, relationship, hard work, positive acknowledgement and personal achievement.

- “When nurses become dissatisfied with their work they often distance themselves from patients, from nursing tasks, and from their inner selves” (p. 724)
Literature Support: Values and Beliefs

  - Support for interview methodology to acquire information about values and beliefs
  - *Appreciative inquiry* is a method whereby individuals focus on and appreciate the most positive aspect of what is working as a means to promote that approach (versus is “what is wrong”); a process of reflection
- Christiansen, B. (2008)
  - Upon reflection, nurses recognize good work as securing fundamental needs of patients and next of kin; managing flow of responsibilities, and receiving positive feedback
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- Similar methodology to full study as longitudinal involving pre-and-post interviews from education to practice regarding goals and values
- Initially motives like human contact, helping others, and job security were most important
- 92% had a wish for further education

- In early career stages, study respondents wanted to learn two primary things from their role models:
  - How to perform tasks competently and professionally, and
  - How to fit into their professional role by matching characteristics of the organizational culture and by earning respect of their colleagues (p. 601)

- In terms of teamwork, early-stage career individuals,
  - Highly value perceived availability of others to help them when needed
  - Fully competent, caring individuals seen as role models