Simultaneous Multi-Patient Simulations to Reinforce Leadership Skills in Associate Degree Nursing Students

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Background:
After the last NCLEX-RN Test Plan in 2014, Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) programs saw a decline in scores nationwide. Based on past ADN NCLEX-RN test scores, there was a concern that ADN students are at a disadvantage in preparation for Leadership Skills such as time management, prioritization, and delegation. The Laredo Community College faculty addressed this concern with the Intermediate Medical-Surgical (second semester) clinical rotation by incorporating three different simultaneous multi-patient simulation days to replace clinical days. The simultaneous multi-patient simulation days were designed using current NLN simulation scenarios with changes to the scenarios to allow students to practice their physical skills, along with the clinical decision-making skills.

Objectives:
1. The student will be able to identify and prioritize client needs when caring for multiple clients.
2. The students will utilize the leadership skill of time management when caring for multiple clients.
3. The student will be able to identify and correctly delegate tasks when caring for multiple clients.
4. The student will increased knowledge and confidence in using the leadership skills of prioritization, time management, and delegation when caring for multiple clients.

Methods:
There were 51 second semester students enrolled in the clinical rotation. The students had two simulation days where each student was assigned as primary nurse to care for two clients with their own unfolding simulation scenario. The students received end-of-shift report at 0700 and were required to use time management to prioritize and provide care to the two clients throughout the 7-3 shift. The students in the role of primary nurse were required to complete assessments, vital signs, review lab and diagnostic reports, review prescribed medications, and prioritize care decisions. The last simulation was a three-patient simulation with a Charge Nurse (CN) responsible for a 9- patient unit, three primary nurses assigned three clients each, and an unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) to assist all three primary nurses. The students were assigned their role by a blind drawing. The CN and three primary nurses were given end-of-shift report at 0700 on each of the assigned three clients who had their own unfolding scenarios.

Evaluation Tool: A 10-question evaluation form with a 4-point Likert scale with 4 the highest score was used to determine individual student perceptions regarding their increase in knowledge of the Leadership skills of time management, prioritization, and delegation.

Limitations: The main limitation for the simultaneous multi-patient simulations was that only the 51 second semester students utilized them. The study would be more effective by utilizing it with the beginning incoming student cohort and continued through the student cohort’s four semesters with the scenarios having increased complexity each semester to lead to higher level clinical reasoning. The evaluation of the effectiveness of the simultaneous multi-patient simulations could be evaluated not just by a 10 question form to show student perceptions, but with the ATI Leadership scores. These scores could be compared to past cohorts who did not use simultaneous multi-patient simulations.

Conclusions:
The ADN students who participated in the two 2-patient and one 3-patient simultaneous simulations had to utilize time management, critical thinking, and clinical reasoning to recognize client changes, perform interventions based on their clinical decision-making which included prioritizing and delegating care. The evaluation questionnaire was based on a 4-point Likert scale with 4 the highest score. The 51 ADN students rated each question > or = 3.5, with the total overall average = 3.84. Some comments included: “It provided insight of what it will be like when we are working on the hospital unit.”; “It was very fast paced, but helpful to my learning of prioritizing, delegating, and critical thinking.”; “I learned what should and what should not be delegated to a UAP.”; “I learned how to prioritize care and how to handle 3 patients, 2 who were in critical condition.”

Implications to Nursing Practice:
The results obtained from this study illustrate that simultaneous multi-patient simulations have a positive impact for ADN students on the Leadership skills of time management, prioritization, and delegation. ADN students are able to assume the role of CN, primary nurse, or UAP, and use their clinical decision-making to learn time management when providing care for multiple clients throughout a shift. The students are able to use clinical reasoning to determine prioritization of nursing interventions and delegate care in a safe environment.

References
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