

2016

Development of a Guide to Successful Onboarding of New Nurse Graduates

Jacquelyn Estelle Young
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Health Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Jacquelyn Young

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Marisa Wilson, Committee Chairperson, Health Services Faculty
Dr. Murielle Beene, Committee Member, Health Services Faculty
Dr. Leslie Hussey, University Reviewer, Health Services Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2016

Abstract

Development of a Guide to Successful Onboarding of New Nurse Graduates

by

Jacquelyn E. Young

MSN, Walden University, 2012

BSN, Indiana Wesleyan, 2010

ADN, Campbellsville University, 2008

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Nursing Practice

Walden University

March 2016

Abstract

The literature indicates that serving as a preceptor for new nurse graduates can be challenging and stressful without proper training in this role. Many organizations appoint preceptors without providing training and support for the role, which negatively impacts both the new nurse and the preceptor. Evidence shows that a preceptor workshop can cultivate the knowledge and skills needed to train and precept new nurse graduates. Further, there is evidence that preceptorship programs ease new graduates' transition to practice, increase employee satisfaction, and improve the quality of care provided to clients. The purpose of this developmental project was to develop a preceptor workshop to prepare registered nurses to serve in the capacity of preceptors within a local agency to ease the transition for new nurse graduates into practice, increase employee satisfaction, increase retention rates, and promote higher quality of care within organizations. The preceptor workshop proposed in this project incorporates Watson's caring theory, Benner's novice-to-expert model, and Wright's domain-specific competency assessment model. These theoretical frameworks served to guide the curriculum and design of an eight-module workshop. This workshop will be shared with the partnering organization with the recommendation for implementation and evaluation within the next year. Development of an effective training program for preceptors will result in positive social change by improving outcomes for preceptors, preceptees, the organization, and the clients. Implementing this workshop will have a positive impact on the quality of care provided to clients within the organization by the affects on retention rates, satisfaction, and transition to practice.

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Dedication

I dedicate this preceptor workshop to the future success of my nursing students and registered nurses. Teaching in the academic setting has been a rewarding career, and I want to ensure that the transition to practice for students is smooth and successful. It is my desire that God will guide their hands and hearts as they impact communities across the world by providing caring, competent, and compassionate nursing care.

Acknowledgments

A simple thank you seems quite insufficient for the sacrifice made by so many to support me through this educational journey in my life. To my husband (Tyler), daughters (Kynleigh and Harper), parents, in-laws, other family, friends and colleagues ... thank you. Thank you for the continued support, love, kind words, encouragement, and prayers that sustained me through this challenging endeavor. I am forever grateful for your actions.

I would like to extend my gratitude to my committee members, Dr. Marisa Wilson, Dr. Murielle Beene, and Dr. Leslie Hussey, for their expertise, leadership, and support. Their guidance and encouragement were instrumental in the progression and completion of the *Development of a Guide to Successful Onboarding of New Nurse Graduates*.

Lastly, yet most importantly, I would like to give thanks to the Lord above for continuing to give me strength, wisdom, and guidance during this journey. I relied on scripture to help me through this uphill climb. "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10, NIV).

Table of Contents

Section 1: Nature of the Proposal	1
Introduction.....	1
Problem Statement	1
Purpose Statement and Project Objectives	2
Purpose Statement.....	2
Project Objectives	3
Significance and Relevance to Practice	3
Project Question.....	4
Significance of the Project	5
Reduction of Gaps.....	5
Implications for Social Change.....	6
Definitions of Terms	6
Assumptions and Limitations	7
Assumptions.....	7
Limitations	7
Summary	8
Section 2: Review of Scholarly Literature.....	9
Specific Literature.....	9
Preceptor Roles and Responsibilities.....	10
An Effective Preceptor.....	10
Preceptor Competency Levels	11

Professional Communication	12
Critical Thinking Skills.....	13
Organization and Time Management.....	13
Transition to Practice	14
General Literature	14
Background Literature	15
Conceptual Models and Theoretical Framework	16
Section 3: Methodology	18
Project Design.....	18
Course Objectives	18
Course Modules	19
Module 1: Preceptor’s Roles and Responsibilities	19
Module 2: Effective Preceptorship	19
Module 3: Nurse Competency Levels.....	20
Module 4: Professional and Interdisciplinary Communication	21
Module 5: Developing Critical Thinking Skills.....	22
Module 6: Tips for Organization	25
Module 7: Effective Time Management.....	27
Module 8: Transition to Practice.....	27
Module 9: Evaluation and Feedback.....	28
Method	29
Develop an Implementation Plan.....	29

Anticipated Population and Sampling	29
Data Collection	30
Instrument	31
Protection of Human Subjects	32
Data Analysis Plan	32
Develop an Evaluation Plan	33
Summary	36
Section 4: Findings, Discussion, and Implications	37
Summary of Findings	37
Discussion	39
Policy Impact	39
Clinical Practice	38
Research	39
Social Change	39
Project Strengths, Limitations, and Recommendations	39
Project Strengths	42
Project Limitations	43
Limitation Recommendations	44
Analysis of Self	44
Scholar	44
Practitioner	45
Project Developer	45

Project Contribution for Future Professional Development	45
Summary and Conclusions	46
Section 5: Scholarly Product.....	47
Introduction.....	47
Background.....	47
Proposal and Future Project Strengths	48
Recommendations for Future Project Study.....	48
Dissemination Plan	49
Poster Board Presentation.....	49
Publication Aspiration	48
Conclusion	49
References.....	52
Appendix A: Preceptor Workshop Curriculum	57
Appendix B: Postworkshop Short-Term Evaluation Survey	68
Appendix C: Structured Communication Tools	68

Section 1: Nature of the Proposal

Introduction

Within the supporting agency that is the focus of this project, nurse retention rates and satisfaction have become an issue. After speaking with the chief nursing officer and education director, I learned that the partnering facility had implemented an incentive program to onboard nurses and to reward their current staff for working extra shifts/overtime. Within a very short time frame, the organization lost several new and seasoned nurses, causing a major staffing shortage. Another major concern within the organization centered on effective mentoring and precepting while onboarding nurses. The partnering organization wanted a program to more effectively train preceptors to onboard nurses to impact satisfaction and retention rates. I have developed a scholarly evidence-based project to be implemented in the future that may increase employee satisfaction and retention rates within the organization.

