Quality and Safety Education for Clinical Nurse Leader Students
Sherry S. Webb, DNSc, NEA-BC, RN
University of Tennessee Health Science Center, College of Nursing
Veronica Engle, Leslie McKeon, Marie Gill, Lewis Perkins

Problem
Nursing education has been challenged to partner with health care organizations to design and evaluate innovative models for clinical education and practice that generate cost-effective quality and safety outcomes.

Evidence
The American Association of Colleges of Nursing has endorsed a new Master’s-prepared advanced generalist role, the Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL), which focuses on microsystem safety, error reduction, and quality improvement.

Strategy
The Dedicated Education Unit (DEU) is a patient unit microsystem developed for exemplar CNL teaching-learning through an academic-practice partnership of faculty and DEU management and staff nurses educated as Clinical Teachers.

Practice Change
Three acute care DEUs (one adult; two pediatric) were developed to provide positive CNL clinical learning by maximizing student learning outcomes, leveraging nursing faculty and front-line staff nurse clinician expertise, and supporting quality and safety competency achievement for optimal patient care outcomes.

Evaluation
Second-degree students (N=16) in our Master’s entry CNL program completed a questionnaire on the DEU strengths and weakness for clinical learning after their Adult Health or Acute Care courses. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were analyzed for major and minor themes, and verified for accuracy.

Results
The DEUs provided an optimal teaching-learning environment for CNL clinical education. Students had real-time learning, enhanced technical skill and clinical decision-making acquisition, greater independence, positive team experiences, and a microsystem view. They prioritized care, cared for multiple patients, and had strong relationships with Clinical Teachers and unit staff. Students were challenged to provide care without getting their assignment the night before, and wanted all students to have a DEU clinical experience.

Recommendations
The DEU for CNL clinical education should be expanded to other acute care units and different types of clinical settings. Ongoing Clinical Teacher development and faculty involvement is essential for sustaining the DEU.
Lessons Learned
The DEU requires a strong commitment by faculty and the DEU management and nursing staff. Frequent communication is critical for success.

Funding
Funded by the Methodist Healthcare Foundation.

Bibliography


