

**Title:**

Teaching Graduate Teaching Assistants Effective Ways to Communicate, Coach, and Collaborate with Students

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**Session Title:**

Poster Presentations

**Slot (superslotted):**

PST: Saturday, 18 March 2017: 7:30 AM-8:00 AM

**Slot (superslotted):**

PST: Saturday, 18 March 2017: 9:45 AM-10:15 AM

**Slot (superslotted):**

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**Slot (superslotted):**

PST: Saturday, 18 March 2017: 3:45 PM-4:15 PM

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**Keywords:**

Mentoring, Role Transition and Self-Efficacy

**References:**

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**Abstract Summary:**

One strategy to combat the nursing faculty shortage is to hire teaching assistants to fill clinical instructor roles. This mixed-methods study used online instructional modules, ongoing communication strategies, and face-to-face mentoring to prepare graduate teaching assistants for the clinical teaching role.

**Learning Activity:**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
Identify the development, implementation, and evaluation of a Nursing Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Mentoring Project	Describe the project’s systematic, logical, and evidenced based approach utilized to build an effective and sustainable program.
Describe the results and implications from the mixed method study to support optimal performance and well being in GTAs as they assume. into the clinical instructor role	Provide mixed methods study results that include results of GTA self efficacy scores, student satisfaction results and the identification of qualitative themes emerging from the GTA mentoring experience and how this information can assist schools of nursing in fostering improved clinical teaching, communication, coaching and well being for new instructors.

**Abstract Text:**

**Background:**The national shortage of nursing faculty continues to have a significant impact on the ability of schools of nursing to meet the current and future demands for professional nurses prepared at all educational levels (AACN, 2014). (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2014). The empirical evidence indicates that the cause of the faculty shortage is multifactorial; it includes economic factors, role transition challenges, increasing complexity of the nurse educator role, and the aging of the baby boomer population of nurse educators. Role transition and the increasing complexity of the nurse educator role create additional obstacles that contributes to the nursing faculty shortage (Slimmer, 2012). The magnitude of the nursing faculty shortage creates an urgency to develop, implement, and evaluate effective strategies to fill vacant faculty positions.

**Purpose:**One current and long-term strategy utilized by schools of nursing to combat the faculty shortage is to hire Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) to fill clinical instructor roles. Considering the continuing faculty shortage, utilizing GTAs as clinical instructors is a viable and cost effective approach to meeting the clinical learning needs of students and supporting the current and future healthcare demand for professional nurses. Clinical instructors face complex situations requiring evidenced based educational and evaluation strategies. Without foundational nurse educator knowledge, skills, and collegial support, clinical instructors experience increased stress, isolation, and role dissatisfaction (Evans, 2013) Without ongoing mentoring that accentuates timely communication, coaching, and collaboration, GTAs face a risk of exacerbated stress, frustration, and isolation that impacts their success in the clinical instructor role and has a direct impact on student learning outcomes (Helms-Lorenz & Maulana, 2016).

**Method:**Recognizing the need to increase the use of GTAs to meet its strategic initiatives and enrollment benchmarks, a Midwestern school of nursing developed and implemented a formal Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Mentoring program. The project goals focused on increasing the GTAs’ teaching self-efficacy, knowledge, and skills, as well as student satisfaction with the GTAs’ teaching abilities.

**Participants/Sample:** Six GTAs with no prior clinical teaching experience, and one with one year of experience participated in the project. They provided clinical instruction to 77 students representing 17% of the undergraduate student population; these 77 students included sophomore, junior, and senior

levels. Project implementation was efficient, effective, and time sensitive to the confounding work demands of GTAs. Mentor support to GTAs was provided by the project director, who is also serves as the Director of the Undergraduate Program.

The GTA Mentoring Program components were:

**Online Clinical Teaching Educational Modules:** To assist the GTA participants in developing their clinical teaching knowledge and skills an online educational program was designed by the mentor/program director, and reviewed by three clinical faculty colleagues within the school of nursing. The online education modules were developed based on nurse educator best practices, and guided by the National League of Nursing (NLN) nurse educator core competencies (NLN, 2014).

Module One: Foundations of Effective Clinical Teaching: Preparation and Strategies

Module Two: Teaching Strategies to Foster Student Clinical Reasoning and Critical

Thinking

Module Three: Effective Student Assessment and Evaluation: Maximizing Student Success.

The Institutional Review Board reviewed this protocol and deemed it an exempted study. GTA participants were required to review learning modules materials, participate in self reflection discussions, and complete a post-test and program evaluation to receive continuing nursing education (CNE) credit hours. As an incentive for participating in the project, all seven participating GTAs completing the online modules and discussion participation earned a CNE certificate of completion.

**Face-to-Face Coaching:**Face to face discussions were conducted on a regular basis and when immediate clinical teaching support was required “Just in Time” coaching was achieved through digital texting

**Scheduled Email Communication:**To support ongoing collaboration and communication bi-monthly touch point emails were sent to GTAs in which clinical teaching tips and school of nursing updates were imbedded. This method of communication provided regular and planned opportunities for collaboration, discussion, and coaching and was delivered by the project director who serves as the Director of Undergraduate Programs at the School of Nursing.

**Data Collection/Analysis:**To determine project outcomes and impact, a mixed methods, pre- and post-intervention study design was used to determine if there was an increase in GTAs’ teaching self-efficacy, clinical teaching knowledge, skills, and student satisfaction of their clinical teaching experience. Self Efficacy Towards Teaching Inventory surveys were modified and adapted with permission from original authors and distributed online to GTAs and students pre- and post-program implementation (Nugent, Bradshaw, & Kito, 1999).

For this quantitative analysis traditional statistical methods (e.g., paired t-tests) are being used to identify student and GTA perspectives and compare differences pre- and post-program implementation. Qualitative data was derived from in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with GTAs before and after all planned mentoring program components were completed. Thematic content analysis by two independent coders is being conducted on the qualitative responses (Elo, et al., 2014; DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000;). Quantitative findings and identified themes will guide future development, modification,

standardization, and expansion of the mentoring project to meet the current and future GTA mentoring needs. Data collection is complete and data analysis is underway.