Problem Statement

Nurse retention and employee satisfaction rates have drawn major attention from the administration within the partnering agency. The collaboration with the partnering organization focused on the significance of effective mentoring and training of new nurses in terms of outcomes such as retention rates and satisfaction. To ensure that new nurses receive proper training and mentoring, effective preceptor programs must be put into place. The development of this scholarly educational preceptor workshop is essential for nurse preceptors to gain the knowledge and skills needed to be effective in their role

when onboarding new nurse graduates as well as in order to increase satisfaction and retention rates.

It is vital that preceptors play a supportive role for new graduate nurses as they transition from the academic setting to the professional practice setting. Preceptors assume great responsibility when assisting new nurse graduates in acquiring basic nursing skills, department-specific skills, and understanding of facility policy and protocol. Without educational programs or modules, preceptors can be confused about their role(s) and responsibilities. The goal of this project was to determine whether evidence supported the development of a scholarly preceptor workshop curriculum to provide nurse preceptors with the knowledge and skills to be confident, competent, and comfortable in their role (Harrison-White & Simons, 2013). Such a workshop would ensure that preceptors receive proper training so that they are qualified and prepared for this challenging task (Robitaille, 2013).

Purpose Statement and Project Objectives

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this project was to develop an evidence-based scholarly preceptor workshop to be implemented in the partnering facility to prepare registered nurses to assume responsibility in the role of preceptor. The proposed preceptor workshop has been presented in a partnering organization for possible adoption. An effective preceptor is an individual who demonstrates knowledge, professionalism, and clinical proficiency and serves to ease the new nurse graduate's transition into the clinical environment from the academic setting. The preceptor workshop will assist preceptors in developing these

qualities and characteristics to ensure effective mentoring of new nurse graduates to improve the quality of patient care, meet organizational standards, and provide continuity of care in a cost-effective manner (Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges, 2003).

The workshop curriculum consists of 8 modules. The modules were designed to apprise preceptors of their roles and responsibilities in training new nurse graduates. Topics covered in this workshop curriculum include characteristics of an effective preceptor, Benner's novice-to-expert model, communication, critical thinking skills, organization, time management, and the transition from student to healthcare professional (Zahner, Tipple, Rather, & Schendzielos, 2009). Successful development of a preceptor workshop has been shown to increase nurse retention rates within organizations, improve job satisfaction levels, and, in return, lead to cost savings for organizations (Robitaille, 2013).

Project Objectives

The project objectives were to use evidence to do the following:

1. Describe the impact of preceptors within healthcare organizations.
2. Explore the significance of preceptor development for new nurse outcomes.
3. Identify important topics/concepts to include when developing the preceptor workshop.

Significance and Relevance to Practice

Precepting a new nurse graduate is a process that requires thoughtful planning and careful consideration. Grossman (2013) contended that as the health care system and

volatile economy continue to change, nurses need to have the skills and knowledge base to empower themselves. If this process of empowerment begins during an effective orientation when nurses are new to the profession, then nurses are embedded with this mind frame. Another topic of discussion in the literature was the significance of nurses being involved in assessments for change. Nurses should be involved in collaboration, planning, and decision-making processes to ensure that they continue to play a vital role regarding measures to maintain and sustain organizations (Grossman, 2013). Effective preceptorship processes have made positive contributions to the nursing profession by creating strong, supportive bonds between nurses. Strong bonds between nurses have promoted advocacy of the nursing profession and protected jobs (Grossman, 2013).

The relevance of this project to practice relates to nurse retention rates, job satisfaction, and quality of care. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN; 2014) reported that according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' employment projections, registered nurse is listed among the top occupations in terms of growth, with the number of registered nurses increasing from 2.71 million in 2012 to 3.24 million in 2022. Thus, demand for registered nurses is expected to increase 19%, with an estimated 525,000 new nurses entering the workforce. In 2008, AACN reported that 27% of new nurses leave their jobs within the first year of practice. Kovner et al. (2007) reported that 14% of new registered nurses change jobs at approximately 1 year of employment, and found that 37% voiced a desire to change occupations.

Increased RN job satisfaction and quality of care can be achieved through effective training by a preceptor. The preceptor offers ongoing support that leads to the

development of confidence and competence. For new nurses, having a support person to challenge critical thinking abilities, provide encouragement on difficult cases, offer information and resources as needed, and assist with overcoming dilemmas is crucial (Kingsnorth-Hinrichs, 2009).

Project Question

Will evidence support the development of a guide to the successful onboarding of new nurse graduates to increase preceptors' knowledge, skill level, and satisfaction?

Significance of the Project

The development of a preceptor workshop may assist with onboarding new nurse graduates by ensuring that preceptors are competent in performing their role. A preceptor workshop was developed to prepare registered nurses to serve as effective preceptors to new nurse graduates by developing specific qualities and characteristics to improve quality of care, assist in meeting organizational standards, and provide continuity of care in a cost-effective manner. For the organization, benefits of developing a successful orientation program for nurse preceptors may include increased retention rates, increased job satisfaction, and cost-saving measures (Robitaille, 2013). It is critical that preceptors receive proper training to ensure that they are qualified and prepared for the challenging task of precepting novice nurses (Robitaille, 2013).

Reduction of Gaps

Roth, Figueroa, and Swihart (2014) revealed that administrators, students, and new employees agree that there are gaps in processes for transitioning from the education setting to practice, as well as from the orientation realm to the practice setting. This gap is

evident in increased risk management tasks, decreased quality and safety outcomes, and increased cost associated with turnover rates for new nurse graduates. A redundant solution identified in the literature centers on support received through an organization's participation in coaching, precepting, and mentoring. This support should occur during orientations, preceptorships, residencies, and various internships within the organization (Roth et al., 2014). By increasing the amount of support, orientation, and mentoring that new nurse graduates receive, it may be possible to reduce gaps in healthcare, improving job satisfaction, nurse retention rates, and client outcomes.

