Looking beyond the traditional: Integrating a new curriculum design into an immersion practicum evaluation tool

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Abstract

Changes in health care delivery and recent reports from the Institute of Medicine (JoM, 2010) call for nurse educators to reconstruct the clinical experiences for nursing students for practice in the 21st century. Health care delivery continues to shift from the acute care to outpatient and transitional settings, therefore faculty must ensure that graduates are prepared to practice in these environments. In order to address these changes, the Jefferson College of Nursing at Thomas Jefferson University embarked on a mission to redesign their undergraduate curriculum. The new clinical courses, now referred to as Immersion Practicums, were designed to provide students the opportunity to provide care in more diverse community and transitional settings, as well as in acute care facilities. Since the immersions are different from the traditional clinical experiences faculty recognized the need to change the clinical evaluation tool. The purpose of this poster is to describe the process used to develop the immersion evaluation tool, the challenges faculty faced, and the lessons learned.

Process

A group of faculty met several times over a three month period to develop a feasible tool. Faculty performed a literature search to examine current practices in evaluating clinical performance and to discover tools and rubrics used in clinical evaluation today. The tool evaluates student performance as honors, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory in each of the immersion course objectives, which are categorized according to the four major themes of the curriculum and the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) core competencies. The new tool was presented to the general faculty for their vetting and feedback.

Literature Review

Clinical Performance

- Objective structured clinical evaluation (OSCE) tool: Instrument development study identifies adequate construct validity and reliability of the Honors OSCE tool in a sample of 365 basic science nursing students (Walsh et al., 2010).
- Web-based Practice Portfolio (WPP): Novel method for data analysis utilizing convenience samples comprised of nursing baccalaureate students and clinical faculty highlights issues related to transparency and translatability of a new pedagogy approach to clinical performance evaluation (Talamo, Reinhart, & Jackson, 2010).
- Clinical performance evaluation practices: Exploratory study survey results of 1,573 faculty in U.S. pre-licensure registered nurse programs primarily measure clinical competence through performance observation, level of student participation in clinical conferences, self-assessment scores, and OSCE evaluation (Deenihan et al., 2009).

Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Quality of Performance</th>
<th>Level of Assistance</th>
<th>Standard Procedure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honors</td>
<td>Professional/collaborative, demonstrates knowledge, evidence &amp; critical thinking skills, able to interpret data, utilize clinical reasoning</td>
<td>Rarely requires assistance</td>
<td>Self-assessment, peer-assessment, reflective practice, self-assessment, utilize clinical reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Professional/collaborative, demonstrate knowledge, evidence &amp; critical thinking skills, utilize clinical reasoning</td>
<td>Rarely requires assistance</td>
<td>Self-assessment, peer-assessment, reflective practice, self-assessment, utilize clinical reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Professional/collaborative, demonstrate knowledge, evidence &amp; critical thinking skills, utilize clinical reasoning</td>
<td>Rarely requires assistance</td>
<td>Self-assessment, peer-assessment, reflective practice, self-assessment, utilize clinical reasoning</td>
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Grading Scale

- Pass/Fail system (e.g., pass/fail, honors/pass/fail, or honors/high pass/pass/marginal pass/fail)
- Multi-institutional, cross-sectional study including 1,171 first and second-year medical students from 12-13 medical schools; survey analysis reveals that the utilization of a two-category pass/fail system impacts psychological stress to a lesser degree than compared to those students who utilize a three-category or greater pass/fail system (Davies, 2011).
- Two-group experimental study involving first- and second-year medical students attending University of California, San Diego; identifies through linear regression analysis that a change from utilization of a honors/pass/fail to a utilization of a two-category pass/fail system decreased academic performance (McDuff et al., 2014).
- Exploratory student survey results of 1,573 faculty in U.S. pre-licensure registered nurse programs primarily measure clinical competence through performance observation, level of student participation in clinical conferences, self-assessment scores, and OSCE evaluation (Deenihan et al., 2009).

Lessons Learned

- Subjectivity: there is no way to completely remove subjectivity from the clinical evaluation.
- Matching QSEN Core Competencies with course objectives and the curricular themes of population health, interprofessional collaboration, innovation, and practice excellence.
- Creating a tool that would be suitable for 7 week and 14 week immersions, and one that could be used for both formative and summative evaluations.
- Inclusion of a Mid-Immersion Remediation Tool for unsatisfactory performance.
- Immersion faculty development on the concept-based curriculum, the evaluation tool, the course objectives terminology, and the rubric criteria.
- The Immersion III course focuses on three different populations, obstetrics, pediatrics, and gerontology. Students will have experiences in all three areas with three different educators; all three educators will need access to the one form.
- Although there was a grading rubric, a defining statement for each objective was developed so that the immersion educators would know what behavior(s) indicated that a student had met an objective.

Next Steps

- The College of Nursing has formed an Evaluation Team to analyze the new curriculum, including this tool. Edits will be made based on feedback from the immersion educators, students and faculty.
- Continued faculty development on the use of the evaluation tool.

References