Dedicated Education Units: A Partnership Model that Works

Susan Randles Moscato, EdD, RN
New Jersey Nursing Initiative
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Show of Hands
Presentation Overview

Overview of the DEU model

Research based findings

Effectiveness of the DEU model
Educational benefits of the DEU model

Getting started recommendations

Implementation essentials
What is a DEU?
What is a DEU?

A dedicated education unit (DEU) is a client unit developed into an optimal teaching/learning environment through the collaborative efforts of nurses, management, students and faculty.
# Impetus to Use the DEU Model

## Service
- Nursing shortage
- Retention and recruitment of nurses
- Management of increased need for student clinical placements
- Complex demands of practice

## Academe
- Faculty shortage
- Increased numbers of students
- Competition for clinical placement
- Calls for a change in nursing education
TRADITIONAL
Siloed education

Curriculum not connected to practice
Faculty member is a “guest” on the unit

Classroom learning
Clinical practice

Disorganized learning environment
Little individualized instruction and focus on the “tasks”

DEDICATED EDUCATION UNIT
Collaborative education

Curriculum aligned with practice
Academic–Clinical partnership

Classroom learning
Clinical practice

Higher quality education, better care
Optimal learning environment
Individualized instruction in “real nursing”
Commitment by all to collaborate to build an optimal learning environment
Key Features of the DEU

Exclusive use of the clinical unit by one School of Nursing

Use of staff nurses and clinical experts who want to teach as clinician instructors (CIs)

Preparation of CIs for their teaching role through purposeful and collaborative staff and faculty development activities
Key Features of the DEU

Faculty *work directly with clinician instructors* as 

coach 

collaborator 

teaching/learning resource
Faculty Works with Clinician Instructors

To develop clinical reasoning skills

To identify clinical expectations of students

To evaluate student achievement
Expert nurse with a desire to teach

Mentor and clinician instructor for 1-2 students

Assigned to the same students for the entire rotation*
Partnership Comes Alive in the DEU Concept

DEU Clinician Instructors and Students
Measuring DEU Effectiveness
Research Findings about the DEU Model

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Evaluating Innovations in Nursing grant
Academic faculty report higher work satisfaction and develop skills in collaboration, mentoring and coaching.
Increased enrollment & graduation rates

UP - Number of Student Enrollments and Graduates: 2005-2011
No negative impact on NCLEX-RN pass rate

Percent of University of Portland Students Who Passed First Time NCLEX-RN
Better Use of Existing Resources

UP – Average Number of Student Placements Per Unit in 2002 & 2006-2011
Clinician Instructors report higher work satisfaction stronger clinical skills “positive turnover”
Academic faculty and nurse teachers believe that DEU students learn a more realistic perspective of nursing and become stronger, more confident graduates.
DEU Partner Benefits

Academic faculty and clinician instructors are *enthusiastic* about their role in clinical education

They believe the DEU:

- Is important and contributes to the nursing profession
- Provides students with high quality clinical education
- Gives their work high visibility and recognition
DEU Expands Clinical Faculty Capacity

“In the traditional model, the faculty is incredibly stretched. The range in competency of the faculty varies—some are phenomenal and some are not. The DEU partnership between faculty and the nurse allows for the education team to have access to full knowledge of the environment.” (Administrator)
What students say about Traditional Clinical Education...
Waiting & Missed Opportunities
Traditional Clinical Education

Unclear Roles and Communication
Quality Varies

Nurses’ teaching experience
Faculty familiarity with unit routines
Faculty and unit staff relationships
Stressful Learning Situation

Hard to get help

All units are not friendly
Students report
Being welcomed as part of the unit
Learning the “work flow” of the unit
Working as part of the team
Increased learning opportunities
Clinical homework is more “meaningful”
Individualized instruction -- “can’t hide”
DEU Model Benefits Students

Students report

**Less stress** because roles and communication are clear

**Ability to practice** critical thinking, prioritizing, time management, and organizational skills
“When you are on a DEU, you get to learn from nurses who know the floor and the routines. When you are on traditional, our faculty didn’t know the floor and wasn’t always familiar with the routines. On a DEU, all that information and experience is at your fingertips. And you can ask all the questions you want because the CI is right there. She is not running off to help someone else.”

(Student)
DEU – the Dance of Component Parts…

Unit benefits
- Unit-based learning environment
- Shared enthusiasm for teaching
- Clear roles and expectations
- Broader use of faculty expertise

Student benefits
- Welcomed on the unit
- Individualized instruction
- Struggling students identified early
- Professionalism and team work skills
- Learn real nursing
- More learning opportunities

Academic faculty benefits
- Part of the unit
- Coach and mentor the nurse teacher
- Develop leadership and collaboration skills

Nurse teacher benefits
- Increased professionalism
- Maintains or gains clinical skills
- Increased work satisfaction
Application of Findings
What the DEU offers educationally ...
Educationally the DEU offers...

- Optimal Learning Environment
- Knowledge acquisition
- Unit Team Membership
- "Situated" Coaching
- Knowledge Use
“This is a teamwork model where the students get to have the same nurse teacher and get to grow and develop with the same person over time. But I think the best part, somebody really captured it really well last week, there isn’t a person on this unit that doesn’t recognize that we have students and look for opportunities to teach.” (Nurse Teacher)
“On the DEU, you had these sheets to fill out but I wasn’t stressed out to get it perfect. It was more like a reminder sheet to figure out what you need to learn. You can see the value of the information and can see how the labs related to the interventions. You also were more likely to remember what you learned.” (Student)
“Another thing about the DEU is that the nurse teacher wanted us to learn the “nursing perspective” and not just how to take intakes/outputs and doing bed baths. She said you are here to learn how to be a nurse. In the traditional unit, the instructor was very adamant about us doing the intakes/outputs, bed baths, making your beds. It was good starting out on the traditional unit and learning to do those things, but once I got on the DEU, I felt like I was in nursing school.”