Implications for Social Change

Positive outcomes are obtained when organizations spend time and resources to select and develop experienced and qualified individuals to participate in preceptorship programs. Investment in a preceptor workshop can lead to increases in quality, safety, job satisfaction, and employee retention among preceptors and preceptees. As the population continues to age and the need for nurses increases, it is essential that the availability of qualified, experienced, and effective preceptors continue to grow to meet the demand (Roth et al., 2014).

Definitions of Terms

Preceptor: A specialist who aids in the orientation, transition into practice, and competency development of a new nurse graduate, new employee, or individual transitioning into a new role (Roth et al., 2014).

Preceptee: An individual who enters into a preceptorship, usually a new hire, new graduate, or someone transitioning into a new role (Roth et al., 2014).

Preceptorship: A relationship that occurs between a preceptor and preceptee for a period of time that defines roles, responsibilities, expectations, and both individuals' scope of practice relative to the organization's standards (Roth et al., 2014).

Onboarding: The process whereby a new hire becomes knowledgeable and prepared to serve as a member of the organization, department, and/or team (Roth et al., 2014).

Orientation: A detailed process for introducing new hires to the work setting/organization. This process assesses the ability of the new employee to perform the basic job requirements set forth by the organization (Brixey & American Academy of Ambulatory Care, 2010).

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

In creating the precepting workshop, I made a few assumptions. *Assumptions* are statements that are often taken for granted or considered true without being scientifically tested (Grove, Burns, & Gray, 2013). These assumptions were the following:

1. The development of a guide to successful onboarding of new nurse graduates has been a positive experience and environment for both registered nurses and the partnering organization.
2. The curriculum within the guide to successful onboarding of new nurse graduates should be practical, increasing the competence and confidence of registered nurses serving in the role of preceptor.

Limitations

There are a few expected limitations within this study. Limitations are weaknesses that may decrease the generalizability of the outcomes. (Grove et al., 2013).

1. The curriculum development for this project may not be generalizable to other organizations.
2. The projected implementation and evaluation plan for this project may not be generalizable to other organizations.

Summary

This section has provided an introduction to the preceptor workshop with inclusion of the problem statement, purpose statement, project objectives, and project question. Explanations have been provided for the significance of this problem and how it relates to evidence-based practice and implications for social change in nursing practice. Assumptions and limitations of the project have been discussed. It has been my intention in this section to provide an overview of the evidence-based project.

Section 2: Review of Scholarly Literature

Specific Literature

Studies in the literature reveal the importance of formal preparation to prepare nurses to assume the preceptor role. One study (Schaubhut & Gentry, 2010) indicated that both the preceptor and new graduates believed that the preceptor was not adequately prepared for the role. A longitudinal study supported through positive evaluations that educational sessions had a positive impact on the preparation of nurses serving in the capacity of preceptor (Schaubhut & Gentry, 2010).

Another small pilot study (Zahner et al., 2009) was conducted to assess the feasibility of using an online continuing education course to increase knowledge and self-efficacy in nurse preceptors. The results revealed that the online continuing education course increased the knowledge of preceptors, and the delivery method was found to be satisfactory in that it was online, asynchronous, and self-paced (Zahner et al., 2009).

Haggerty, Holloway, and Wilson (2012) supported the significance of preceptor training for the outcomes of the preceptee as well as nursing practice. Prearranged selection of preceptors, proper education, role preparation, and resources had a positive impact on the development of confident and competent nurses who presented with strong critical thinking abilities. These factors supported a positive working and learning relationship between preceptor and preceptee that led to positive changes within their nursing practice.

A curriculum was selected for the course presented in this project based on previous studies and research supporting a deficiency in the following areas as well as the

impact on retention, employee satisfaction, and competency. Each module topic was explored in detail, and the decision to include each topic in the course was supported by previous research and literature.

Preceptor Roles and Responsibilities

Registered nurses who serve in the role of preceptor must be specialists in their field who will facilitate successful orientation, transition to practice, and role competency for new nurse graduates. Preceptors must be sufficiently competent and experienced to serve as role models and resource people for preceptees (Roth et al., 2014). Preceptors require special knowledge, skills, and attitudes; great experience; and a strong grasp of the nursing profession, along with the ability to think outside the box and not rely on analytical principles. Preceptors must be able to integrate theory and practice into their responses and actions. Conway-Klassen, Brennecke, Wiesner, and Spannaus-Martin (2012) supported the inclusion of the topic of preceptor roles and responsibilities into the curriculum of the preceptor workshop to ensure that preceptors understand the expectations of the position and are able to meet these demands to support clinical education. Module 1 in the course curriculum outlined the preceptor's role as it related to accurate communication, articulating clearly defined expectations and objectives, applying Benner's model (novice to expert), supporting new nurse graduates, building confidence, and verifying competency levels (Roth et al., 2014).

An Effective Preceptor

To be an effective preceptor, registered nurses must possess specific qualities or characteristics. Literature supports the assertion that preceptors should possess strong

communication skills, demonstrate a commitment to the assigned role, offer ongoing feedback to preceptees, verbalize positive and constructive feedback, and incorporate various learning strategies (Robitaille, 2013). Furthermore, the characteristics of an effective preceptor include a caring, supportive, patient, and encouraging attitude; self-confidence and self-assurance in relation to his or her own nursing knowledge base; ability to be a role model, with efficient time management and organizational skills; high standards and expectations for nursing practice and quality of care; respect and integrity for patients, colleagues, and self; encouragement of hands-on experience; and memory of what it is like to be a novice nurse (Flanders & Zwerneman, 2006). Module 2 in the course curriculum serves to explain, emphasize, and further develop these qualities in those individuals who assume the role of preceptor.

