

Shadowing of Nurse Leaders by Bachelor of Nursing Honours Students

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Introduction

Honours undergraduate Nursing students currently undertake two taught courses; Policy in Health Care and Management in Health Care; a 12,000 word Dissertation and are required to complete clinical consolidation.

Curriculum enhancement of the Management course was developed to ensure that the content engaged the interests of the students and facilitated its practical application.

The aim was to observe leadership in action. Specific learning outcomes were to: discuss leadership styles observed; appraise management styles observed; and the reasons for the impact of these styles; critically appraise strategic planning witnessed. Nurse Leaders in the NHS and Academia agreed to one day of shadowing by a student (no=11). Rules of engagement were agreed and student prepared in advance. Evaluation was through individual evaluation sheets and one focus group conducted with all students. Students identified a range of styles employed and identified that they were used for specific purposes. Students identified the unique skills Senior Nurses have in conducting meetings. Students observed strategic planning and learned a considerable amount from observing management at this level.



Management for Health Care course

Some course aims

merge relevant theory, research and practical application
 ... the use of information, leadership, motivation, decision-making, team building and negotiation to critically appraise factors affecting the delivery of health care.

Some detailed learning outcomes

Critically appraise theories of motivation, leadership, problem-solving and decision making;
 Analyse the process of negotiation
 Appraise the use of information in the planning, delivery and evaluation of health care.

The Purpose of Shadowing

Aim

To observe leadership in action

Learning Outcomes

Discuss leadership styles observed
 Appraise management styles observed
 Analyse reasons for the impact of these styles
 Critically appraise strategic planning witnessed

Methodology

Nurse Leaders in NHS and Academia agreed to one day of shadowing by one Honours student
 Rules of engagement agreed
 Preparation of students for the one day experience
 Individual evaluation by students
 Focus group with students



Results: Leadership Styles

Style Observed	No. of responses
Democratic	6
Laissez Faire	5
Autocratic	3
Authoritarian	3
Varied	1
Motivational	1
Delegation	1

Results: Management Styles

Style Observed	No. of responses
Democratic	6
Autocratic	3
Laissez Faire	3
Authoritarian	2

Other comments:

Good chairmanship was noted	4
Conflict resolution witnessed	1



Results: Impact of Style

Style adopted was:

to allow everyone present to contribute and so to achieve buy in from all
'needed everyone on board to make it work so there was more discussion'
 to draw from knowledge and skills of individuals to achieve outcome
 changed when not a productive discussion
'style changed to ensure discussion remained focused'

Strategic Planning

Enhanced understanding of health care planning
 Policies and protocols
 Decision making
 Action plans
'I saw how much planning it took to move the library....there were so many people involved that I did not expect e.g. accountants'

Additional Comments

'Overall, really good experience; very interesting and informative'
'Allowed me to process theories of leadership and management by observing them through practice'
'Saw the impact of legislation, strategic planning and leadership styles throughout the day'
'Got to see the different career paths can take with a nursing degree'
'I now realise how essential it is to be organised'

Results: Focus Group

There was consensus that it was a good experience. All observed a variety of events: educational meetings, policy meetings, public patient forum; conference calls; disciplinary meeting; staff short-listing for selection process.
 A few practical aspects could be improved.



Conclusions

This curriculum enhancement assisted Honours students making the link between theory and practice. Students analysed their observations and demonstrated insight into management and leadership in health care.