Samantha Baggett

Self Reflection – Nursing Education

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The National League for Nursing’s mission statement is to promote excellence in nursing education to build a strong and diverse nursing workforce to advance the nation's health. This mission is guided by four dynamic and integrated core values that include: caring, integrity, diversity and excellence. (National League for Nursing, 2007). These values are the foundation of the NLN Competencies Model. I feel that I possess each of these qualities, which means I have a strong foundation to build upon.

A caring educator will characterize concern and consideration for the nursing profession as a whole with commitment to the common good of themselves and others (NLN, 2007). I feel that I could not care more about this field of study, my patients and the future of nursing. I want to give back to this profession that I am so passionate about by instilling knowledge into future nurses through education. Throughout my classroom, I will also teach my students to care for others through group work and community based assignments. Being back at Auburn University the past two weeks has been an overwhelming joy. Interacting with first semester to senior nursing students has taken me back in time to my days at Miller Hall. It is a joy to watch these future leaders, of our field, learn the skills, concepts and supported evidence behind techniques.

The educator will also display integrity through open-communication, ethical decision-making, and humility (NLN, 2007). As a nurse educator, I will follow the open-door policy that I have learned during my educational journey. It always meant so much to me to be able to feel comfortable making an office appointment, placing a phone call or emailing an instructor that I knew would be helpful, honest and encouraging. I plan to be open-minded, listen and learn from other peer educators for strategies to help students. Honesty will be a requirement in every aspect of my students learning processes. They will agree to and uphold academic honesty policies. Over the past two weeks, I have been able to communicate with many students. I have enjoyed answering their questions and truly relating to their concerns. It gives me great joy to feel like I am assisting them within their academic journeys.

The educator will be expected to embrace a culture of diversity with acceptance and respect and strive for excellence. Every student will be held to the same professional standard and be evaluated fairly with no influence from their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs or other ideologies. I have met many students who are all very different and approached me with various questions. I have felt I have adjusted well to meet each student where they are while relating to them enough to answer specific questions in a professional yet empathetically.

Excellence will include a commitment to growth, improvement and understanding in a culture where change is embraced and mediocrity is not tolerated (NLN, 2007) While educating others, I also plan will strive to stay current with the latest technology and evidence based practice. I plan to base all my teaching strategies on the latest research and proven best quality strategies to engage students in their learning. My students will be motivated to give one hundred percent effort in all assignments even when the tasks seem tough. During my very first lecture last week, I showed a video to students that motivated them as beginner learners to embrace each class and lab time to the fullest to reach their ultimate goal of becoming a competent nurse.

The foundation of caring, integrity, diversity and excellence all lead to the competencies for graduates of master’s programs. These competencies include: human flourishing, nursing judgment, professional identity and spirit of inquiry.

A nurse educator must function as a leader and change agent within their specialty area of practice to create systems that promote human flourishing (NLN, 2007). I will strive to motivate my students to reflect on what they already know through their personal experiences and educational background thus far. They will be encouraged through assurance that they have many qualities to present this field with before even being the education process. By motivating them with positive feedback in the beginning, I will promote a sense of confidence in hopes for students to set their goals high. All week I have motivated students during their lab times while performing hands-on learning styles. I have observed not only their skills improve but also their confidence and critical judgment improve.

Nursing judgment is a critical component of a nurse educator. An educator must make decisions reflecting scholarly current evidence while critically thinking about gaps in knowledge to formulate research questions. Critical thinking at a scholarly level develops overtime with practice. I am excited about learning more about formulating questions whose answers might improve practice and quality care. I am learning much from my preceptors at Auburn about the thought process behind each assignment or lab that benefits the students over the course of their curriculum. It has been as amazing experience already to hear their testimonies of implementation and revision of different theories and learning strategies to achieve the end result of producing high quality and competent nurses.

Throughout my educational training and clinical experience I will form a professional identity. While evaluating my past experiences, I will be able to present scenarios that will help my students relate to learning material. I can share my own personal and professional growth stories and how those circumstances have helped me to better myself as a nurse and advance my profession. I loved my first lecture last week and received some wonderful feedback from the students and faculty. I felt I used many different learning techniques to engage all learning styles and incorporated enough real-life personal experience to keep all students attentive.

Nurses need multiple ways of thinking, such as clinical reasoning and clinical imagination as well as critical, creative, scientific and formal critical reasoning. By clinical reasoning, we mean the ability to reason as a clinical situation changes, taking into account the context and concerns of the patient and family. AS nurses we must use clinical reasoning to capture patient trends. Nurse educators must develop ways to develop students’ clinical imagination and reasoning by asking what if questions about a patient or the family (Benner, 2010). I have seen this model the past two week while being a facilitator for Advance Mock Hospital. I truly got emotional during our first rotation because I was so proud of the knowledge foundation and critical reasoning that was demonstrated my each student. It was proof that Auburn University and Auburn University Montgomery are doing their part within their departments with their educators! I am proud to be a part of such an elite group!!

As educators, the future of nursing lies in our hands. We must embrace the challenge with every ounce of energy within us by using the latest technology and supported research to develop the best academic programs possible. The ending results of an outstanding academic program will be better overall health care and patient’s outcomes for our future. I feel that I am passionate about this field of study and will bring one hundred percent effort into my classroom to motivate my students to be the best nurses.

References

Benner, P., Sutphen, M., Leonard, V., & Day, L. (2010). *Educating nurses: A call for radical transformation.* Stanford, CA: Jossey-Bass: A Wiley Imprint.

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