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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore and interpret the part-time nursing faculty's perceptions of their need to learn pedagogical skills during their role transition experiences from an expert clinician identity to a clinical instructor identity while teaching at a rural 2-year institution (community college). A qualitative design with Moustaka's phenomenological methods approach was conducted with 3 nurses as they transitioned into their clinical instructor identities. Analysis of the data yielded 5 themes: (a) development of their clinical instructor identity; (b) perception of similar and different learning needs; (c) incentive and motivation to learn; (d) the necessity of prior and current nursing experience; and (e) the importance of other faculty and resources. Study results propose the use of Illeris' Transformative Learning and Identity theory as a framework for associate degree nursing program administrators to use in the development of successful part-time faculty orientation and professional development programs.

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Introduction

In the United States, prelicensure nursing programs are experiencing a significant shortage of faculty (Benner, Sutphen, Leonard, & Day, 2010; Davidson & Rourke, 2012; National League for Nursing [NLN], 2016; Schoening, 2013). According to the NLN (2016) Annual Survey of Schools of Nursing Academic Year 2013–2014, 25% of practical nursing/vocational nursing and 28% of associate degree nursing (ADN) programs reported that a lack of faculty was a main obstacle to expanding their program enrollment numbers in an attempt to decrease the United States nursing shortage. As a result, these nursing programs are increasing the use of part-time faculty, both as direct hires and by forming partnerships with health care facilities through which staff nurses serve as part-time clinical instructors to teach students in the laboratory and clinical settings (Hewitt & Lewallen, 2010; McDonald, 2010; Schoening, 2013).

Entering academia as a part-time nursing faculty member requires a major transition from the role of a clinician in nursing practice to the role of an educator in higher education (Davidson & Rourke, 2012; McDonald, 2010; Schoening, 2013). According to

Billings and Halstead (2016), the nurse educator role is a recognized role within the discipline of nursing which is distinct from clinical practice. In addition to being competent to practice in the clinical setting, the nurse educator's role requires specialized preparation, skills, and knowledge to prepare nursing students to practice safe quality patient care (Billings & Halstead, 2016).

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore part-time nursing faculty's perceptions of their learning needs during their role transition experiences from an expert clinician identity to a clinical instructor identity while teaching at a rural 2-year institution (community college). There is a dearth of research that explores part-time nursing faculty's role transition, especially at 2-year institutions in rural regions. Given the extensive competencies required to educate nursing students and the importance of professional identity development in a successful role transition process, further research is needed. This study analyzed experiences of part-time faculty at 2-year institutions within a rural region with the development of their nurse educator identities.

Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review was to ascertain what research existed relating to the learning, role transition, and identity development experiences of part-time nursing faculty in ADN

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programs. Most previous research on these topics has focused on full- and part-time faculty at 4-year institutions. A lack of research exists regarding the experiences of part-time faculty in 2-year ADN programs.

Several qualitative studies were conducted on the experiences of new faculty's role transitions from expert clinicians at bachelor of science degree in nursing (BSN) programs. The transitioning experience often produces stress and anxiety in new faculty. In addition, they must learn new knowledge, skills, and values to adequately socialize to their new role. A study of full-time nursing faculty at a BSN program completed by Schoening (2013) generated the nurse educator transition model. The model proposes that full-time nursing faculty's role transition experiences include feelings of anticipation, excitement, and role ambiguity; learning teaching skills and roles; and finally identity formation as an educator. Participants were self-directed in learning necessary skills, roles, and responsibilities related to their educator identity. Anderson (2009) had similar results, however, he found that the learning, role transition, and identity development process differed between full-time faculty because of past clinical and teaching experiences indicating transitioning is an individual process.

A study completed by Duphily (2011) identifies several themes suggesting a difficult transitioning for novice full-time nursing faculty at two ADN programs. A lack of education preparation, transitional stress and uncertainty, feelings of isolation, decreased job satisfaction, inconsistent support and lack of socialization, and difficulty establishing proper student–faculty relationships contributed to problems with nurses successfully transitioning to their full-time nursing faculty roles.

