An Innovative Approach to Improve Nursing Skills Using Peer Mentoring

Why is this important?
- The time is right to implement changes to how skills are taught
- Less opportunity for working in clinical settings
- Procedural knowledge is acquired through practice
- Peer learning has been valued by all levels of education

What is your experience with using lab mentors?

- Exploratory research to uncover nursing students' experiences with peer mentoring
- Senior nursing students were paired with beginning nursing students for their first clinical experience
- The paired students provided nursing home residents with ADL care
- Mentee's reported increased confidence and feeling less anxious
- Correction by peers less intimidating than by instructor
- Mentors modeled hands on care and used a variety of teaching strategies
- Improved leadership skills
- Both mentors and mentees reported having positive experiences


- Identified skills most commonly used by new grads within first 6 months of practice
- Administration of meds
- Prevention of skin and wound care
- 3rd year nursing students had a skills tutorial session
- First 3 weeks, the teacher tutored the 1st year students
- After week 3 the practice sessions were linked with the 3rd year practice sessions
- Peer assessment was not part of this project
- 3rd year students were required to submit teaching plans regarding the skills for their peer learner
- Evaluation
  - Questionnaire (evaluate own learning, skills, and feedback)

**Goldsmith Results**

- Provided the opportunity for personal growth
  - 73.7% first years responded positively
  - 75.7% third years responded positively (lower response however)
- Enhanced learning
  - 70% first years responded positively
  - 80% third years responded positively
- Comfortable giving and receiving feedback
  - 81% first years responded positively
  - 89% third years responded positively
- Was satisfying
  - 74% first years responded positively
  - 84% third years responded positively
- Increased performance of skills
  - 75.2% first years responded positively
  - 97.4% third years responded positively
- Conducted over three semesters
- 179 first year students, 51 third year students
- Compared lab faculty only with faculty plus peer tutors groups in psychomotor skill acquisition
- Discussion
  - Found the use of peer tutors did not decrease anxiety in first year students
  - In a triad (tutor, tutee, and instructor) did alleviate levels of anxiety
  - Students who were being guided by the instructor felt they experienced greater gains in critical thinking and problem solving
  - Instructor was rated more favorably than the peer tutor on most items
  - Tutors consistently rated experience positively
  - Tutors felt their interpersonal communication skills were increased
- This study included only one nursing skill in the lab setting

- Qualitative study
- Students assigned to develop and facilitate a clinical scenario for a critically ill child
- Scenarios were 15-20 minutes which included debrief for entire team
- 24 students over 2 years
- One Student stated “I had to learn loads more than I would have done had I just taken part in the simulation”
- Small study
- Results demonstrate students developing scenarios support learning of student nurses
- Proactive learning
- Safe and nurturing environment

- Peer facilitated reflection each week for 15 weeks
- Mentees enjoyed the experience they valued a relaxed environment as well as the class support.
- Peer facilitators felt the mentees did not wait for the facilitator to complete the reflective cycle.
- Facilitators felt better prepared for future experiences and learning was relevant for the future.
## Results of Student Surveys

### Fall 2014-Spring 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Avg</th>
<th>Percent Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepared for clinical</td>
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<td>93.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommend</td>
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<td>100.0%</td>
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<td>Mentors were helpful</td>
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<td>Mentors were prepared</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors were knowledgeable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors put me at ease</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors explanations were clear</td>
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<td>81.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe during lab</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attend a student led lab vs study</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be a mentor</td>
<td>3.25</td>
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### Spring 2016

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Comments Fall 2014
- Too rushed, more time (frequent comment)
- They often made me feel like I was a child or stupid
- It helped when they had experience
- They know how it is to be in our shoes
- Gave me an opportunity to talk through complex concepts
- It’s great to know more experienced students so you can ask questions/get advice
- It was helpful to work with someone who has done it before; yet they are where we are...
- Good opportunity to ask questions about future semester, helpful to build those relationships because students seem more approachable
- Information was not always consistent between mentors and teacher
- Good for the most part, wish they collaborated more

Comments Spring 2016
- My mentor was amazing and went beyond just course material. She gave good advice for other classes and the program over all. I was motivated to do better to make her proud. I wish I had more time with mentors!
- Mentors were able to give simple explanations while providing examples. They also gave advice about other nursing classes and studying/testing strategies.
- They had the same perspective that we have. It was nice to hear and learn from their experiences.
- ...they’d just been in our position and knew what was important to focus on. They would also help prepare us for the next semester lab by telling us how what we were currently learning was a precursor to the next lab.
- The mentors helped to feel less nervous.
More Comments

