

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



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# The Clinical Learning Experience: Nursing Education



- Clinical learning historically/currently used & supported in nursing education.
- All models of clinical learning rely in some manner on nurses working in the clinical workplace.
- Staff nurses exert the greatest influence on the quality of the CLE & have a powerful influence in shaping students attitudes & behaviors.

# 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\*\*

# Definition of Terms



## ***Clinical Learning Experience (CLE):***

**The interactive network of forces in the clinical environment that includes all that surrounds the student nurse such as the clinical setting, equipment, staff, patient's, nurse mentor, and nurse educator's who collectively influence student's clinical-learning outcomes (Dunn & Burnett, 1995; Papp, et al. 2003)**

## ***Experience:***

**The comprehensive combination of thoughts, attitudes, perceptions, and feelings associated with an event or activity, as reported by the individual who has the experience (B. Rodgers).**

# Definitions of Terms

## ***Learning.***

An active, personal process experienced by students which is supported and guided by university nursing faculty and staff nurses in order to bring about change in undergraduate nursing students capabilities, thinking and understanding of reality.

## ***Obstetrical Unit.***

Located in a hospital setting, the place where childbearing women, newborns, and their families receive nursing care prior to, during, and following childbirth.

# 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 FBC who worked in unstructured manner with 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\*

- **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\*

# 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 work 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

- **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



# Study Implications



- **Nursing Education**
- **Nursing Practice**
- **Nursing Research**

## 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?