Preceptor Competency Levels

Benner developed a nursing model and applied it to levels of preceptor preparation, recognition, and certification. Benner's novice-to-expert model was mentioned in several studies and included in this curriculum based on the importance of understanding how preceptees will think and interact with clients based on their competency levels and years of experience. The inclusion of Benner's model also allows further discussion of ways that preceptors can assist students in clinical learning and application of theoretical knowledge to clinical situations (Schaubhut & Gentry, 2010). Benner's three dimensions of preceptor competency are advanced beginner, competent, and proficient. A preceptor in the *advanced beginner* phase generally has 1 to 2 years of experience; demonstrates acceptable performance under the supervision of an advanced

preceptor; is able to identify preceptees' performance strengths and concerns yet may have difficulty developing an action plan for correction; and views events as isolated occurrences instead of maintaining a comprehensive view. A *competent* preceptor, with 2 to 3 years of experience, has moved past the advanced beginner stage; views his or her actions in terms of long-range goals or plans; and begins to proactively intervene with preceptees without supervision. A *proficient* preceptor has progressed through the first two phases and generally has 3 to 5 years of experience; draws on experiences to determine outcomes and needed alterations; perceives precepting situations from a comprehensive viewpoint instead of as fragmented parts; and is viewed as an expert related to his or her experience while role modeling lifelong learning (Roth et al., 2014).

Professional Communication

There was support in the literature for the inclusion of professional communication in a training module for preceptors to assist them in the transition from a student role to a professional role and assuming the role as part of a healthcare team (Conway-Klaassen et al., 2012). A preceptor should maintain core competencies, including effective communication skills and open mindedness (Roth et al., 2014). In addition to strong communication skills, preceptors must possess conflict resolution abilities. It is essential for preceptors to communicate issues or concerns to new nurse graduates or preceptees. A case study was used to discuss the need for open communication and prevention of horizontal violence or demeaning communication (Schaubhut & Gentry, 2010).

Critical Thinking Skills

Inclusion, promotion, and development of critical thinking skills are essential components of the workshop curriculum. The role of a preceptor is to assist new nurse graduates in thinking through situations and scenarios to come up with means of resolution. It is necessary to motivate new nurse graduates to anticipate care or needed assessments, interventions, or evaluations. The promotion and development of critical thinking skills in new graduates are often achieved by asking questions such as *when*, *where*, *why*, *how*, and *who*. Reflective questioning after decision making allows new nurse graduates to review situations and decide whether there were better options to improve patient outcomes (Kingsnorth-Hinrichs, 2009). Another aspect of critical thinking is understanding that all patients with a given medical diagnosis may not respond to treatment modalities in the same way (Etheridge, 2007).

Organization and Time Management

New nurse graduates can quickly feel overwhelmed and struggle with their new professional role. It is imperative that preceptors help preceptees establish routines and become familiar with the organization's policies, procedures, and supplies. During this time, preceptors should urge new nurse graduates to be patient and spend time reflecting on situations. Preceptors should express the importance of placing safety over speed and encourage new nurse graduates to work diligently and prioritize patient needs (Nelson, 2010). Preceptors should encourage note taking during shift report and throughout the day to stay on track. Preceptors should counsel new nurse graduates to develop a routine

to maintain organization but be flexible enough to allow for emergencies or urgent situations that require prioritization (Nelson, 2010).

Transition to Practice

The preceptor workshop curriculum developed for this project was designed to train preceptors to onboard new nurse graduates effectively and ease their transition into the practice setting. This workshop assists with acquiring the needed skills, knowledge, and resource base to provide safe and competent care. Preceptors have assisted preceptees with managing the care of multiple clients, supervised the care they provide, and assisted with delegation, time management, prioritization, effective communication with the healthcare team, decision making, synthesizing data, and appropriately applying evidence-based research into practice (Stokowski, 2011).

General Literature

Preceptorship is not a new concept or term; it has appeared in literature since the late 1970s. However, preceptorship programs are no longer envisioned as a quick and easy process for onboarding new nurses. Nurses need time to develop within the preceptor role, along with adequate training and support. Research is currently suggesting that the preceptor role is stressful and that the current training process in many organizations is inadequate (Kelly & McAllister, 2013).

It is vital that preceptors play a supportive role for new graduate nurses as they transition from the academic setting to the professional practice setting. Preceptors assume great responsibility when assisting new nurse graduates in acquiring basic nursing skills, department-specific skills, and facility policy and protocol. Without

educational programs or modules, preceptors can be confused about their roles and responsibilities (Harrison-White & Simons, 2013).

Negative preceptorship experiences may involve poor role modeling, limited opportunities for learning, an unsupportive and possibly hostile environment, and inconsistency in care delivered to clients. Positive preceptorship experiences, on the other hand, can lead to reduced turnover rates and increased confidence, satisfaction, and consistency of care, as well as a supportive and positive environment with added opportunities for learning (Schaubhut & Gentry, 2010).

An effective preceptor workshop not only impacts preceptees, who receive more support, but also the registered nurses that have assumed the preceptor role. Literature indicates that benefits of being a preceptor include increased autonomy, increased peer respect, professional satisfaction, improved collegial relationships, career advancement, and professional development. However, it is necessary that the preceptor feel satisfied and valued, or precepting can lead to increased stress and strain due to an increased workload (Haggerty et al., 2012).

Background Literature

Throughout the literature, the terms *preceptor* and *mentor* may be used interchangeably; consequently, I used both terms in reviewing literature. The terms have similarities, yet there are some clear differences between them (Haggerty et al., 2013). Relationships that exist between two individuals in various settings that facilitate not only professional but also personal growth are known as *mentoring* (Haggerty et al., 2013). In

contrast, *preceptorship* is usually a short-term relationship that is demarcated within the clinical setting (Haggerty et al., 2013).

Haggerty et al. (2013) contended that the success of the preceptee often depends on the quality of precepting that he or she received. Furthermore, that effective preceptorship is strategic in improving retention rates of new graduates, improving new graduates' socialization skills through support, bridging the gap between theory and practice, and improving overall job satisfaction. On the contrary, inexperienced, unqualified, or disinterested preceptors can have a negative impact on new nurse graduates. Poor precepting practices can increase preceptees' frustration and stress levels.

Conceptual Models and Theoretical Framework

The guide to the successful onboarding of new nurse graduates that is presented in this project was founded on various models and frameworks, including Watson's theory of human caring, Benner's novice-to-expert model, and Wright's domain specific accountability-based competency assessment model.

Watson's theory of human caring is often used in nursing science, practice, and education as a theoretical framework or philosophy. Watson's theory of human caring encompasses acknowledgement of oneself and others while embracing a caring and healing process (Watson, 2011). Watson's theory of human caring was incorporated into the development of each module and the characteristics of each preceptor.

