A Partnership to Enhance Community Health Education for RN to BSN Students.

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Abstract:
This article shares a unique model of collaboration between the college of nursing and a community business to offer an on-site occupational health clinical experience for RN to BSN students. This activity could be easily replicated by others to provide a learning opportunity for nursing students.

Hospitals remain the primary site of employment for nurses. However, with health care reform nurses are exploring many new opportunities including many settings in the community (Black, 2014). Incorporating community health into nursing curriculum is a necessity; however, providing meaningful clinical experiences can be a challenge for faculty. To meet students' learning needs, faculty must be open to developing innovative clinical opportunities (Ellenbecker, 2002). This article describes a unique partnership between faculty in a RN to BSN completion program and employees of a local UPS®. The partnership provided an opportunity for students to have a real on-site experience in health education for community members in a nontraditional clinical site. Faculty and employees of the UPS® center's health and safety committee worked together to plan a health fair for employees that took place at the workplace setting.

One of the goals in the 2014-2018 strategic plan of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is to "Advance the Health, Safety, and Well-Being of the American People" (HHS, n.d, p. 3). Strategies to promote prevention and wellness across the lifespan include educating individuals to adopt healthy lifestyles (HHS, n.d). This activity is just one example of how this can be accomplished.

Description of Project
Students participating in the project were enrolled in a required public health course. The course is comprised of a didactic and clinical component. As part of their clinical component students are required to rotate through various community agencies. This event served as one clinical experience for students. Faculty consulted with representatives from UPS® to identify health promotion topics that would be of interest to their employees. Once topics were established, faculty provided students a list of topics from which they could choose. Students were also given information about the population they would be teaching and the setting in which the health fair would occur. Students worked in groups to prepare a teaching plan that was submitted to a clinical faculty member for approval. The teaching plan included content, delivery method, visual aids, and handouts. Faculty was cognizant of the need for student safety in the community; therefore, students were cautioned about safety on the UPS® lot including such topics as parking and driving on the lot.

The cooperative effort was a big success for students. Faculty served as role-models for students who observed faculty interacting with others in the community and providing health education to a specific population in a non-traditional setting.

Future Plans
This demonstrated a successful way to provide a community experience for RN to BSN students, and also provided easy access to health promotion information for a specific population at the workplace setting. Faculty has plans to continue this activity in this setting and look for similar opportunities within the community. They also plan to capture the opportunity for evaluation of the experience from the students and participants' perspectives.

References

Thomson-Hood Veterans Center
A state owned long-term, 285 bed, nursing care facility for Kentucky's Veterans, in Ashland, Kentucky. Has immediate access for

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