

## Nursing Education Research Conference 2018 (NERC18)

### Dedicated Education Units and Traditional Units: A Comparison of Learning Outcomes

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Designing a quality clinical learning experience for undergraduate nursing students is challenging. Reports by the Carnegie Foundation, Institute of Medicine (IOM) and Robert Woods Johnson Foundation call for nurse leaders to improve how nurses are prepared and educated by reducing the gap between classroom and clinical teaching. In addition, the IOM's *Future of Nursing* report encourages collaboration among organizations to better prepare nurses to deliver high-quality care.

The Dedicated Education (DEU) Model of nursing practice education is one strategy to bridge the gap between classroom and clinical teaching and to enrich the quality of students' learning opportunities.

A DEU model changes the traditional role of the faculty and the unit staff in their provision of clinical education to students. In a traditional model, a school of nursing faculty member has primary responsibility for a group of 8 to 12 students, and each student is assigned to specific care delivery activities by the faculty member who also supervises the delivery of care. The involvement of unit-based staff in a student's provision of nursing varies based on the relationships established by the individual faculty member. In some settings unit-based staff may have limited awareness of students' clinical expectations, their designated learning objectives, or their prior knowledge. In a DEU, each nursing student is paired with a unit based nurse for the duration of the clinical rotation. The student and the nurse care for an assignment of patients together, with the student assuming increasing responsibility over time.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate student confidence in performing nursing role responsibilities and to measure learning of specific nursing skills performed during a clinical learning experience.

This was a quasi-experimental study using a pre-test/post-test survey design. Students are randomly assigned to a clinical setting by a coordinator. Students completed a survey to measure level of comfort and skill performance before and after the clinical rotation. A total of 96 students, 48 in a DEU and 48 in a traditional unit, completed both surveys. The survey included the Casey-Fink Nursing Student Transition Survey and 15 Likert scale items focused on self-perceived comfort in performing specific nursing procedures, specific to the clinical course objectives. Two items collect data on the participant's prior work experience in health care and their desire to work in this setting after graduation.

The analysis examined the magnitude of the change in level of comfort and skill performance before and after the clinical experience. The data revealed that students in the DEU performed a greater number of skills, reported a higher level of comfort and confidence in skill performance and had a greater magnitude of change in pre and post clinical scores on the Casey-Fink Student Transition Survey.

This study provides a beginning body of evidence that the DEU is a positive factor in student learning in the clinical area. Future studies need to examine the impact of DEU experiences on the students' transition to new RN employee in the practice organizations.

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#### **Title:**

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**References:**

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**Abstract Summary:**

This study compares the learning outcomes of groups of students completing a clinical practice course on either a Dedicated Education Unit or a Traditional Unit.

**Content Outline:**

I. Introduction

A. Designing a quality clinical learning experience for undergraduate nursing students

B. Charge Carnegie Foundation, Institute of Medicine (IOM) and Robert Woods Johnson Foundation to improve how nurses are prepared and educated by reducing the gap between classroom and clinical teaching

## II. Models of nursing practice education

### A. Traditional unit - description and process

- 1) faculty member makes assignment
- 2) student completes tasks for 1-2 patients
- 3) faculty member supervises student performance

### B. Dedicated Education unit (DEU)-description and process

- 1) faculty member develops on-unit RNs to be DEU nurses
- 2) students partner with DEU nurse to care for a group of patients
- 3) faculty member facilitates student learning and professional growth of the DEU nurse

## III. The study

A. Purpose: to evaluate student confidence in performing nursing role responsibilities and to measure learning of specific nursing skills performed during a clinical learning experience.

B. Design: a quasi-experimental study using a pre-test/post-test survey design.

C. Procedures:

### 1) Sample

- a. Students are randomly assigned to a clinical setting by a coordinator.
- b. Ninety-six students: 48 in a DEU and 48 in a traditional unit

### 2) Instrument:

a. A survey to measure level of comfort and skill performance before and after the clinical rotation.

b. The survey included the Casey-Fink Nursing Student Transition Survey and 15 Likert scale items focused on self-perceived comfort in performing specific nursing procedures, specific to the clinical course objectives.

c. Two item collect data on the participant's prior work experience in health care and their desire to work in this setting after graduation.

### 3) Analysis

a. Magnitude of the change in level of comfort and skill performance before and after the clinical experience.

b. Comparison of level of comfort and skill performance between the DEU group and the Traditional-unit group.

c. Difference in the number of skills/behaviors performed between the DEU group and the traditional-unit group.

#### IV. Findings

A. Students in the DEU performed a greater number of skills

B. Students reported a higher level of comfort and confidence in skill performance

C. Students in the DEU had a greater magnitude of change in pre and post clinical scores on the Casey-Fink Student Transition Survey.

#### V. Conclusion

A. The DEU model of nursing practice education promote achievement of learning outcomes.

B. Future research needs to explore is the DEU experience impacts the GNs transition to the RN role post-graduation.

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**Professional Experience:** I have over 25 years experience in academia and have been teaching online since 2001. In 2011 I earned a second doctoral degree in Educational Technologies to enhance my knowledge of online teaching/learning strategies and the use of technology in the learning environment. In 2004 I developed an accelerated BSN program using an immersion model of learning. I am currently the DEU facilitator for specialty units at our practice partner institutions.

**Author Summary:** Dr. Raines is a Perinatal Nurse Specialist and Associate Professor. She initiated a Dedicated Education Units in the Mother-Baby, NICU and Labor and delivery practice settings. Dr. Raines has received a number of awards for her clinical expertise and leadership including the 2016 ELSIE (Elsiver Leading Star in Education) and the 2016 Isabel Hampton Robb Award for Excellence in Clinical Leadership from the National League for Nursing.