(Student)
“On the DEU you could see how the different nurse teachers taught their students. They were very particular in how they tried to get to know how that student learned. My instructor was very good at trying to get to know how I wanted to learn. She was very good at knowing when I was comfortable doing something and, if I was comfortable, she would just watch me. I thought that was a really good way to handle it. She was actually concerned about the best way for me to learn.” (Student)
“My relationship with the student is definitely close on the DEU – it is more of a bond. The students are more of a part of the team. I wouldn’t even know the student’s name if they were with (faculty) instructor. They were more like passing through. But when they are on the DEU, they are more of a part of the team.” (DEU Nurse Teacher)
DEU “Getting Started” Activities
Evidence-based
DEU Implementation Essentials
Establish a strong academic-clinical partnership

Endorsement of the DEU model by senior leadership – at both the clinical partner and nurse education level

Assessment of “Readiness” – identification and addressing institutional factors that may influence the development or operation of their DEU
Sample “Readiness” Questions

Are there union scheduling and floating policies that will prevent coordination of the clinician instructors’ work schedule with their students’ rotation days?

Can the academic partner conduct regular orientations for the clinician instructors, provide faculty privileges for the clinician instructors, coordinate quality assurance for the project, and ensure the DEU complies with State Board of Nursing requirements?

Can the clinical partner release nurses to attend the DEU orientation, compensate the clinician instructors, collaborate with the nurse education program to maintain fidelity, and ensure the DEU complies with union and other organization policies?
Ensure a collaborative commitment to develop a DEU

Collaborations are built on –

Commitment to a shared vision

Written set of “Assumptions” that articulate common set of beliefs, agreements, expectations and tasks.
Sample Vision Statement and Assumption

The DEU is a client unit developed into an optimal teaching/learning environment through the collaborative effort of clinicians, management and faculty.

Assumptions -

The DEU provides an optimal environment for faculty and clinical and nursing staff to cultivate a mutual respect, develop partnerships and appreciate the skills each brings in educating students in the best possible way.

Only students from one school will be on a DEU at a time. The school of nursing faculty member will be called a clinical faculty coordinators (CFC) and will serve as a mentor/instructor coach for the clinician instructors and teachers on the unit. The CFC will not be expected to be on the unit at all times when students are there, but will be available electronically at all times.

Clinician instructors on the DEU will be prepared and supported in their teaching role by the academic partner.
Ensure a collaborative commitment to develop a DEU

Step #1
Select a high-quality unit or health-care setting with the following characteristics:

• Unit delivers exemplary care
• Staff work in effective teams
• Unit staff believe teaching is a high priority
• Unit has efficient management systems
DEU Implementation Essential

Ensure a collaborative commitment to develop a DEU

Step #2
Designate a DEU planning team

- Name academic and clinical coordinators
- Oversee “nuts and bolts” planning tasks
- Orchestrate “buy-in” events
- Reduce sources of stress
Ensure a collaborative commitment to develop a DEU

Step #3
Transform clinical faculty role

- role transition dialogue
- “Teach the Teacher” theory and practice
- Reframing clinical activities and work responsibilities
Ensure a collaborative commitment to develop a DEU

Step #4

Select & provide orientation for clinician instructors

• Nurse manager selects expert nurses who want to teach
• 6-8 hour orientation on academic campus*
DEU Implementation Essential

Ensure a collaborative commitment to develop a DEU

Step #5

Establish communication procedures
  Within the clinical education team
  With the nurse manager
  With students
Establish Quality Assurance Systems

Name DEU coordinator position

Embed internal evaluation systems

“Quarterly” meetings
Clinician instructor evaluations – students/faculty
DEU faculty meetings
Rounds – Daily rounds and “Grand” rounds
Available on DVD from the University of Portland:

**DEU Leadership & Innovation Symposium**

*Best Practices in Clinical Teaching*

*Managing the Difficult Student*

For more information on DEU “Portland Model” visit 
http://www.nursing.up.edu
Thank you!
Communities of Practice assume that:
- Knowledge acquisition happens within unfolding practice situations, not in memorization and recall of knowledge learned in the classroom.
- Experienced nurses make clinical judgments within a specific clinical situation.
- Clinical situations are unstructured and open-ended, so knowledge must be integrated and applied to a specific context rather than memorized.

**The DEU in Action as a Community of Practice**

The student experience on a DEU includes:
- Immersion in clinical settings so that students are able to experience workflow
- Learning how practice is organized
- Noting how experienced nurses work with patient trajectories
- Work from the beginning of clinical placements with nurses who are expert on a particular clinical unit/agency
- Treatment as members of the community of practice rather than as guests or even as intruders.

**Crucial Considerations in Creating a DEU as a Community of Practice**

- Give students real work that contributes to the clinical area from the beginning of their clinical experiences
- Assist students to learn how client trajectories influence care
- Encourage students to be aware of how work is organized and how a nurse functions as a member of a care team
- Work with students to learn to think-in-action rather than focus on tasks and memorization