> They know what kind of questions students have because they too.
> I was able to ask questions about their experiences since they had just been through this. They didn't know everything all the time, which put me more at ease when I came across something I didn't know; I didn't feel stupid because it is normal.
> They were empathetic when I vented about being nervous for clinicals or other things. They were great at explaining things and I really didn't feel embarrassed if I had a question that seemed stupid.
> They were able to give us insight about our current and near future clinical experiences. It also helped to learn from many different teaching styles.
> Gave me insight into coursework, schedules, and study techniques for this and future semesters.

Suggestions for improvement

> Some mentors freely gave answers before asking students to give more chances for independent learning.
> Maybe more time to practice some skills like using the pump machines; we only had a few minutes and it was rushed.
> More hands on. Teach the material, then put them through a simulation. I know your short on time that lab, so I felt we were always rushing to write down the answers that it took away from doing hand on work.

Why the improvement?

> Each week mentors were assigned readings about mentoring
> Completed a journal entry about aspects of mentoring
> Completed a journal entry about their mentoring experience
> Assigned 3-5 students to mentor for the entire semester
> Mentors given opportunity to design delivery of the lab information
> Mentors encouraged to discuss what was important to learn/understand
> Instructor learned to “let go” of some of the control
Barriers to Implementation

- Faculty cooperation—letting go
- It takes half the semester for the mentors to “catch the vision”
- Never enough time
- Mentees didn’t see faculty involvement
- Learning tools
  - Preparation work vs. in lab work
  - Student vs. teacher creation
- Leveling material across semesters

Mentor’s Comments

Mentors Perspective

What Worked For Us

- Met half an hour with the teachers and fellow mentors in order to review the concepts with each other and to clarify points about how the class would be taught that day.
- Able to understand the concept/task a lot better when I was able to research, come up with a plan and then teach it.
- We had specific students that were “ours.” This made it easier to develop a bond. I have a few that are still texting me with questions.
- Connecting with the students on a personal basis. I found that they trusted me more, they listened when I was presenting things, and they respected me as a mentor.
- Collaborating with the other mentors and the teachers to achieve the goals of what we had for the students.
Mentors Perspective
What Didn’t Work For Us

- Demonstration only
  - I hated just lecturing in front of the class. I don’t feel that they listen as well as smaller groups with hands on examples.
- Too much information in a short amount of time
- Teaching a concept did not understand
- It was hard to know what materials the class instructors were giving out to their students in order to prepare them for the lab. When the classes weren’t as prepared for lab, it felt like they weren’t getting as much out of the lab as those who were.

Mentors Perspective
What We Learned

- Increased understanding of subject
- Applying own learning principles to learning plan
- Forced to look at information from a different perspective
- Different methods to teach material which will help me in the future nursing jobs with educating my patients.
- If you have to teach the material you learn it better and are able to retain it longer.
- Working side by side with our instructors enabled us to ask questions freely and learn from our teachers in a very personal environment.
- Developing labs helped me learn to become a better communicator, instructor, and ultimately helped me to learn more about the subjects.

Mentoring and NCLEX preparation

- Many questions on the ATI exam were related to what I taught in the lab
- As I studied for boards I really tried to focus on basic med surg principles and we covered a lot of that content in the lab.
- There were concepts that we did in lab that I never would have remembered if I hadn’t had the “review” in lab.
- There are many questions which I don’t think I would have known had I not become a mentor.
- There were many subjects throughout the semester that I was able to learn much more about than I had with just classroom work.
ATI Results for 29 mentors

Comprehensive predictor
--- 11 below average
3rd semester test
--- 13 below average

Final comments by mentors

It did play a part in getting hired, I think. I put it on my resume and both interviewers commented on it and had me go more in depth about what I did. Both seemed impressed and talked about nurses being teachers.

Final comments by mentors

A mentor, like a nurse, must take on the role of a teacher and friend and must ultimately be a great communicator and be able to develop meaningful relationships with those that they are helping in order to be successful. Being a mentor really helped me to enhance these critical skills and overall has made me a better nurse.
Questions?
Suggestions?
Experiences you have had?