Introduction

Pre-licensure nursing students have a final practicum or clinical course as they transition to the professional nurse role. The student role requires increased independent practice, which can be a challenge. The final practicum is designed for the student to partner with a practicing nurse preceptor to learn both nursing role and skills. Learning during the practicum is important as the student will recognize the development of their own intellectual knowledge, psychomotor skills, and affective attitudes as they transition from nursing student to nurse graduate.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to create and evaluate a process to improve the quality of selection through an integrated application for nursing students entering their final practicum or clinical course.

Literature Review

Nursing students value clinical placements that:
• Foster their learning needs
• Help meet professional goals as they
• Support transition into nursing practice

Little evidence to support educators challenges
• Organizing clinical placement requests
• Students entering their final practicum and integration of learning needs with skills

Methods

We developed a web-based application using Qualtrics® survey software. Students were able to access the application via computers, tablets, or smartphones. Options were divided into the categories based on specialty areas.

The application included the following:
• Divided options into categories based on specialty area
• Students provided text box to give 250-word narrative
• Practicum requests received from 106 student applicants
• Results reviewed by educators to assign all student placements

A brief questionnaire was administered to evaluate students’ feedback about the integrated application. We also evaluated the amount of days, hours, and faculty workload usually dedicated to this process when using the paper vs. electronic application.

Results

Using the electronic system decreased the amount of days, hours, and workload usually dedicated to this process. We decreased the amount of days from 11.5 to 8 days of meetings, which reduced the hours necessary to complete the full review by 10 hours.

Based on faculty workload calculations, we discovered that we initially dedicated 11% of our time per month to this activity, thus decreasing to 4% in based on our month workload after using the electronic application process.

Themes Emerged

Twenty-three students responded to the questionnaire, evaluating the newly implemented electronic application. We identified three themes from student responses.

• Application well organized and easy to follow.
• Quick and easy to navigate and complete.
• Preferred electronic over paper application

The questionnaire provided students the opportunity to give feedback about the application.

Conclusion

Communicating the goals, process and outcomes was important in the development and implementation process to achieve change in the workflow for students and workload for faculty. Developing a process to improve selection quality for an integrated application became a challenging goal. Limitations identified included incomplete applications, discrepancies between narrative and drop-down menu selections, and the narrative word-length was limiting.

References