Also incorporated into the framework of this project was Benner's novice-to-expert model. This model represents the five stages that occur in career development for nurses: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert. As a nurse

progresses through the stages, the level of skill attainment increases. Nurses' capabilities reflect their stage in the model. One may thus assume that the more time an individual spends in nursing, the greater his or her skill level and the higher his or her stage in Benner's model will be (English, 1993). Roth et al. (2014) explained the relevance of Benner's model for preceptors. The five levels of Benner's model are categorized into three dimensions of change reflected in practice:

- Change 1: Allow preceptors to rely on past concrete experience for precepting instead of abstract concepts.
- Change 2: Shift preceptors' perception to view situations as a complete whole with certain elements that are relevant instead of as equally relevant parts.
- Change 3: Apply Benner's model to foster a shift from an observation role to active engagement. (Roth et al., 2014)

The final framework for the development of the workshop was Wright's domain-specific competency assessment model, which allows preceptors the ability to integrate three domains of skill to ensure that preceptees are successful in establishing competency. The three domains that preceptors assess are the following: (a) technical skills, cognitive skills, knowledge, psychomotor skills, and technical understanding; (b) effective use of interpersonal communication skills when collaborating with others; and (c) critical thinking ability (Roth et al., 2014).

Section 3: Methodology

Project Design

This purpose of the quality improvement project was to develop an evidence-based curriculum, along with an implementation and evaluation plan to pilot (*Precepting 101: A Guide to Successful Onboarding of New Nurse Graduates*) to support preceptors. I designed this curriculum to apprise preceptors of their roles and responsibilities while training and mentoring new nurse graduates. The following topics are covered in this module: characteristics of an effective preceptor, Benner's novice-to-expert model, communication, critical thinking skills, organization, time management, and transition from student to healthcare professional (Zahner et al., 2009).

Course Objectives

1. Delineate the role of the preceptor.
2. Identify characteristics of an effective preceptor.
3. Differentiate between the various levels of Benner's model from novice to expert.
4. Describe the importance of communication among health care professionals.
5. Examine strategies for developing critical thinking skills for new nurse graduates.
6. Identify methods for maintaining organization throughout the shift.
7. Examine strategies for improving time management skills.
8. Discuss challenges that come with transitioning from a student to a new nurse graduate.

Course Modules

Module 1: Preceptor's Roles and Responsibilities

This module defines *preceptor* and provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of a preceptor. Watson's caring theory has been incorporated into this module to emphasize that the preceptor's responsibility and role involves exhibiting caring behaviors toward coworkers, clients, and families. The preceptor must demonstrate caring behaviors and holistic actions to create an environment conducive to healing (Sitzman, 2007). Completion of this module should take approximately 45 minutes (Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015).

Preceptor's Roles and Responsibilities:

- Define *preceptor*.
- Examine the differences between a preceptor and a mentor.
- Functions of a preceptor.
- Responsibilities of a preceptor.
- Time commitment when precepting a new nurse graduate. (Zahner et al., 2009)

Module 2: Effective Preceptorship

This module identifies the characteristics of an effective preceptor to aid in the determination of suitable candidates for preceptors of new graduates. Watson's caring theory has been incorporated into this module to ensure that preceptors exhibit caring behaviors and provide holistic actions (Sitzman, 2007). Completion of this module

should take approximately 30 minutes (Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015).

Effective Preceptorship:

- Characteristics of an effective preceptor.
- Strategies for developing relationships with new nurse graduates.
- Discuss rationale for wanting to be a preceptor.
- Strategies for initiating and nurturing new nurse graduates. (Zahner et al., 2009)

Module 3: Nurse Competency Levels

This module emphasizes the various levels of competency from novice to expert so that preceptors understand and expect the level of competency of the new graduate (Benner, 1982). Wright's domain-specific competency assessment model has been incorporated into this module so that preceptors can assess new graduates' technical skills, cognitive skills, knowledge, psychomotor skills, and technical understanding (Roth et al., 2014). Completion of this module should take approximately 55 minutes (Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015).

Nurse Competency Levels:

- Assessing new nurse graduates' learning needs.
- Assessing new nurse graduates' level of practice.
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses in critical thinking and clinical skills.
- Identifying appropriate yet challenging learning opportunities for new nurse graduates.

- Evaluating new nurse graduates' performance level. (Zahner et al., 2009).

Module 4: Professional and Interdisciplinary Communication

This module addresses the importance of effective communication, collaboration, and conflict management for all preceptors. Wright's domain-specific competency assessment model has been incorporated into this module to emphasize effective use of interpersonal communication skills when collaborating with others (Roth et al., 2014). Completion of this module should take approximately 90 minutes (Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015).

Professional and Interdisciplinary Communication:

- Use of structured communication tools
 - SBAR tool supported and mandated by the Joint Commission's National Patient Safety Goals
 - S Situation (the problem)
 - B Background (data related to the problem)
 - A Assessment (assessment of the problem)
 - R Recommendation (addressing the problem; Clochesy, Dolansky, Hickman, Gittner, & Hickman, 2015).
 - Role play exercise: Nurses will call the healthcare provider to give an update using SBAR.
 - "Ask Me 3" tool to improve communication between the nurse and the patient.
 - 1. What is my main problem or issue?

- 2. What do I need to do?
- 3. Why is it important for me to do this? (Clochesy et al., 2015)
- Role play exercise: Nurses will use the “Ask Me 2” tool to communicate with a patient regarding an issue.

Module 5: Developing Critical Thinking Skills

This module involves examining strategies for developing critical thinking skills for new nurse graduates. This module also focuses on prioritization. Benner’s model has been incorporated into this module to emphasize the new graduate’s level of experience related to critical thinking, which should be expected at a novice to advanced beginner level. Wright’s domain-specific competency assessment model has been incorporated into this module to focus on improving and developing critical thinking ability in new nurse graduates (Roth et al., 2014). Completion of this module should take approximately 55 minutes (Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015).

