

ABSTRACT: A LEARNING TOOL FOR NURSING: THE MULTIPLE STUDENT ASSIGNMENT METHOD

MARGUERITE E. SCHUMACHER

Chairman, Nursing Section

Red Deer College

Two major questions related to teaching in the clinical areas are recognized as fundamental to meaningful learning. The first, what is a satisfactory teacher : student ratio, and the second, how can the clinical resources be used effectively? In planning the curriculum, the faculty at Red Deer College felt a need to try out different approaches to teaching in the clinical areas.

The multiple student assignment method was selected as an approach for learning to nurse with patients. This meant that more than one student was assigned to one patient or a group of patients. Each student had a different role — participant, conferee, information gatherer, or observer — caring for the patient or patients as a team. All students rotated through the four roles cyclically, in the order described above.

Pre-clinical conferences were held to discuss the objectives for the day and students used this period to begin to prepare their written nursing care plans. Each team of students was instructed to meet mid-morning to pool their resources. Each instructor met with her total group of students (15) at the end of each clinical laboratory to discuss the learning experiences in relation to the objectives.

A study was designed which provided for a variety of multiple student assignment methods to be used in the clinical settings throughout the two-year programme. This study covered two classes which had completed the program and one which had completed half of it. Two hospitals were used for clinical experience, a 250-bed general hospital and a 100-bed long term care and convalescent auxiliary hospital.

The purposes for the study were identified as :

1. to determine the level of achievement of a student group in the clinical areas with the multiple student assignment method,

2. to establish how larger numbers of students could be enrolled without increasing the number of nurse-faculty members,
3. to determine whether large numbers of students could make use of existing clinical facilities with the multiple student assignment approach.

In order to test for relationships between student experience in the various roles and student achievement, the frequency with which each student was a participant, an observer, and information-gatherer was recorded for each course in nursing. The data were collected on role experiences in ten courses. Records of student grades in school tests for each of these courses were used as the measure of student performance.

The findings of the study revealed that there is a positive relationship between the frequency of assignment to each role and performance as measured by the grade achieved; experience in all three roles contributes to the knowledge necessary for achieving the objectives as measured by the test.


The study indicated that a higher ratio of students to instructors was possible using the multiple student assignment method for certain periods of the year. However, there was a need for added teacher assistance for a period of eight weeks in the first year when student practice focused on the development of manual skills.

—Marguerite E. Schumacher, *A Learning Tool for Nursing: Monograph I*, published by Red Deer College, Red Deer, Alberta, 1971.



Hommage de:

**la directrice et du personnel enseignant
de l'Ecole des sciences infirmières
de l'Université Laval
Québec**



**W. B. SAUNDERS COMPANY CANADA LIMITED
833 OXFORD STREET
TORONTO 18, ONTARIO**

NURSING CLINICS OF NORTH AMERICA

This journal especially for nurses is published four times a year, has a hard-back cover, and is illustrated. A convenient way to keep abreast with modern nursing problems and available only to subscribers for \$13.00 yearly. To students and teachers available for \$10.80 yearly.

**ROBINSON: PSYCHIATRIC NURSING
AS A HUMAN EXPERIENCE**

Realistic clinical situations dealt with on a one-to-one relationship of the nurse and the patient. Now available for \$8.25.

**LITWACK, et al: COUNSELING, EVALUATION
AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT
IN NURSING EDUCATION**

A practical guide, a reference or an adjunct text for teachers of nurses. Provides some of the answers to the who, what, when, how & why of criteria needed to evaluate the professional and personal growth of the nursing student. Available for \$11.35.