

# Introducing Senior Nursing Students to PeriOperative Nursing

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## Introduction

The nursing shortage in the US is well documented. It is especially challenging to staff operating rooms (ORs). Owing to this challenge is the fact that many traditional nursing programs fail to include perioperative (perio) nursing in their curriculum and their students lack substantial exposure to the perio clinical setting. In response to this shortage and after a request by a strategic clinical partner one Universities traditional undergraduate baccalaureate nursing program tailored a last semester clinical experience to highlight perio nursing as a clinical specialty.

The enhanced clinical immersion was initiated by a team that included the clinical partner and their perio educator along with two faculty from the University, one of which has extensive perio experience and earned the CNOR(E) credential and remains active in AORN. Other team members included carefully selected and experienced clinical preceptors.



## Methodology

- The Undergraduate Nursing program was asked by leadership of a clinical partner to build an enhanced perio clinical experience for last semester senior students with the hope of hire upon graduation
- Students were encouraged to volunteer to be placed in the OR to complete their last semester of clinical totaling 232 hours
- Clinical partner provided faculty with a brief list of skills they would like the students to master before coming to the OR setting
  - Surgical hand scrub
  - Gowning and gloving
  - Tying in surgical team members
- Faculty utilized materials in the AORNs *Colleges of Nursing Faculty Tool Kit* to build a day of orientation and hands on experience practicing the skills list requested by the clinical agency
- Faculty created resource folders for each student to include
  - AORN Positioning Pocket cards
  - AORN Skin Prep Pocket cards
  - AORN Guideline Quick Review
    - ~Surgical attire
    - ~Sterile Technique
- Faculty created a resource room for students to use to prepare for clinical assignments
  - Alexander's Care of the Patient in Surgery 17<sup>th</sup> ed.
  - AORN Guidelines for Perioperative Practice 2024
  - Print copies of AORN journal & OR TODAY
- Faculty sponsored each student by providing them with membership in AORN and accompanying them to local chapter meetings
- Students were matched with clinical preceptors & followed by faculty with perio experience

## Results

- Six students volunteered to participate in the enhanced perioperative clinical over the course of two semesters
- Two of the six students applied and were hired, accepting positions in the OR upon graduation

## Next Steps

- The undergraduate faculty partnered with the universities nurse anesthesia program to create collaborative learning experiences in the simulated OR
- Undergraduate perioperative students will audit nurse anesthesia classes in;
  - Airway management
  - Patient positioning
  - General anesthesia induction
  - Ultrasound basics for IV insertion
  - Peripheral nerve blocks
- Skills related to the role of circulating nurse will then be practiced alongside future nurse anesthesia providers
- The same two groups of learners will also participate in high acuity low occurrence events in the OR utilizing simulations developed by AORN
  - Malignant hyperthermia
  - Mass transfusion



## Conclusions

- The OR is a poorly understood and underused clinical site in most undergraduate nursing programs
- The efforts of a dedicated perioperative team can change that perception
- Collaborating with a nurse anesthesia program in a simulated OR environment provides both groups of learners a safe space to practice and master essential skills
- Successful completion of an enhanced perioperative clinical and eventual hire of graduate nurses can decrease the amount of time spent in orientation and thus decrease the cost of orientation
- The enhanced perioperative clinical has grown in interest. Among senior nursing students last semester, 32 out of 86 expressed a desire to participate.

## References

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