

Student Nurse Apprenticeship Program: Innovation in Clinical Education Models

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Abstract

Background/Introduction

In 2022, the Alabama Board of Nursing approved a student nurse apprentice program. This initiative provides nursing students opportunities to gain clinical experience while paired with registered nurses (RNs). The program is an innovative clinical teaching method involving a partnership between a nursing program and healthcare facility to create a learning environment where students can apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings while receiving progressive compensation for clinical time.

Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to describe the student nurse apprentice partnership between a baccalaureate nursing program and local healthcare facility where students entering their second semester of a five-semester program work with RNs to complete required clinical hours. The program is significant because it allows students to earn an income while completing program requirements, decreases placement requests for faculty, and improves students' content application.

Methods or Processes/Procedures

Students apply and interview through the hospital for the apprenticeship position at the end of first semester. The hospital selects student nurse apprentices based on availability of RN mentors. Clinical placement coordinators and course leaders work with RN mentors and conduct site visits to ensure students are meeting course objectives. Evaluations are completed by RN mentors and student nurse apprentices. Debriefing sessions are conducted by the hospital and nursing program to collect student feedback at midterm and end of term.

Results

Student nurse apprentice mean HESI scores have exceeded the class mean on three of four exams. Qualitatively, student nurse apprentice students report positive experiences and have provided objective examples of improved clinical judgment skills.

Limitations

NA

Conclusions/Implications for Practice

Collaboration with the state board of nursing and local hospitals is essential for development and success of apprentice programs. The program has potential to positively impact nursing's critical need for recruitment and retention of practice-ready nurses and can serve as a model for other programs.

Biography

Andrea Smith is an Assistant Clinical Professor in the faculty of nursing at Auburn University. She has been teaching in academia since 2019 and specializes in medical-surgical and cardiac nursing. Prior to entering academia, she was an Education Coordinator at Piedmont Columbus Regional Hospital where she was the coordinator of the Nurse Residency Program. Her experience in hospital education and nursing student transition into practice has led to her focus of clinical teaching and improving student experiences in the clinical setting.

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