Think Positive! Examining the Transition to Academia from Clinical Nursing

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Introduction

- International nursing shortage affecting nursing education as well
- Many vacant nursing faculty positions being filled with clinical nurses lacking formal teaching preparation
- Over 1,000 vacant nursing faculty positions remain
- Thousands of qualified students turned away from nursing schools due to lack of faculty
- Stress of transitioning widely emphasized in the scientific literature
- Gap in the literature regarding positive aspects of the transition to nursing academia

Research Question

- How do full-time baccalaureate novice nurse educators, who have transitioned to full-time nurse educators in a baccalaureate program within the past three years from clinical practice, describe the positive experiences of their transition period?

Supporting Theories

- Mezirow’s Transformative Theory
- Transformative Theory as updated by Nohl
- Bridges’ Transition Model

Methods

- Basic qualitative study patterned after S. B. Merriam
- Sample consisted of eight nursing faculty members who could self-describe their personal positive transition experience
- Participants were employed full-time in baccalaureate programs for three years or less from transition
- Semi-structured interviews transcribed to increase validity and reliability of data

Findings

- Four common themes were revealed
  - Mentoring and support
    - Assisted professionalization to the nursing faculty role
  - Collaboration
    - Facilitated time management for the novice
  - Camaraderie
    - Enabled socialization to the nursing faculty role
  - Positive aspects of the nursing faculty role
    - Flexibility, independence, and giving back to the profession through teaching the next generation of nurses

Conclusion

- Theoretical underpinnings were supported through this research
- Research question was answered through the findings
- Implications from this research are applicable for clinical nurses moving into the academic role, for nursing education departments seeking positive environments, and for novice nurse educators who have successfully transitioned to the professional role and are seeking retention strategies for the academic position

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