

Use of an Electronic Clinical Tracking System for Monitoring Competency Achievement in a Doctor in Nursing Practice Program

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Background

Current practice in graduate professional program matriculation tends to rely on preceptor and faculty perceptions (Starosta, et al., 2017, Englander et al, 2013), or on clinical hour requirements (Halles, Biesecker, Brennan, Newland & Haber, 2012).

Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs (2016) and the American Academy of Colleges of Nursing work group (AACN, 2016) suggests the addition of competency achievement to student and programmatic evaluation. This workgroup recognized the critical foundation laid by the Advanced Practice Registered Nurses groups in 2006, and 2012 (NONPF, 2012, AACN, 2014) to role specific competencies. Monitoring competencies adds complexity due in part to a dearth of common taxonomy (Clabo, 2017).

Goal development in graduate nurses increases self-awareness and encourages improvement of clinical learning experiences across student and professional practice (McMillan, Bell Benson, et al, 2007). Use of an electronic clinical tracking system (ECTS) helped DNP students determine deficit areas, identify, and document clinical goals to promote progressive independence and responsibility in clinical patient encounters (Price, Tschannen & Caylor, 2013). Objective development is an important step for DNP students in the practicum experience (Moran, Conrad, & Burson, 2017).

References

Handout available on request.

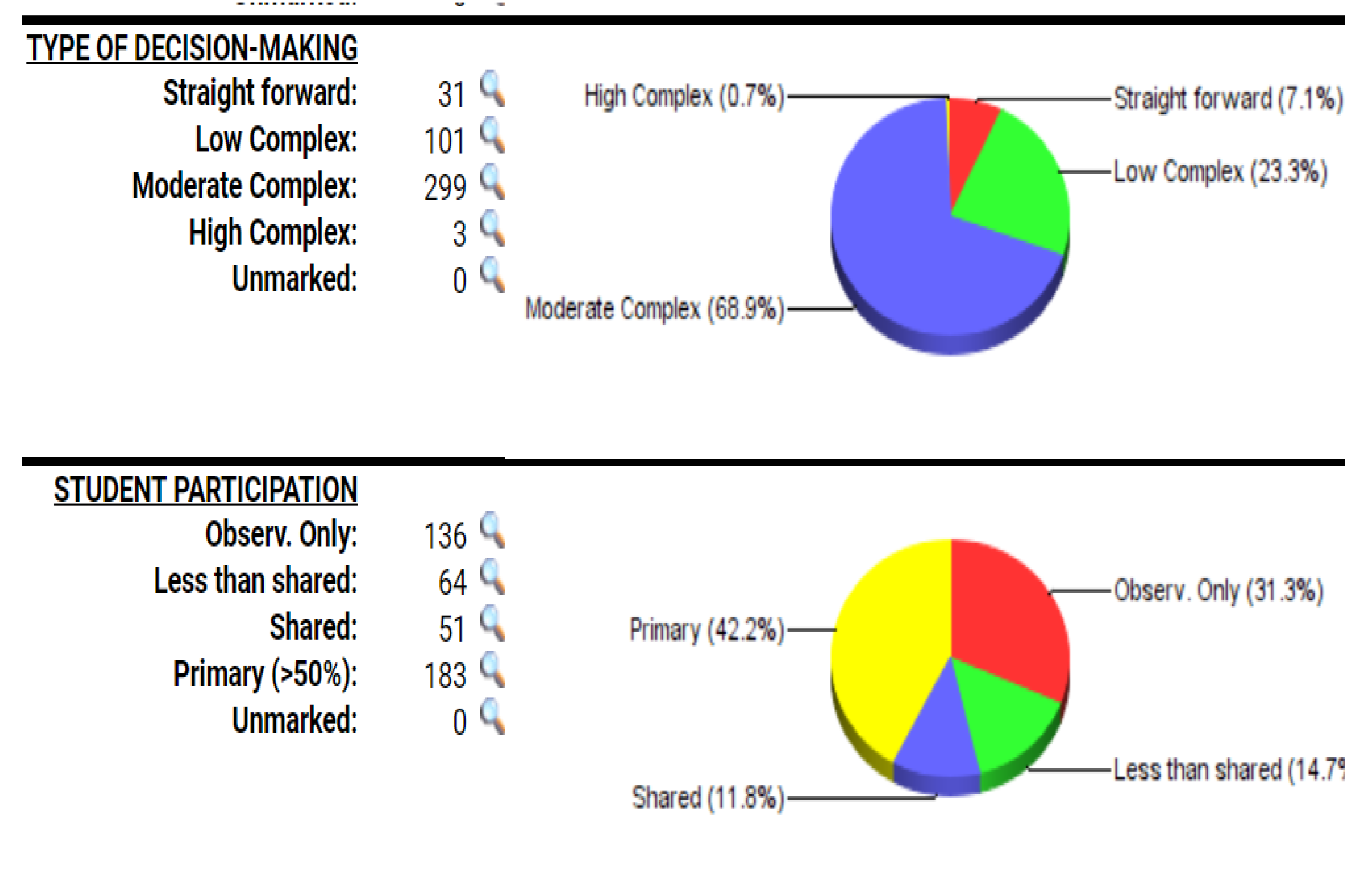


Figure reporting, complexity of visit measures

Quality Improvement Question

Will development and monitoring of personal learning goals incorporated in ECTS guide scaffolded learning across a semester to build accountability in seeking new, diverse clinical learning experiences to promote clinical competency achievement in DNP students?

Student Reflections:

- ECTS can easily be queried to monitor goal deficiencies and progression.
- "Writing goals and objectives helped relate the Essentials and CORE Competencies to skills and practice competencies."
- "Goals and objectives helped keep us [students] accountable and helped me to take more responsibility for practicum learning experiences."
- "This helped me recognize my clinical strengths and weaknesses to guide practicum experiences."
- "This experience gives me a foundation for competency assessment in future practice."

Methods

Students were introduced to a tool and asked to utilize ECTS to evaluate their clinical experiences and reflect on their current range of experience and develop SMART goals for the coming semester.

ECTS helps students and faculty track diversity in patient demographics, complexity of disorders, decision complexities, and reimbursement to enrich and more fully balance student learning experiences.

The guidance tool incorporated appropriate competencies from the AACN DNP Essentials (2006) and NONPF Core Competencies (2017).

Conclusions

Students demonstrated self-reflection and used the ECTS and SMART goals to seek increased complexity and diversity of patient visits. We found that integration of ECTS into clinical goal development along with documentation of clinical hours and monitoring of competency attainment also helps students address technology competencies (Johnson & Bushey, 2011).

However stronger guidance was indicated and a new tool incorporating clinical specific Essential and Core competency and Lenburg's Competency Outcomes and Performance Assessment Model will be used to better frame and guide learning (Lenburg, 1999).

Qualitative reflections demonstrated increased self-awareness and responsibility for current and life-long learning.