Developing Critical Thinking Skills:

- Definition and introduction to critical thinking
 - Discuss various definitions of critical thinking
- Importance of critical thinking in nursing
 - Nurses must be able to learn facts and procedures as well as be able to apply them to unique patient situations.
 - Do not be a superficial thinker. Do not memorize information; devote time to applying knowledge to situations to think on a deeper level. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012)

- Clinical judgments
 - Perceptual judgments
 - Involve collecting and validating data within a specific situation
 - Inferential judgements
 - Determine significant data, eliminate insignificant data, and identify relationships in the data collected
 - Diagnostic judgments
 - Linking clusters of data with patterns of specific nursing diagnoses.
(Nugent & Vitale, 2012)
- Levels of critical thinking
 - Basic thinker
 - Builds from a novice database of knowledge and experience
 - Complex thinker
 - Explores options based on patterns and an understanding of commonalities and differences. Can identify cues, cluster data, choose appropriate actions, and evaluate responses.
 - Expert thinker
 - Develops reasoning based on patterns, standards, or models to understand the uniqueness of each situation. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012)
- Strategies to promote critical thinking
 - Use a method to organize information
 - Validate information

- Establish assumptions
- Identify patterns of responses
- Identify gaps in information
- Set priorities (Maslow's hierarchy of needs)
- Formulate goals
- Evaluate actions and outcomes (Nugent & Vitale, 2012)
- Critical thinking application activity
 - Thinking aloud
 - A proficient critical thinker is able to verbalize thought processes and rationales. Verbalizing processes helps to solidify thinking. Thinking aloud can be used while engaged in an activity or during reflection time afterward (Nugent & Vitale, 2012). Think of a situation and difficult process that you went through recently. Review the process and rationale for actions verbally with a partner. Were you able to learn by reviewing your performance in that situation?
- Set priorities
 - Pressing/important tasks
 - Nonpressing/important tasks
 - Pressing/nonimportant tasks
 - Nonpressing/nonimportant tasks (Nugent & Vitale, 2012)

Module 6: Tips for Organization

This module identifies methods and tips for maintaining organization throughout the shift. Often, new graduates struggle to keep up with the demanding pace of busy units, and staying organized is essential. Completion of this module should take approximately 30 minutes.

Tips for Organization:

- Get organized
 - Create a daily calendar to organize your activities so that you can achieve daily goals.
 - Organize your thoughts to help reduce anxiety. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012)
- Develop self-discipline
 - Set goals and priorities for each day.
 - Establish firm boundaries when things must be done.
 - Recognize when you can be flexible and when you must stick to your daily plan. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012)
- Learn to say “no”
 - When saying “no” to someone, ask yourself the following questions:
 - Is this task consistent with my goal or priority?
 - Is this something that I must do?
 - Is this something that I really want to do?
 - Is this something that I do not want to do?
 - Is this person able to do the task without me?

- Is there someone else that can help with this task? (Nugent & Vitale, 2012)
- Avoid time traps
 - Avoid unwanted phone calls (small talk).
 - Conclude long-winded conversations that are not going anywhere.
 - Redirect long responses to open-ended questions that are not necessary for providing quality care.
 - Avoid excessive socializing with patients and families.
 - Avoid assuming the role of a counselor meeting emotional needs (use resource personnel within the organization). (Nugent & Vitale, 2012)
- Motivate yourself
 - Focus on gaining internal motivation by learning something new, achieving a goal, and excelling at a skill or performance of a procedure.
 - Visual attaining future goals (personally and professionally). (Nugent & Vitale, 2012)
- Delegate
 - Identify person to whom you may delegate appropriately.
 - Explain the anticipated outcome to be achieved.
 - Discuss any necessary resources to accomplish the task.
 - Relinquish accountability for the task being delegated. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012)
- Overcome procrastination

- Do not delay tasks.
- Change your mindset from completing chores to accomplishing tasks to reach the goal of being a competent, successful, and efficient nurse.
- Identify what you are putting off; challenge the procrastination with positive thoughts; justify why this task is necessary to complete now.

(Nugent & Vitale, 2012)

Module 7: Effective Time Management

This module examines strategies for improving time management skills for new graduates. Completion of this module should take approximately 30 minutes (Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015).

Effective Time Management:

- Time management equals self-management
 - How you use your time reflects how successfully you manage efforts to meet your goals.
- Reflect on barriers to productivity
 - Consider internal and external factors that can affect productivity.
- Develop a corrective action plan to maximize your productivity during the day. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012)

Module 8: Transition to Practice

This module addresses the challenges in transitioning from a student to a healthcare professional and presents tips for preceptors to aid in easing that transition.

Benner's model has been incorporated into this module to ensure that preceptors are

aware of the various levels of proficiency in performance. This is to acknowledge that most new graduates enter the practice arena at the novice level, meaning that they have no experience in the tasks that they are expected to perform (Benner, 1982). Completion of this module should take approximately 50 minutes (Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015).

Transition to Practice:

- New nurse graduates are excited and eager to learn; however, they are easily overwhelmed with time management, interruptions, and increased stimulation from within the department.
- New nurse graduates are not attuned to subtle change in patients or critical thinking.
- Preceptors must set simple goals that can be met quickly to build confidence.
- Preceptors should encourage “baby steps” toward a larger goal to promote success and confidence.
- Preceptors must continually provide support, real-time feedback, and positive affirmation. (Kingsnorth-Hinrichs, 2009)

Module 9: Evaluation and Feedback

Each preceptor will need to complete an evaluation survey through Survey Monkey upon the conclusion of all educational modules. This evaluation will provide feedback and suggestions for improvement for future updates. The evaluation survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Method

The literature review and search for evidence-based literature was conducted electronically through online journals and articles. Multiple searches were conducted through Walden University's Library by exploring several nursing and health related databases which include: CINAHL, Cochrane, Medline, ProQuest, in addition to, articles from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). To ensure current information was used in the project, articles were chosen that were ten years old or less. However, selected articles that supported the theoretical framework and important concepts of the developmental proposal were used that were older than ten years. In most cases, multiple articles were used to support terms and the workshop curriculum content. The specific terms that were used for the search were: *preceptorship, preceptor characteristics, precepting workshops and preceptorship programs for preceptors*. In addition to the literature review, all required forms have been submitted to Walden University's Institution Review Board (IRB) for approval prior to curriculum development of the precepting workshop. Once approval from the IRB was granted, the project moved to the collaborating phase to focus on the anticipated implementation and evaluation plan for the supporting organization.

