Nursing Student & Instructor Preference for Clinical Models: Evidence to Support Curriculum Development

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Background

- Clinical placements integral for praxis
- Curricular structure of the clinical placement - minimally considered
- Block Clinical
- Non-Block Clinical
Purpose

Investigate student and instructor perspectives of two clinical models on student learning
Question

Given a choice between [participating in / teaching in] block clinical or non-block clinical, which would you choose? Why?
Sample, Setting, & Methods

• 141 undergraduate students
• 52 instructors
• 5 universities offering both block and non-block clinical models
• 4 Canadian provinces
• Online survey
• Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
Results
Theme 1 - Learning and Applying Nursing Knowledge

• **Instructors** - Non-block clinical - opportunity to facilitate and scaffold student learning

• **Students** - Both models - Development of knowledge, skills, abilities, and praxis
Learning theory and clinical simultaneously stimulates more discussion in class because students have had some experience and can bring real-world examples back to class.

(Instructor)
Theme 2 – Time for Growth, Reflection, & Evaluation

- **Instructors** - Non-block clinical - greater time to reflect and grow and thus facilitate student learning. Allowed instructors to evaluate and support students.

- **Students** - Both models - encouraged time for growth and professional development.
- Block clinical - allowed for time to prepare and focus on the clinical day with fewer distractions and more social time.
Non block clinical has a lot of distractions during the rotation (assignments, exams, lectures). It’s hard to feel comfortable on the ward when you’re only there 1 day a week, you don’t get to know the patients and their needs, you don’t get to reevaluate care plans.

(Student)
Theme 3 – Integrating & Immersing in to the Clinical Environment

• **Instructors** - Block clinical - opportunity to refine skills and develop proficiency in clinical reasoning, problem solving, critical thinking, and organization.

• **Students** - Block clinical - assisted to develop confidence, and relationships with staff and patients. It also facilitated increased independence.
The consolidated practice time allows the students to focus on their psychomotor and interpersonal skills and allows them to get to “know” their patient, to see changes in the patient’s condition overtime, and to develop more confidence at the end of week.

(Instructor)
Theme 4 – Assimilating & Transitioning into the Real World of Nursing

• **Instructors** - Block clinical - simulated the realities of nursing work, scheduling, allowed for better application of nursing process, and facilitated continuity of care.

• **Students** - Block clinical - reflected realities of nursing, facilitated transition into practice, allowed for continuity of care, and application of the nursing process.
Block clinical allows you to fully understand how a unit functions day to day and for you to see how a patient’s health changes. You can see how your interventions played out and if they were a good idea and why. You get a better feel for the routine of actual nursing.

(Student)
Student and instructor preference for block vs. non-block by year (in percentages)
Implications for Nursing Curricula

- Both clinical models
- Non-block clinical models
- Block clinical models
Contact & Thanks

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References
