Characteristics of Effective Nurse Educators

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Background
For many years the nursing shortage faced around the country has become more and more severe. This shortage is compounded by the fact that there are few qualified nursing educators and a large number of job openings. In the last five years thousands of qualified potential nursing students have been turned away from nursing programs because there were simply not enough professors to adequately educate them. Finding a way to recruit more effective nurse educators is essential to the health of the profession.

Methods
An extensive literature review was done and IRB approval was granted

Using Benner’s "Novice to Expert" model, at least five years experience in a teaching position was determined to fit the role of "effective nurse educator"

An online survey was emailed to Deans of nursing schools requesting it be forwarded to all qualifying faculty

Data Analysis
The Likert scale was assigned a numerical value from 1-5 with 5 being "very influential"

Total score for each quality was divided by the total possible score given all participants had rated each as "very influential"

Resulting number shows the degree (percent) to which a value is deemed influential

Results
Professional Characteristics
Top 3: pride in work, fairness, and communication skill
Bottom 3: eloquence, adept with technology, correctness

Personal Characteristics
Top 3: fairness, honesty, and approachability
Bottom 3: charisma, humor, forgiveness

Future Research
Further investigation into the qualities deemed detrimental to being an effective nurse educator could potentially reveal more insight on this issue. These characteristics may actually be a larger determinant in success than positive characteristics. Additionally, this study would be useful from a student’s perspective, which is ultimately the most important in terms of education.

Implications
Using these top six qualities, nurse educators can begin to identify the areas in which they excel as well as the areas in which they need to improve. Clinical nurses who possess these characteristics already may realize the potential they have at being a successful nurse educator. The first step to ensuring the end of the nursing shortage begins with finding effective nurse educators to teach the future nurses.