Develop an Implementation Plan

Development of the implementation plan has occurred with collaboration from the supporting organization including the quality director, chief nurse officer, education director, and orientation coordinator. The following serves as a tentative plan for implementation and as a beginning point for discussion with the stakeholders from the

supporting organization. The organization has expressed interest in the need to improve their process-training preceptors to ease the transition for new nurse graduates, increase job satisfaction, and improve nurse retention rates. Within the organization, the stakeholders have been meeting resistance when recruiting nurses to preceptor new nurses and students. Collaborating with stakeholders to develop an implementation plan assisted with meeting the needs of the organization.

Anticipated Population and Sampling

The proposed supporting organization's anticipated total population of the study should include registered nurses within the small, rural, level III trauma center in central Kentucky. It is anticipated that convenience sampling would include all registered nurses that completed the precepting workshop and evaluation survey. It is anticipated that the supporting organization will want to use nonprobability sampling in this study. Inclusion data in this project would be registered nurses who completed the precepting workshop and survey and exclusion criteria would be registered nurses who did not consent to participate in the study.

Data Collection

When future implementation occurs, further collaboration will occur to determine the best data collection method. For evaluation purposes, the organization will either use a pre-developed evaluation survey or develop and validate their own to best meet the needs within the organization. The recommendation will be made to conduct evaluation immediately following the workshop to assess the effectiveness and that it be an online electronic survey to better maintain confidentiality. It was discussed that all preceptors

would receive an email notification about the study, which will include a letter of introduction, an invitation to participate, the date, time, and location of the preceptor workshop and a link to access the online survey from their electronic work email. The letter of introduction will include: consent for participation, eligibility criteria, risks, benefits, confidentiality, anonymity, and investigator contact information (Rush et al., 2014).

Each registered nurse will be recruited to participate in the study by sending an invitation through the organization's email system. The email will serve as a recruitment tool to provide information on the purpose of the workshop and survey, how the workshop and survey should be completed, and that participation is voluntary. No control groups will be utilized for this project, as no nurses will be excluded. No agreements will be made with nurses who participate in this project. No incentives will be provided for participating in this study. Participants who agree to participate will give implied consent by attending the workshop and completing the evaluation survey through Survey Monkey; therefore making participation anonymous.

Instrument

All participants at the conclusion of the preceptor workshop will complete a post-workshop online survey. It is anticipated that the survey would consist of multiple-choice questions and statements that are ranked using a Likert scale including strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, and strongly disagree. I would foresee an additional section of the survey that would include additional comments related to their opinion of the program, suggestions for improvements, whether the program increased their

preparedness to serve as a preceptor and whether they would recommend the program to others (Rush et al., 2014). My recommendation for the evaluation tool will be shared with the supporting agency, however, the evaluation survey/tool will not be created until the agency is ready for implementation and can better share their needs related to the topic.

Protection of Human Subjects

Permission and approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) will be obtained prior to conducting any research that involves human subjects. Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. All nurse participants should complete an anonymous post-workshop survey. If the survey is not completed, the nurse will not be included in the final data.

Data Analysis Plan

The recommendation will be made to the supporting agency that the Development of a Guide to Successful Onboarding of New Nurse Graduates workshop will be evaluated by an electronic anonymous survey that should be conducted through Survey Monkey. In this manner, the results would be analyzed and tabulated to compare to competence level of preceptors, overall workshop satisfaction and effectiveness of the workshop for registered nurses. After this process, the results could then be interpreted and discussed with stakeholders from the partnering organization.

The preceptor workshop was developed to be a face-to-face course that was presented in the learning and resources department within the organization. It is anticipated that the workshop will take approximately 7 hours or less to complete with interactive case studies and scenarios to ensure understanding and competence. The

preceptor workshop was designed to be presented in a lecture format utilizing Microsoft PowerPoint. The lecture will be video/audio recorded and edited for professional presentation format and time condensing. The precepting workshop video will be uploaded to YouTube with the link provided to all registered nurses via email for reference and/or review. This workshop will be completed at a scheduled date and time. The date and time will be announced in advance to assist with proper scheduling for attendance. The modules should be completed in sequence of one through eight and should conclude with an evaluation/feedback survey. Incorporated into module 3 is Benner's (1982) From Novice to Expert theory. It is important for preceptors to understand the competency levels of new graduates in efforts to meet their needs and advance them up the ladder (Benner,1982). Also integrated throughout the workshop was the application of Watson's caring theory and Wright's domain-specific competency (Roth et al., 2014).

Develop an Evaluation Plan

The program evaluation for the workshop will be an ongoing and continuous process that will require much collaboration for when the implementation process actually occurs. Evaluation discussions will occur between me, the quality director, chief nurse officer, education director, and orientation coordinator. This team will collaborate and revisit the project question, strategies, and workshop outcomes to ensure the evaluation is effective.

The evaluation plan will include a short and long term analysis of the workshop and the future success of the workshop. The anticipated development of an evaluation

tool will be private and confidential based on further collaboration with the supporting agency. I will recommend the development/selection of two forms of evaluation that will include short term analysis of the workshop and long term effects of the workshop on preceptors and the organization.

The short term plan will be a survey that will consist of approximately 15 questions. The survey should address various demographic information, which will include age, gender, employment status, years of nursing experience, previous preceptor experience, and highest degree received. The second part of the evaluation survey will obtain feedback related to the workshop. Participants will be asked to rank the perception of the workshop from strongly agree to strongly disagree in the following areas.

1. The course objectives identified in the workshop modules were met.
2. The preceptor workshop prepared me to serve in the role and function as a competent preceptor for new nurse graduates.
3. The preceptor workshop developed or improved my ability to promote critical thinking in new nurse graduates.
4. I found the tips for organization helpful in my role as a preceptor.
5. I felt that the time management aspect of the workshop would benefit me as I serve in the role of a preceptor.
6. I felt that the prioritization aspect of the workshop would benefit me as I serve in the role of a preceptor;
7. I would recommend this preceptor workshop to other registered nurses who may serve in the capacity of a preceptor for new nurse graduates.

