Strategies Associated With OSCE Simulation, Anxiety, and Clinical Competency in a Family Nurse Practitioner Program

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Purpose:
Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) are widely used in Advanced Practice Registered Nursing Graduate Programs and are recognized as a reliable and valid method to assess clinical competence (Aronowitz, et al, 2017; Miller & Carr, 2016; Mitchell, et. al, 2015). While the OSCE has generally been accepted by faculty members as a performance-based assessment, it is often poorly accepted by students. Use of OSCE in undergraduate programs is well documented; its use in graduate programs is less documented. For graduate students the use of OSCEs involves patient scenarios which require complex clinical reasoning skills, advanced practice knowledge and skills, and interpersonal/communication skills. Successful completion requires proficiency in multiple areas, including the ability to complete a thorough health assessment, advanced physical assessment skills, advanced pharmacology knowledge, interpretation of diagnostic tests, diagnostic reasoning skills, establishment of an evidenced-based treatment plan, effective teaching, and the ability to document the assessment and plan. Despite its acceptance as a reliable and valid clinical evaluative method, the most frequently cited disadvantage of the OSCE is student anxiety and is known to produce higher levels of stress and anxiety among students when compared to more traditional forms of testing. The aim of this project was to examine the differences in student self-reported anxiety levels and clinical competencies for OSCE mastery as students progressed through their final three semesters in a family nurse practitioner program.

Methods:
The project examined three consecutive retrospective clinical reflection student assignments at 30 minutes prior, during, after, and following debriefing to determine students’ self-perceived anxiety levels. In addition students assessed their self-perceived clinical competency.

The descriptive study utilized a convenience sample of 72 subjects including both males and females. Data was analyzed using SPSS and the Friedman’s test that is a non-parametric test looping within groups to test differences in ranks of scores on 3+ related groups using nominal and ordinal data. Through utilization of Benner’s Novice to Expert Theory (1982), our hypothesis was that student OSCE anxiety would decrease and self-reported competency scores would increase each semester during their final year in a family nurse practitioner program.

Results:
Through utilization of Benner’s Novice to Expert Theory (1982), our hypothesis that student OSCE anxiety would decrease and self-reported competency scores would increase each semester during their final year in a family nurse practitioner program was on target.

Conclusion:
Results from this study add to the body of reported evidence on self-perceived student OSCE anxiety and clinical competency. Through dissemination of this project, faculty utilizing OSCEs as an evaluative process will have an understanding of student self-reported anxiety and clinical competency to provide optimal learning opportunities.

Title:
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Keywords:
Clinical Competency, Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) and Student Anxiety

References:


Abstract Summary:
Objective Structured Clinical Examinations are widely used in Advanced Practice Registered Nursing Graduate Programs and are recognized as a reliable and valuable method in student evaluation. This form of evaluation is poorly accepted by students with reported high levels of anxiety.

Content Outline:
1. Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) are widely used in Advanced Practice Registered Nursing Graduate Programs and are recognized as a reliable and valid method to assess clinical competency. While OSCE is generally accepted, little focus has been done with student anxiety and their perceptions of the experience.
2. OSCEs are readily accepted from the faculty perspective, but poorly accepted by students. Utilizing Benner's Novice to Expert Theory our hypothesis is that student anxiety levels will become less over time based on previous learned experiences.
3. Little evidence is reported in the literature based on student anxiety levels. This project looked at students' retrospective clinical reflection assignments over the course of 3 semesters to measure student anxiety in a West Texas University Family Nurse Practitioner Graduate Program.
4. Results from this study will add to the body of reported evidence on self-perceived student OSCE anxiety and clinical competency growth.

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**Professional Experience:** Dr. Joyce Miller has been a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner since 1993 serving underserved populations in rural West Texas. Over the past years, she has worked as a faculty teaching in the graduate program at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. Her area of research has been related to health literacy, politics in nursing, spirituality, decisional conflict, self-efficacy, and health promotion program. She has been a member of Sigma Theta Tau since 2005.

**Author Summary:** Dr. Joyce Miller currently is an associate professor at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Odessa, Texas. She has been teaching in the family Nurse Practitioner Program since 2004 while practicing one day per week in a rural community.

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**Author Summary:** Dr. Guenther has been a RN since 1982 and a family nurse practitioner since 1996. She attended post-master's courses at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center in San Antonio for her FNP studies. In 2008, she completed her PhD in nursing and began teaching in the MSN/FNP program with the Texas Tech Health Sciences Center School of Nursing in 2009.

Third Author
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**Professional Experience:** Dr. Cannon is a professor and regional dean for Texas Tech University HSC in Odessa. She has been an educator for more than 20 years in various settings, including ADN, BSN, graduate, and continuing education. She has presented at local, state, national, and international conferences with an emphasis on healthcare literacy, leadership, curriculum, instruction, and online education. She has authored multiple publications on topics ranging from healthcare literacy to politics in nursing.

**Author Summary:** As an author and presenter for International and National Conferences, she brings expertise on a variety of subjects such as nursing education, evidence-based practice and evidence-based teaching.
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**Professional Experience:** In the past five years, I have spoken at a variety of International/National Conferences such as Sigma Theta Tau International in Brisbane, Australia, NLN Summit 2002 in Anaheim, California, and 9th Annual Conference: Primary Care for the Underserved in Detroit, Michigan. Topics of presentations have ranged from healthcare literacy research, how to write and get abstracts accepted and collaborative interdisciplinary education projects. In addition to presentations, I have taught undergraduate research courses, undergraduate courses, undergraduate teaching courses, and graduate courses. I have had extensive experience converting these courses to online delivery methods. Manuscripts have resulted from each of the above presentations and other topics.

**Author Summary:** Dr. Boswell speaks at numerous conferences. She has published on healthcare literacy, online teaching, mentoring, and research. She has been an educator for more than 10 years, working at multiple levels Dr. Boswell is a strong advocate for effective faculty and peer mentoring. She is currently on the faculty at the school of nursing at Texas Tech University HSC.

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**Professional Experience:** Ms. Ritchie is a retention counselor/nurse educator associate for Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Odessa, Texas and has been a vocational nursing instructor at a community college for 5 years prior to her current position. She has worked in a hospital setting for 10 plus years in various settings including oncology, and clinical management of a post surgical unit.

**Author Summary:** Ms. Ritchie is a retention counselor/nurse educator associate for Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Odessa, Texas and has been a vocational nursing instructor at a community college for 5 years prior to her current position.