

Identification of Health Education Competency In School Nurse Certification Programs: Multiple Case Study

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Research completed while doctoral student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

INTRODUCTION

- The purpose of this study was to explore and describe health education competency activities in both classroom and clinical settings within school nurse certification programs in Pennsylvania.
- Very little research exists on school nurses in general or examining school nurse as health educator.

STUDY AIMS

1. Identify gaps or needs in preparation of nurses for the role of health educator.
2. Describe strategies school nurse certification programs are using to prepare nurses for the role of health educator according to the ANA/NASN School Nursing Standards of Practice.

METHOD

Multiple Case Study


- Useful for areas with little evidence-based information or hard to objectively gather data.
- Single-unit of analysis: school nurse certification program.
- Multiple data sources: interviews, curriculum, course descriptions, assignments
- Replication logic: select cases that may predict similar results.
- Rich descriptive data: drive curricular revision, reveal gaps in academic-practice partnership.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- School nurse as an educator can have lasting effects but appear uncomfortable and unprepared in the classroom setting.
- Wide variety in state credentialing of school nurses results in inconsistencies of preparation for this specialized role.
- Addressing continuing education needs of school nurses is challenging.

RESULTS

Themes

- **Have a voice:** "I just think that the more we give them (school nurse certification students) information that they are a part of a school and need to be recognized...as a certified school nurse they are equal with the teacher...they do have a voice that will prepare them to be in that school setting."
 - **Know the law:** "The legal mandates course helps school nurses understand how the federal, state, local, and school administration rules and regulations impact their practice."
 - **Be an advocate:** "The school nurse needs to really advocate for him or herself, showing their importance and not just sit in their office. They also need to be a bigger advocate for the community in bringing programs, especially those in underserved populations."
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- **Be a leader:** Qualities of leadership are described in every interview, whether overtly or in reference to the school nurse's ability to educate, speak intelligently about the issues, advocate, communicate, etc.
 - **Lack of teaching experience:** "They need to do a needs assessment, create a lesson plan, be prepared to come across as professional."
 - **Collaboration:** "It's very important for them to be looked at as part of the team and not just an afterthought when there is an emergency."

IMPLICATIONS

- Leadership training and leadership succession planning.
- Mentorship, join professional organizations.
- Academic-practice partnerships to prevent gaps.
- Program development process: needs assessment, lesson planning, pedagogy, evaluation.
- Clearly understand school nursing laws & scope of practice.
- Curricular threads for role of health educator, leadership, culture, legal issues.
- Use of evidence-based information to support teaching & advocacy.
- Activities to grow comfort with 'having a voice'.
- Classroom and practicum teaching projects.

CONCLUSIONS

Course content and curricula may not be in step with current practice needs.

Physical assessment lacking and culture not overtly being addressed.

Certification program curricula, assignments teaching strategies, clinical experiences do support health education standard of practice.

Standardization of credentialing, school nurse perspective, & student health & academic outcomes related to specialized training versus none.

Conduct future research using the updated Framework for 21st Century School Nursing Practice.

GAPS

HEALTH
EDUCATOR?

FUTURE RESEARCH

REFERENCES

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