INTRODUCTION

How does one know if a chosen course of study in college will lead to a satisfying career upon graduation?

➢ At the University of Texas at El Paso, pre-nursing students enrolled in the Introduction to Nursing course complete one hour observations of upper division nursing students completing a clinical simulated hospital day.
➢ Clinical simulation is an active learning method that promotes critical thinking and clinical reasoning through experiential learning in a safe environment.
➢ The use of clinical simulated experiences is a best practice that maximizes retention of important concepts and solidifies translation of theoretical knowledge into clinical practice.

SIGNIFICANCE/PURPOSE

➢ Exposure of pre-nursing students to simulated hospital day activities gives them an idea of what to expect when they enter the nursing program and also gives them an insight into what actual registered nurses do.
➢ Early exposure of pre-nursing students to a clinical environment provides information they can use as they plan their academic pathways and career trajectories.

METHODS

➢ Pre-nursing students complete a one hour observation of simulated hospital day.
➢ A questionnaire is completed in which students record their impressions of upper division nursing students engaging in simulated clinical scenarios.
➢ Upper division nursing students take on the roles of both nurse and patient. Students in the role of “nurse” provide basic nursing care. They do shift reports, complete assessments, administer medications, document their activities, and collaborate with other health care professionals. Students in the role of “patient” role-play their conditions.
➢ After one-hour observations are completed, a debriefing activity is conducted in class in which pre-nursing students discuss their observations using a guided debriefing tool.

RESULTS

➢ This observation activity is often the first exposure many pre-nursing students in this community have to a clinical setting.
➢ Many students have reported that this experience has given them an idea of what is expected of upper division nursing students as well as what is expected of nurses in professional practice.
➢ Most students have reported that they found this activity to be extremely beneficial and have expressed that they think this experience will help them as they make decisions about pursuing a career in nursing.

FEEDBACK

What impressed you most about what the nurses were doing?
➢ “How they were not afraid to ask questions before doing something they were unsure about”
➢ “The realness of the situation”
➢ “They were so caring and confident in the care of their patient”

What were some key learning points from this experience?
➢ “I didn’t see a lot of handwashing-I will make sure I wash my hands when it’s my time”
➢ “Nurses have to know a whole lot and they have to ask a lot of questions”
➢ “You really have to check your medications”
➢ “How important it is to actually pay attention to the patient and not just assess them without involving them in the conservation about what you are doing”

What are take-aways from this experience that will help you as you plan your future studies and career?
➢ “As a nurse you need to pay attention to all the little details-you really need to know what you’re doing”
➢ “I didn’t realize nurses did all these things”
➢ “You really need a lot of patience and compassion to be a nurse”
➢ “Use mistakes as learning experiences”

RECOMMENDATIONS

➢ To actively involve pre-nursing students within the clinical scenarios as family members or other health care professionals.
➢ Conduct studies that evaluate if this experience influences decisions to apply to the nursing program.
➢ Conduct studies that examine how this experience affects the level of confidence in students when they participate in their first simulated hospital day in the nursing program.

References Available Upon Request

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