Research reveals the need for part-time clinical instructors at BSN programs to be oriented to the organization's faculty pay and benefits, resources, and meetings; clinical policies and procedures; curriculum content and objectives; simulation technology; and assessment and evaluation of student learning (Davidson & Rourke, 2012). Implementation of effective orientation and professional development programs can provide support and assist part-time faculty in developing their teaching abilities to promote effective student learning (Davidson & Rourke, 2012).

Besides the need for orientation and professional development, many studies support the need for mentorship by experienced faculty of all new part- and full-time nursing faculty for their successful transition to their teaching role (McDonald, 2010; Schoening, 2013; Weidman, 2013). Identifying nursing faculty learning needs is critical for the establishment of such programs. For ADN programs, mentorship and orientation of all faculty, part-, and full-time, is required according to the standard 2.8 set by the Accreditation of Commission for Education in Nursing (2017).

The diverse pedagogical skills required by all nurse educators in the academic setting have been defined by several professional nursing organizations and nursing program accrediting agencies. The *Scope and Standards of Practice for Academic Nurse Educators* (NLN, 2013) define eight core competencies that promote excellence in the nurse educator role that nurse educators must be held accountable to:

- (a) facilitate learning, (b) facilitate learner development and socialization, (c) use assessment and evaluation strategies, (d) participate in curriculum design and evaluation of program outcomes, (e) function as a change agent and leader, (f) pursue continuous quality improvement in the nurse educator role, (g) engage in scholarship, and (h) function within the educational environment (NLN, 2013).

In addition, the increased emphasis in health care on patient safety, quality care, and patient care outcomes led to the development of

the Institute of Medicine's (now known as the *Health and Medicine Division*) Five Core Competencies for health care professionals (Finkelman & Kenner, 2012). Attainment of these competencies along with the NLN Core Competencies and other pedagogical skills are critical for nurse educators so they can facilitate effective student learning. Nursing program outcomes should focus on production of graduates who can provide safe, high-quality patient care in a variety of health care settings. To teach curriculum focused on the NLN and Health and Medicine Division Core Competencies, all nursing faculty need professional development on curriculum concepts and interactive teaching strategies. Content based on the competencies include extensive updating of curriculum on how to provide patient-centered care, work on interprofessional teams, employ evidence-based practice, apply quality improvement, and utilize informatics in clinical practice and health care systems (Finkelman & Kenner, 2012).

Last, the student population and organizational environment of 2-year ADN programs are different when compared with 4-year institution nursing programs (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014; Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2011). Students at 2-year institutions are generally nontraditional and more diverse with multiple life experiences who struggle to fit required course work and activities into schedules constrained by family commitments, child-rearing responsibilities, and part- and full-time jobs (Cohen et al., 2014; Levin et al., 2011). In addition, students are generally less academically prepared to pursue a degree than students at 4-year institutions (Cohen et al., 2014; Levin et al., 2011). Levin et al. (2011) discovered that all part-time faculty at 2-year institutions generally are not offered the same opportunities for orientation and professional development as full-time faculty. Therefore, it is critical that all ADN program nursing faculty be educationally prepared to modify teaching strategies to facilitate effective learning in these diverse students with multifaceted roles. ADN programs must graduate students prepared to enter nursing practice able to provide safe quality patient care.

Theoretical Touchstone

Illeris' (2014) Transformative Learning and Identity theory was used as the theoretical touchstone for this study. Illeris (2014) defines *transformative learning* as learning that involves change in the identity of the learner. Identity is about being a person in the world, who one experiences being, and how one relates to and wants to be experienced by others (Illeris, 2014). Finally, establishment of one's identity involves the three dimensions of learning (content, incentive, and interaction) in society and depends on the learner's characteristics and present and past experiences (Illeris, 2014). This theory provided a touchstone for the study as it provides a context for critical factors relating to nurse educator identity transformation not previously studied in this population.

Methodology

The design for this study utilized phenomenological qualitative methods. Moustakas (1994) describes the aim of phenomenology as "...to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the individual descriptions, general or universal meanings are derived...essence and structure of the experience" (p. 13). The phenomenon in this study involved exploring the individual nursing faculty experiences as they transitioned from the expert clinician identity to the clinical instructor identity while teaching at a rural 2-year institution. Specifically, participants were asked to share what pedagogical skills and additional learning each faculty perceived was needed in order to be an effective clinical instructor.

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