

# A Naturalistic Inquiry of Obstetrical Staff Nurses Experiences of Clinical Learning



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**April 11, 2011**

# The Clinical Learning Experience: Nursing Education



- Clinical learning historically/currently used & supported in nursing education (NCSB, 2005; AONE, 2004).
- All models of clinical learning rely in some manner on nurses working in the clinical workplace (Gaberson & Oermann, 2007).
- Staff nurses exert the greatest influence on the quality of the CLE & have a powerful influence in shaping students attitudes & behaviors (Charleston & Happell, 2005; Dun & Hansford, 1997; Peirce, 1991; Hand, 2006; Papp, et al., 2003; Palmer, et al., 2005).

# The Clinical Learning Experience: Nursing Practice



- **Growing shortage & widespread market demand for qualified RNs**
  - Project a deficit of more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  million RNs by the year 2025 (Buerhaus, Staiger, & Auerbach, 2009).
- **Increased enrollment in SONs creates the need for more nurses to work with students AND greater reliance on staff nurses for clinical learning.**

# The Clinical Learning Experience: Nursing Research



- Little knowledge available about staff nurses “unstructured” work with students.
  - **Brammer, J. (2006).** A phenomenographic study of registered nurses’ understanding of their role in student learning: An Australian perspective. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 43, 963 – 973.
  - **O’Callaghan, N., & Slevin, E. (2003).** An investigation of the lived experiences of registered nurses facilitating supernumerary nursing students. *Nurse Education Today*, 23, 123 – 130.
  - **Hathorn, D., Matchmes, K., & Tillman, K. (2009).** The lived experience of nurses working with student nurses in the clinical environment. *The Qualitative Report*, 14, 227 – 224.

# Definition of Terms



***Unstructured Work*** – A temporary student-staff nurse relationship that occurs when RNs have an assignment that involves work for a portion of one shift with a nursing student who is on the nursing unit for clinical learning with a university faculty member who is also present on the unit for the duration of the clinical learning experience.

\*\*The unstructured student-staff nurse relationship stands in stark contrast to the one-to-one student-preceptor relationship, which can last several weeks\*\*

# Study Purpose and Research Question



- **Study Purpose:**

- Understand staff nurses' unique experience of having undergraduate nursing students assigned to the nursing unit for clinical learning.

- **Research Question:**

- What is the experience of staff nurses in an obstetrical unit with undergraduate nursing students present on the unit for clinical learning?

# Naturalistic Inquiry



- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- This method allowed:
  - Each individual staff nurse's account of his/her experience of clinical learning, behavior choices, decisions, interpretations, & meaning to be heard
  - The accumulation of sufficient data to understand/explain staff nurses experiences.
  - For construction of a rich, in-depth, thick description of obstetrical staff nurses experiences with undergraduate nursing students

# Methodology



- **Study Design**

- Naturalistic Inquiry

- **Study Site and Setting**

- Family Birth Center located in Pacific Northwest region of U.S.

- **Sample**

- Baccalaureate prepared RNs employed on a FBC who worked in unstructured manner with undergraduate nursing students assigned to L&D or postpartum nursing units

- **Sample Size**

- N = 12

- **Sampling:**

- Purposeful & emergent
- Included convenience, maximum variation & snowball



# Methodology



- **Data Collection Instrument**
  - The researcher
- **Data Sources**
  - Semi-structured one-to-one interviews
  - Researcher's notes
  - Demographic information
- **Data Analysis**
  - Constant-comparative method
  - Inductive, interpretive, emergent, continuous
  - Proof-read, re-read, code, categorized, delineated properties/rules, name. subsume, subdivide
- **Data Management**
  - Manual
  - NVIVO 8

# Methodology



- **Reporting**

- A rich, detailed description of staff nurses experiences

- **Ethical Considerations**

- IRB approval
- Informed consent, signed
- Confidentiality of participants maintained

- **Trustworthiness (Truth)**

Credibility

- Prolonged engagement
- Persistent observation
- Peer debriefing

Dependability & Confirmability

- Audit Trail
- Auditing
- Peer Debriefing

Transferability

- Thick, detailed description
- Context described

# Study Findings- Themes



- **Giving and Receiving**

- Enjoyment , excitement, personally satisfying, rewarding
  - Giving back to profession, full fills personal obligation, professional responsibility
  - Play a role in preparation & retention of students by “giving a good start”
  - Students give back to nurses
  - Some nurses “run the other way”
  - Personal and workplace factors make work challenging/stressful
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- “95% of the time I feel very excited to be able to hang out with the students, but...sometimes if it’s my fourth 12 in a row & I’m tired, my knees & my back are aching & I’ve got lots of stuff going on its hard to give up energy to be with students just for the day... because I feel like I wouldn’t have enough energy to do a good job”

# Study Findings - Themes



- **Advancing Professionally and Personally**
  - CLE provides many opportunities for advancement
  - Some RNs not eligible to/voluntarily take advantage of advancement opportunities
  - Some nurses do not advance personally for their unstructured work
  - Nurses have differing views about receiving incentive/compensation
  - Lack of incentives suggested to have bearing on nurses attitudes
- “...you don’t get any pat on the back, you don’t get, you know, ‘good job, thanks for having a student today.’ You don’t get any of that stuff.”

# Study Findings - Themes



- **Balancing Act**

- RNs and patients with needs of academia
- Academic or student learning goals rarely considered when shift assignments are made; made as ‘afterthought’ or based on kinds of patient CN believed student would benefit from\*
- CNs do not increase RNs workload when they work with students
- Some RNs do not perceive change in workload when working with students.
- Students slow nurses down
- Presences of students on unit improves quality of nursing care
- RNs take measures to ensure patient/student safety
- Under certain circumstance the presence of students can be detrimental
- Some RNs have are concerned nursing license is “on the line”

# Study Findings - Themes



- **Past and Present**

- RNs have powerful and long lasting influence on students\*
- RNs influence students decisions to seek employment at clinical agency
- “As a student you go to different hospitals and you go to different units and you sort of get a flavor of what all the hospitals are about.....I had a couple of rotations...and I really liked the fell...I just felt they were well supported...thought they had a good philosophy and really did the things...so I ken where I kind of wanted to go there...”

# Study Findings - Themes



- **Getting to Know and Working with You**
  - Relationships between RNs, students & UCIs important
  - RNs take proactive approach to get to know/develop relationships with students/integrate into workplace
  - RNs work highly dependent on students year in school & experience
  - Student characteristics influence CLE
  - Being prepared\*
  - RNs have good relationships with UCIs.
  - UCIs visibility & interactions highly variable
  - RNs desire to work more closely/collaboratively with UCI as long as this does not slow RNs down

# Study Findings - Themes



- **Gender (may) Matter**
  - Some RNs find working with male students challenging, harder
  - Male nursing students on OB unit are a ‘harder sell” to patients
  - Male nursing students do not get the full OB experience
  - Some RNs did not allow gender to define the CLE
- [having a male student] does change the day a bit...but I try not to let that shadow what we’re doing because he’s there to learn....



## In Conclusion....



**The CLE is primarily a patient/work-centered process involving a nurse/student dyad that takes place in a clinical workplace environment to facilitate accomplishment of academic objectives.**

## In Conclusion....



- The purpose of this study was realized and reported as a thick, rich, detailed description of staff nurses unstructured experiences when undergraduate nursing students are present on the nursing unit for clinical learning.
- Findings can be used by clinical agencies and academia to better inform and prepare nurses for their unstructured work and by staff nurses to guide their work with students.

# Questions?

