

Innovative Use of Online Technology to Supplement Nursing Student Knowledge and Practice Readiness in Adult Critical Care

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Abstract

Background/Introduction

Novel clinical education delivery models are needed to prepare practice-ready graduate nurses. Online technology can support this goal when it allows for seamless transition into an employer's onboarding process.

Purpose

A large urban university nursing program, its academic health system, and a professional nursing association partnered to evaluate the use of supplemental online learning to facilitate student transition to professional practice in critical care. It was anticipated this would increase student knowledge and confidence, influence NCLEX-RN pass rates, serve as a bridge to improve orientation and increase professional nurse retention.

Methods or Processes/Procedures

Senior students in a capstone rotation were offered voluntary access to selected content from an online critical care orientation course developed by the association and used by the health system for critical care nurse onboarding. Students were also paired with nurse preceptors for clinical experiences. After consenting to participate, students completed pre and post-assessments to assess discrete variables, including critical care knowledge acquisition and self-confidence in specific behaviors, including the ability to: recognize changes in patient stability, advocate on patients' behalf, provide safe care, demonstrate caring practices, and integrate cultural differences.

Results

Thirty-seven students participated in the pilot; 26 accepted employment in the health system and remain employed. Retention will be measured longitudinally. Thirty-six students passed the NLCEX-RN on first attempt.

Limitations

Limited clinical placements for students in critical care settings and challenges to recruiting participants in year 2 in the face of transitioning to NGN-testing influence longitudinal assessments.

Conclusions/Implications for Practice

Participating students increased critical care knowledge, confidence in foundational behaviors and experienced higher first-time NLCEX-RN pass rates. The health system reported enhanced graduate transition into critical care practice and anticipated higher retention. The professional association identified a new way of contributing to practice readiness. Replicating the experience on a larger scale in other settings while continuing longitudinal evaluation of the pilot cohort is recommended.

Biography

Mary Hanson-Zalot is the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs overseeing curriculum development and assessment at Jefferson College of Nursing. She has 34 years of experience in teaching at undergraduate and graduate levels and has served in numerous administrative positions within nursing education. A former Fellow of the Leadership in Academic Nursing Programs of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, she has presented extensively nationally and internationally on topics pertaining to the influence of caring on student and client outcomes, student academic persistence, innovative curricular designs, teaching strategies, and learning assessment in higher education.

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