

Innovative Academic-Practice Partnerships: Integrating Nursing Clinical Faculty into University-Based Student Health Care Centers

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INTRODUCTION

Background & Significance

Background: Graduate nursing faculty should maintain clinical practice to ensure relevancy in the classroom and align with the updated guidelines set forth by the AACN Essentials and the NTF Standards. University-based student health care centers (SHCC) experience soaring patient volume during Fall and Spring semesters with the influx of students, presenting challenges for the clinic to meet the needs of patients.

Significance: The National Task Force Standards for Quality Nurse Practitioner Education requires that policies and guidelines be established within an academic institution to support NP faculty in a practice setting.¹

Purpose

To highlight an innovative initiative to establish an academic-practice partnership (APP) within a university-based SHCC, opening the door to flexible and supportive work environments for clinical faculty, increasing provider availability for patients, and increasing DNP student preceptor availability.



SUBJECTS

Setting/Sample

University-Based Student Health Care Clinic at the University of Florida in Gainesville, FL.

One clinical nursing faculty initiated practice in Spring 2022. Data collection ran from Fall 2022 to Spring 2023 and included patient visits completed during this time. It accounted for 0.2 FTE of faculty effort.

METHODS

Design

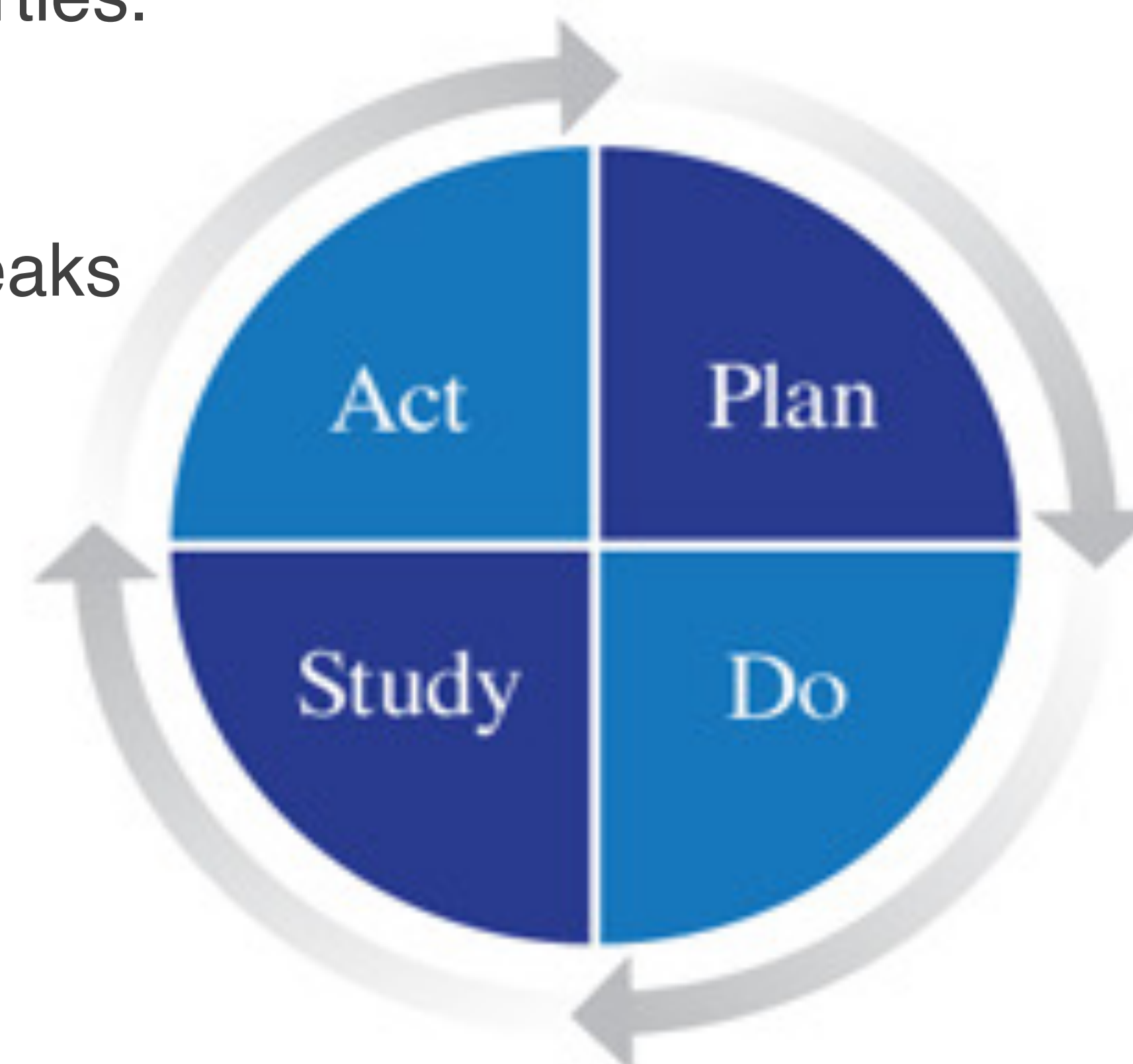
A continuous quality improvement approach (Plan-Do-Study-Act) was utilized to evaluate implementation of clinical faculty practice within a student health care clinic.

An AAP was formed between a college of nursing and university-based SHCC, initiated by clinical faculty. It was founded in line with the AACN-American Organization for Nursing Leadership task force guiding principles, including establishing a shared vision and expectations; mutual goals within designated time frames; frequent and meaningful engagement between those involved; and mutual investment and commitment.²

Two cycles were completed as of Spring 2023, and it is being continually refined to benefit both parties.

Changes made during cycles:

- No requirement during student breaks
- Opportunity to work a weekend shift for additional payment
- Requirement of call one night per semester
- Moving to a “shift” base approach in place of days/week to facilitate rescheduling days if needed



RESULTS

- A total of 452 patient visits were completed by the clinical faculty member during Fall 2022 and Spring 2023.
 - Focus is primarily urgent care type visits to reduce follow-up requirement outside of clinic day.
- After one year, a total of two clinical faculty have established practice within the clinic.
- To date, one DNP student has completed a clinical rotation in the clinic. More are scheduled for future semesters.



DISCUSSION

Implications for Practice

AAPs can be fostered to increase collaboration between colleges of nursing and university-based SHCCs. University-based SHCCs can offer supportive and flexible options to support faculty practice and increase DNP student preceptor availability. Integrating clinical nursing faculty into university-based SHCCs can increase provider availability and patients visits during semesters with higher demand, advancing innovative approaches to improve health care delivery and higher education.

Limitations

A nursing faculty shortage contributes to increased workload, which may limit the availability of faculty to practice. Not all academic institutions are associated with a student health care center, though alternative clinical environments should be considered.

