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Background

On March 25, 2008, NCSBN held an invitational roundtable, which brought together leaders in education, practice and regulation to discuss how nursing can collaborate to innovatively enhance nursing education for the next generation of nurses. This meeting was facilitated

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Transition to Practice: Pregraduation Work-Based Summer Internships

Minnesota Nursing Internship Implementation Group

Development of a Pregraduation Work-Based Clinical Nursing Course in Minnesota

In Minnesota, educators, students and employers of nurses experienced uncertainty about what work a nursing student can perform during summer employment. In November 2002, this dilemma prompted the Minnesota affiliate of Colleagues in Caring to initiate a roundtable discussion with representatives from clinical agencies, nursing education programs and the Minnesota Board of Nursing. The objective of the discussion was to consider the legal and educational implications of nursing students in summer employment situations.



Representatives from the board of nursing informed participants that the Minnesota Nurse Practice Act exempts individuals who are students to practice professional nursing without a license only when they are enrolled in a formal course within a board of nursing approved program. In response to this information, a group of volunteers representing practice, education and regulation formed a Nursing Internship Implementation (NII) Group to develop a common clinical course for all schools to implement during the summer of 2003.

The Minnesota NII Group formed with the goal of moving away from outdated conceptions of education and training for the nursing student summer work experience. The Minnesota NII Group is a long-term partnership between service agencies, the state board of nursing and licensure-preparing professional nursing programs. The strengths of traditional professional nursing practice were incorporated and informed development, as did the nursing education tradition of theoretical understanding and rigorous questioning.

A criticism of a learning and assessment model for nursing education that is centered in the occupational setting is that competence is acquired in a mechanistic format. Professional roles are reduced to discrete abilities and therefore, the nursing students learn and are evaluated in a highly reductionist way (Ashworth and Saxton, 1990). Gonczi (1994) describes competence as being able to integrate abilities with professional judgments in varying contexts. Flanagan, Baldwin, and Clarke (2000) use the term "work-based" learning to describe a designated program of learning within an occupational setting where service and education collaborate to provide a clinical course for students occurring as they work within the service setting. The work-based clinical course must integrate occupational competencies with the formal teaching and evaluation that occurs within an academic nursing course.

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The Minnesota NII Group used research regarding the use of preceptors in nursing (Letizia and Jennrich, 1998), standards of professional practice and regulatory competencies to design a work-based learning experience that transcends the training and education dichotomy. This cooperative work-based learning approach allows education, regulation and service to assess nursing students for the acquisition and integration of knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills in the world of practice. The NII work-based learning approach includes attributes outlined by Foster (1996, as cited in Flanagan, Baldwin, and Clarke, 2000). The focus is on:

- Assignments emanating from the workplace;
- Engagement with complex work-based problems in management of care;
- Learners taking responsibility for ensuring their own learning in the work environment;
- Cooperation between people with different roles and expertise;
- Performance enhancement;
- New techniques or approaches, which create many opportunities for learning; and
- Reflection on specific areas of practice as to identify professional standards.

The Minnesota NII work-based clinical learning project provides clinical elective courses from each participating educational institution during a summer session. Students pay tuition for the course according to their school's requirements. The service agency makes the decision about allowing students to take the course within their agency and only at that point can students enroll in the course. Students are compensated by the agency while they are in the course. Educational institutions submit a list of the abilities for which a student has been evaluated thus far in the nursing curriculum. Students must be in good standing and have completed the junior year of a baccalaureate professional nursing program or the first two semesters of an associate degree professional nursing program.

Preceptors are chosen by the participating service institution and take part in an orientation session presented by agency education specialists and NII faculty participants. The course presenters outline the context for the Minnesota NII work-based experience in relation to the American Nurses Association scope and standards of nursing practice, code of ethics, social policy statement, National League for Nursing's *Essentials of Nursing Practice*, and American Association of Colleges of Nursing's *Essentials of Nursing Practice*. The focus of the experience is three-part: the cognitive, which is the application of knowledge through attention to critical thinking; the affective, which is the enhancement of self-confidence and self-efficacy; and

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Evidence-Based Regulatory Model
to Practice."

A form of pregraduation

the psychomotor, which includes practicing skills learned to date.

Within this orientation session, preceptors learn that their role is to facilitate attainment of students' objectives in the cognitive,

