Faculty and Staff Nurse Collaboration in the Clinical Learning Environment, Strategies for Improvement

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Background: The literature suggests that collaboration between academia and practice is a key component of successful clinical experiences and clinical education is an essential part of nursing education. It serves as the socialization process into the nursing profession and allows students to transfer knowledge learned in the classroom to a skill set in the clinical learning environment. Students have been interviewed extensively about their experiences in the clinical learning environment and barriers to learning have been documented. As nurse educators it is important to examine this literature in order to improve nursing education.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to examine the concept of collaboration between the staff nurses and nursing faculty members in the clinical learning environment. There are clear indicators of the benefits of collaboration and the positive impact this has on student learning. Unfortunately, gaps exist in the research to identify what is currently happening and ways to improve collaboration in the clinical learning environment.

Methods: Qualitative data was collected from 497 participants across the country as part of a larger study using an online Qualtrics survey. The participants answered a series of 24 Likert style questions and at the end of the survey was the open ended question "Is there anything else you can add to explain the relationship that exists between staff nurses and nursing faculty members in the clinical learning environment?" The information obtained from the participants ranged from one sentence to ten sentences describing the relationship and suggestions for improvement. The researcher performed content analysis using NVivo Pro 11. In order to be included in the study participants had to either currently work or have worked within the past year as a clinical educator or a staff nurse on a floor where nursing students are taught.

Results: The participants were broken into three groups: 1) staff nurses, 2) nursing faculty members, and 3) nurses who taught and practiced. There were responses from 143 staff nurses, 276 nursing faculty (240 full time and 36 clinical adjuncts) and 78 who worked in both academia and practice concurrently. The last group of 78 nurses were comprised of 56 full time staff nurses who also taught clinical as an adjunct, 5 full time faculty who also worked as per diem staff nurses and 17 nurses who held full time jobs in non-direct care nursing in addition to teaching clinicals.

Conclusion: Major themes that were identified and will be explored include expectations, coordination, communication, and courtesy. The results from this study support the notion that both academia and practice professionals wish to work together, but often have a different understanding of the other side. When discussing the concept of collaboration it is important to recognize there are multiple steps and processes that need to happen in order for true collaboration to be achieved. Both parties need to commit to work together. Although benefits of collaboration have been well validated, collaboration is still not practiced. Having one study that includes the perspective of both team members creates an open forum and supports the movement towards true collaboration in the clinical setting.
Keywords:
Clinical Education, Collaboration and Qualitative

References:


Abstract Summary:

The benefits of collaboration in the clinical setting between faculty members and staff nurses have been documented as essential in student learning, yet it is still not practiced. Qualitative data was collected from 497 participants which included both staff nurses and faculty members. Themes include coordination, communication, courtesy, and expectations.
1. Participant demographics (multi-site)
2. Themes (expectations, coordination, communication, and courtesy)
4. Conclusions from the study
   1. Take aways for educators and current clinicians
5. Implications
   1. Education
   2. Practice
   3. Research/Theory

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**Author Summary:** Dr. Katie Hooven's academic history includes graduating with her BSN, MBA, MSN, and PhD in Nursing Education. She has been a nurse for over 10 years and has been at The College of New Jersey for 5 years and is currently the Project Director for 2 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grants on her work with population health. She is also a co-investigator for a grant from Novo-Nordisk focusing on obesity in the Trenton schools.