

Title:

Enhancing Patient Safety and Student Nurses' Clinical Experiences through the Use of Student Competency Checklists

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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):

PST: Saturday, 18 March 2017: 1:30 PM-2:00 PM

Slot (superslotted):

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

Keywords:

competency, patient safety and student nurse

References:

1. Bjorge, D., Leland, A., & Gunnar Dale, J. (2013). What factors facilitate good learning experiences in clinical studies in nursing: Bachelor students' perceptions. *International Scholarly Research Notices*, 2013, 1-7.
2. Coyne, E., & Needham, J. (2012). Undergraduate nursing students' placement in specialty clinical areas: Understanding the concerns of the student and registered nurse. *Contemporary Nurse*, 42(1), 97-104.
3. Maxfield, D., Grenny, J., Lavandaro, R., & Groah, L. (2011). The silent treatment. Why safety checks and checklists aren't enough to save lives. Retrieved from <http://www.silenttreatmentstudy.com/download/>
4. Morley, D. A. (2014). Supporting student nurses in practice with additional online communication tools. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 14(1), 69-75.

Abstract Summary:

Student nurses completing hospital-based clinical experiences recognized that unclear student expectations created safety issues for patients and providers. In response, the student nurses created, implemented, and measured the effects of two tools designed to clarify students' clinical roles and responsibilities and facilitate communication among those involved in clinical learning experiences.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
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Recognize the effects of nurse communication on student nurses' confidence.	Key observations and research findings from relevant literature will be included to demonstrate the effects of communication on students' learning experiences.
Review strategies to improve communication between student nurses and nursing staff in the clinical setting.	Key findings from relevant research studies will be presented; the competency checklist and self-assessment tool will be on display.
Identify the benefits of establishing clear expectations for student nurses in the clinical setting.	Results of the research study will be presented.
Recognize the importance of a self-assessment tool to help students seek out learning opportunities.	Self-assessment tool and competency checklist will be on display, along with results from the study.

Abstract Text:

The student nurse experience is unforgettable. It is one of exciting opportunities, new knowledge, and challenges. Clinical experiences in particular offer student nurses chances to step out of their comfort zones, experience the full spectrum of the nursing role, and undergo personal and professional growth. When health care providers, faculty, clinical instructors, and student nurses work according to the same expectations, these experiences can produce seamless learning for the students and cohesive, quality, safe patient care. Unfortunately, the complexity of the clinical environment presents many opportunities for inconsistent, confusing, disorganized, and intimidating situations for the student nurse (Bjorg, Leland, & Gunnar Dale, 2013; Coyne & Needham, 2012). These circumstances not only impact the learning experience for student nurses, they also lead to unsafe conditions and dangerous opportunities for error (Krautscheid, 2008). A group of student nurses at one Midwest university investigated the factors that produce these situations. This investigation became the impetus for a student nurse-driven project focused on improving clinical experiences for student nurses and facilitating safe patient care.

Communication has been identified repeatedly as a major factor in the quality and safety of patient care (Maxfield, Grenny, Lavandaro, & Groah, 2011), as well as student nurses' learning experiences (Bjorg et al., 2013; Coyne & Needham, 2012; Krautscheid, 2008; Morley, 2014). Based on this knowledge, the student nurses conducted informal surveys with other students and nursing staff to identify how those involved felt about the clinical experience at the large urban hospital where clinical learning experiences are arranged. The major issue identified was that both students and nurses are unsure of their roles and responsibilities during the learning partnership.

The student nurses then identified strategies to combat this problem. The first strategy involved creating a course-specific list of nursing competencies and skills that students should achieve during their clinical experiences.

The students collaborated with nursing faculty in the university's medical surgical nursing course to identify specific and general nursing competencies and skills, which became known as "competency checklists." The items were organized into the following categories: Independent; with supervision; and observation only. The document produced from these lists was a checklist for the clinical instructor, nursing staff, and the student nurses that would clarify what students can and cannot do during their clinical experiences, thereby facilitating communication and appropriate delegation. A second document was created from this list, which became known as the "self-assessment" list. This list provided students with a tangible interpretation of the clinical learning objectives and was meant to promote student nurses' self-assessment and to guide them in identifying learning opportunities.

A pilot study for the competency checklist and self-assessment began in the fall semester of 2016. The competency checklists were distributed to lead course faculty, who incorporated the documents into the clinical learning experiences. Surveys were administered to participants at the implementation of the pilot study and will be administered again after 6 weeks. The aims of this pilot study are to increase student nurse and patient safety by improving communication among those involved in the clinical learning partnership. Specifically, the project focused on clarifying the scope of practice, responsibilities, and learning goals of the student nurses involved in the medical surgical course at this university.

At the end of this pilot study the project leaders hope to find that student nurses experienced clarity regarding their role in the clinical learning partnership, improved communication with clinical staff, increased confidence in seeking relevant learning experiences, and increased opportunities to participate in relevant learning experiences.