Key Issue in Nursing Education

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Abstract

In healthcare comes nursing, with nursing comes intricate pieces to maintain safe quality care to the patient. Those pieces include skills, knowledge, and attitudes. In order to obtain skills, knowledge and attitude, the nurse must be educated upon these attributes. Going back to healthcare, healthcare participates in evidence based practice to provide the most up to date medical practices. Adhering to evidence base practice means there will be a never ending changing healthcare system. The changing healthcare system not only must learn the latest and greatest but educate those who are coming into healthcare or who are going through a healthcare program. New nurses and students need to feel confident in the skills, knowledge and attitude in which they are giving. Therefore, direct communication between the healthcare facility and the college or university offering the program can create a huge impact on the future of nursing. With rationales, avocation, and theoretical healthcare models the key issue of healthcare can be addressed.

Key Issue in Nursing Education

Nursing is the art of taking care of individuals who are in need of medical care through protection, support and enhancement (American Nurses Association, 2017). In healthcare, demands are ever growing in every direction. With nursing shortages increasing, nursing trends changing as education changes, the needs of employers changing, care models changing, the need to increase access to education for faculty and students increases (National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice, 2010). The purpose of this paper is to address the key issue in nursing education; aligning education with the nursing practice.

**Rationale of Issue**

In addressing aligning education with the nursing practice issue, some of the rationale to back this begins with the ever changing healthcare system. Healthcare takes on a practice to stay up to date. Up to date means a procedure such as a Foley catheter insertion may change as evidence based practice measures have researched and learned various issues with a Foley catheter. One issue which has been researched is how long a Foley can be inserted before infection rates increase. This is only one issue in the changing of healthcare. Other changing factors in healthcare can include Information Technology, and financial hardships which create healthcare systems to work in a more useful way (National AdvisoryCouncil on Nurse Education and Practice, 2010). Healthcare educators must be able to know of these changes and adapt to those who are being educated.

Educators can be the preceptor, the educator in orientation of a facility or a human resource advisor who is performing initial interviews. Educators are seeing new nurse graduates with decrease skills in Intravenous insertions, certain charting expectations, informatics technology and other useful skills which were needed to be performed during nursing school (National AdvisoryCouncil on Nurse Education and Practice, 2010). Research provides drastic inabilities of nursing students to perform basic nursing skills out of nursing school. This creates for a rationale to change how education must be aligned with nursing practice.

**Advocating for Change**

In an effort to provide a change in the key issue, effort and discussion of options for educators alike must be discussed. In order to find which issue is affecting facilities, surveys can be distributed to address issues. One issue may be the most important on the medical floor, however the survey may show a completely different issue in the emergency room. In one research survey, it listed having a lack in successful employment in long-term care facilities, skill sets were lacked in various ways, and the naïve-ness in community-based nursing and the services offered in this atmosphere (National AdvisoryCouncil on Nurse Education and Practice, 2010).

To correct these problems, improvement in communication through the college or university nursing programs with facilities in the area or clinical sites must improve. On the opposite side, the facilities accepting nursing students for clinical must communicate with the nursing program (National AdvisoryCouncil on Nurse Education and Practice, 2010). Facilities must be able to identify gaps in the skills which are lacking in new nurses.

Other options to align education with nursing practice is to look at continuing education efforts to the nursing student. Research shows a nurse with a baccalaureate degree in nursing (BSN) shows a decrease in mortality rates with patients. Research continues stating this is due to the BSN program providing a more critical thinking strategy then the Associates degree in nursing (ADN) (National AdvisoryCouncil on Nurse Education and Practice, 2010). Just recently West Shore Community College (WSCC) has partnered with Ferris State University (FSU) to offer students the chance to take courses within the college to prepare for the BSN at FSU (Boes, 2017). This form of a program is called an articulation program (National AdvisoryCouncil on Nurse Education and Practice, 2010). This program offers students to gain further education in the nursing program. Facilities in the area have partnered with colleges or universities offering tuition payed for free to the employee if they continue the education track to the BSN called a partnership (National AdvisoryCouncil on Nurse Education and Practice, 2010).

Recently at North Ottawa Community Hospital, the inter-disciplinary education program was initiated (Bruesch, 2016). This form of education provides a classroom setting with an educator. The classroom lasted 12 sessions, some being a half day and others a full day of education in the labor and delivery field. In an effort to educate new graduates better before ending orientation. The program was received and accepted well with the new graduate hires.

Lastly, in an effort to promote alignment in education, internships have been discussed and implemented. Larger facilities benefit with this strategy due to cost challenges. Facilities bring in new nursing students as an intern. Some internships last approximately one year, the student is aligned with a preceptor and works one on one with this person and the student is paid. This allows the student to gain better skills then what they would have received under a six or 12 week orientation program to be released to work independently (National AdvisoryCouncil on Nurse Education and Practice, 2010).

**Theories to Support Change**

In chapter 11 of Complexity Leadership, the subject of Self-Reflective Practices is discussed. In preparing to add a theory to support the alignment of education with nursing practice, the discussion of personal change needs to be addressed. To become a complexity leader, one must accept the transition of change not only in personal life but also in the professional life (Crowell, 2016). Taking on these exciting changes can be stressful unless the leader can find the balance within themselves and take control. Once this balance is achieved the complexity leadership will be obtained and succeed.

A conceptual theory to include in alignment of education in the nursing practice is emergence. Emergence is defined as “The process of manifesting new complex patterns, processes, and properties through mutuality, arising from system integration dependent on connectivity within the complex adaptive system” (Koithan, Bell, Niemeyer, & Pincus, 2012, p. 11).The new pattern is the changing of healthcare. The process is how the education is received of the change in healthcare, and properties would be the individuals who need the education such as the educators, students, new hires, and healthcare workers it may affect. Mutuality is the coming together and aligning all these entities to provide education to the complex adaptive system which is the facility, colleges and or universities.

Functionalism Theory believes everything is one item (Alderson, 1998). For example; a car needs gas and oil, therefore all three entities creates one. Aligning education with the nursing practice can relate to the Functionalism Theory. Utilizing the key issue, the rationale for change, and advocating for change the theory creates one. The one key issue, creates the promotion of; increased skills, knowledge and attitude of nurses new or old. This will provide safe quality care to the patient.

Conclusion

Aligning education to the nursing practice is a key issue in healthcare. Providing evidence based literature to accept this issue is discussed with rationale. It is noted new nursing students hire in with the lack of certain skills sets. Each institute across the country must perform surveys to distinguish the lack in nursing practice of the new student. Coordination with local colleges and universities can help decrease this educational issue. Utilizing the functionalism theory can provide safe quality care to the patient and provide a novice nurse to the facility.

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