Closing the Leadership Gap: Mentoring the RN to BSN Student for Success

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Learning Objectives

• To understand the relationship between the demand for nursing leadership in the labor market and the motivation of associate’s degree nurses returning to complete BSN degrees.

• To identify ways to mentor for leadership education in a RN to BSN online program and close the leadership gap.
Significance of the Study

• Strong Association between quality and safety and nursing leadership (IOM. 2003, Benner, 2010, RWJF, 2014)
• Minimal leadership focused curriculum in associate’s degree programs
• Approx. 1/2 of the RN labor force holds a 2 year associate’s degree (HRSA, 2013, ANA, 2014)
• 79% of employers expressing preference for BSN degree (AACN, 2014)
Significance of the Study

- Leadership education and practice translate into improved patient outcomes (RWJF, 2014)

- Transformational leadership in particular is associated with higher patient satisfaction and lower rates of adverse events (RWJF, 2014):
  - Mortality
  - Medication errors
  - Hospital acquired infections
Aim of the Study

• To identify if and in what ways there is an association between RN to BSN enrollment and a demand for leadership skills in the labor market

• To identify ways in which an online RN to BSN college faculty and advisors can provide leadership opportunities
Methodology

• Qualitative study
• Structural coding of student essays in Atlas.ti using a phenomenological approach
• Single site large public college in the Northeast
• Online RN to BSN program
• N=264 randomly selected essays from a cohort of N= 942
• Students admitted between the years 2008-2013
Methodology

• Where did the data come from: Coding Rationale Essays

Goals in Pursuing the Bachelor of Science in Nursing?
Expectations of the Nursing Professional?
Academic Expectations?
Degree Plan Narrative?
Results

• Of the n=254 student essays coded, 36% (n=90) stated that their sole purpose in returning to complete the RN to BSN degree was to obtain leadership skills.

• The demand for leadership education in the labor market is in part driving the demand for RN to BSN degrees.
Results

• Coding revealed key areas in reference to the need for leadership skills
  • Unable to advance in clinical ladders
  • Unable to secure jobs in acute care settings
  • Unable to apply for administrative positions
  • Unable to work in the nurse educator role
A general finding in the essays was that nurses did not realize until they were in the job market how much having only an associate’s degree limited their opportunity for career growth.
Leadership Opportunities

• Core Curriculum- leadership course
• Advanced Clinical- self directed interests
• Community Clinical- community leadership
• Student Academic Conferences
• College Academic Committee Representative
• Individualized Plan of Studies
Leadership Opportunities

• “Mentor and mentee relationships make a difference”
• “Mentors guide students' own learning through questions and dialogue”
• “Mentors listen to student goals and help students determine their own course of study”
• “Adapting learning activities for individual interest”
Future Implications

Closing the Leadership Gap

- RN to BSN programs play a role in educating the future leaders in nursing
- Ongoing evaluation of RN to BSN programs to ensure ample leadership opportunities- connecting students to leadership
- Career advisement to meet the needs of the adult RN to BSN student
Future Implications

• Improved Quality and Safety
• Increase need for robust articulation agreements between 2 year nursing programs and RN to BSN completion programs
• Increase the presence of nurses in key leadership positions throughout the healthcare system nationally and globally
References


References
