**The Decline of Hands-On Learning in Nursing Education**

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The significance of hands-on learning in nursing education cannot be overlooked. Considered the gold standard for skill development and student evaluation, the fundamental act of nursing a patient is essential (Bray & Østergaard, 2024). Limited opportunities to practice hands-on nursing skills have proven detrimental to nursing students, often leaving them feeling unprepared for clinical environments and the workforce (Marriott et al., 2024). As nursing education evolves, it becomes increasingly important to explore solutions that can bridge the gap in hands-on training.

**Statement of the Problem**

**Problem Overview**

Several factors have contributed to this reduction in hand-on experience, including limited access to clinical sites, unavailability of instructors during clinical placements, and a lack of faculty to facilitate practice environments (Dunker et al., 2024). Inadequately prepared nurses often struggle with clinical decision-making, communication, and bridging the gap between theory and practice (Sunah & Bokyoung, 2024). This lack of preparation is also linked to an increase in medical errors, which jeopardizes patient safety (Sunah & Bokyoung, 2024).

At the core of the problem is the lack of experience and practice in nursing real, live patients in healthcare settings. Students may not be able to perform a basic head to toe assessment because there is no one to demonstrate the process or supervise them as they perform it. Digital literacy also plays a role, as many students find that online learning does not align with their preferred learning styles (O’Conner, 2024). Given that today’s clinical environments already incorporate various digital tools, such electronic health records, prescribing systems, and telehealth, a more effective integration of these technologies could enhance hands-on learning opportunities (O’Connor, 2024).

**Objective Through Technology**

It is clear that clinical hands-on learning is irreplaceable in nursing education. However, the argument for supplementing hands-on learning with the integration of technology is powerful. By providing nursing students the opportunity to practice hands-on skills in a safe and supportive learning environment, we can increase their exposure to practical experiences (Bray & Østergaard, 2024). The goal is to enhance students’ confidence, competency, and critical thinking skills in relation to clinical practice, preparing them for success as new graduate nurses entering the workforce. Feedback on clinical skills would be incorporated through debriefing sessions, conducted both with peers and individually, facilitated by nursing educators. This allows educators to provide one-on-one feedback immediately after each skill demonstration, as well as offering a peer feedback option for students (Bray & Østergaard, 2024).

**Conclusion**

The nursing shortage is increasingly evident and presents a global challenge that will not be easily resolved (Dunker et al., 2024). To alleviate this strain on the healthcare system, it is essential to ensure that nursing students are adequately trained to assume the role of primary nurses, apply their knowledge to practice, and develop their careers (Bray & Østergaard, 2024). Nurses must remain adaptable, and by providing them with opportunities to practice their skills, we can help facilitate this adaptability. By investing in practical skill development, we can not only support the growth of confident and competent nurses, but also contribute to the overall resilience of the healthcare system.

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