8. This workshop will increase my satisfaction level in my role as a preceptor.

Lastly, there will also be a blank space provided for additional comments, questions or concerns about the workshop. Prior to implementation of this short term evaluation plan survey questions will be validated by at least four experts within the organization and two experts from the academic setting.

I anticipate that the long-term evaluation analysis will focus on the success of the workshop. Did the workshop meet its goals and objectives? Have the effects of the workshop improved employee satisfaction, retention rates and decreased costs related to employee turn-over? I would collaborate with the organization to start collecting and gathering data through an electronic means on employee satisfaction scores, retention rates in nursing, and departmental cost once this workshop is implemented. Any new surveys created or data collection methods will be validated by experts within the organization prior to their use.

According to Friis and Sellers (2014) there are four stages of evaluation that include: formative, process, impact, and outcome evaluation. Formative evaluation will occur in the beginning of the workshop to ensure that all activities, materials, plans, procedures, and modifications work. Describing, monitoring, and documenting the workshop, and related issues in order for the workshop to improve and be the most effective. The process evaluation provides support for the workshop and ensures accordance with the goals and objectives of the proposed preceptor workshop. The impact evaluation determines changes in the participants of the workshop instead of the organization or the community. The process of impact evaluation answers the proposed

program design question and establishes the cause and effect relation between the program and its outcomes (Hodges & Videto, 2011). The final evaluation of the proposed preceptor workshop will provide data on what was effective and what could be improved in the workshop.

Summary

Development of a preceptor workshop curriculum, and plan for implementation and evaluation has increased the quality of care provided to all clients, improved overall job satisfaction, and increased nurse retention rates. Preceptor training programs are required to stabilize the nursing workforce. The section addressed the development of the quality improvement project and a plan for implementation and evaluation by the supporting organization.

Section 4: Findings, Discussion, and Implications

Summary of Findings

The project question was the following: Will evidence support the development of a guide to successful onboarding of new nurse graduates to increase preceptors' knowledge, skill level, and satisfaction to effectively onboard new nurse graduates?

The purpose and core objective of this project was to develop an evidence-supported workshop that would assist registered nurses in assuming responsibility for the role of a preceptor by increasing their knowledge, skill level, and satisfaction. The workshop was developed to prepare registered nurses to serve as effective preceptors to new nurse graduates by developing specific qualities and characteristics to improve quality of care, assist in meeting organizational standards, and provide continuity of care in a cost-effective manner. The workshop content focuses on 8 areas, beginning with defining and providing an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the preceptor. Module 2 identifies the characteristics of an effective preceptor to aid in the determination of suitable candidates for preceptors of new graduates. The third module emphasizes the various levels of competency from novice to expert so that preceptors understand and expect the level of competency of the new graduate (Benner, 1982).

Module 4 addresses the importance of effective communication, collaboration, and conflict management for all preceptors. The next module addresses strategies for developing critical thinking skills for new nurse graduates in addition to prioritization. Module 6 identifies methods and tips for maintaining organization throughout the shift.

Module 7 addresses strategies for improving time management skills for new graduates. The last module focuses on challenges in transitioning from a student to a healthcare professional and identifies tips for preceptors to aid in easing that transition.

Because this is a developmental project, dialogue and collaboration within the partnering agency determine how the project could be fully implemented and evaluated to meet the needs of the agency's employees, clients, and organization. The core objective in this project is to present a program to an organization that will allow its preceptors to gain the knowledge and skills needed to be effective in their role when onboarding new nurse graduates by ensuring their confidence, competence, and comfort (Harrison-White & Simons, 2013). This project was developed to empower nurses by increasing their knowledge and skill level, creating strong bonds between nurses, establishing a support system, and increasing job satisfaction and quality of care (Kingsnorth-Hinrichs, 2009). In literature focusing on bridging the gap in practice, the recurring solution was participation in a preceptorship program to assist in onboarding new nurse graduates (Roth et al., 2014). Discussions with the partnering organization will determine the specific content within each module and how the workshop will be delivered and evaluated based on individual needs.

The review of literature and synthesis of those findings were used to support the creation of the developmental project, *A Guide to Successful Onboarding of New Nurse Graduates*. All study findings and/or supporting research literature will allow further discussions with the partnering organization for an anticipated implementation and evaluation plan. This section addresses the anticipated strengths and limitations of the

project, as well as recommendations and potential implications for policy, practice, research, and social change, as discussed with the partnering organization.

Discussion

The following subsections address the project's potential impact on policy, clinical practice, research, and social change, as well as the project's strengths, the project's limitations, and recommendations from the organization.

Policy Impact

As healthcare continues to move forward with advances in technology and research, it is critical that healthcare providers, specifically nurses, are prepared to care for clients while providing current evidence-based quality care. The aim of this proposed project is to ensure the preceptors can instill and develop critical thinking abilities to foster sound clinical judgment by new nurse graduates to ensure patient safety (Etheridge, 2007). During this project's development, I conducted an interview via electronic mail with the orientation coordinator at the partnering agency to gain a better understanding of the agency's needs and goals for a preceptor workshop. This interview allowed me to ask questions about the agency's current process for training preceptors and to determine where agency staff felt that improvements needed to be made so that I could better understand how to assist the organization with my developmental proposal. We also discussed challenges that new nurse graduates had faced in the organization so that preceptors could be more sensitive to those needs during the preceptorship process. Many of the issues that we discussed in the interview were echoed in the literature, such

as critical thinking abilities, communication, confidence, time management, and organization (Etheridge, 2007).

If the proposed developmental project is implemented, it will have an impact on local policy within the organization to ease the transition to practice for new nurse graduates, increase education and preparation for preceptors, ensure consistent and competent nursing care, and increase retention and satisfaction rates for nurses. Robitaille (2013) supported the idea that preceptors' communication skills, leadership skills, and knowledge level are vital to the successful onboarding of new graduate nurses as they transition into practice. Policy may be developed to support the program and outline the procedure for completing the required training to serve as a preceptor for new nurse graduates within the organization. One study (Hardy & Smith, 2013) revealed that after the implementation of a similar preceptor-training program, indicators showed that quality was improving, standards of practice were becoming more routine, and that staff members were happier. By implementing this change, the facility reduced turnover rates and created an environment in which nurses felt that they belonged (Hardy & Smith, 2013).

Clinical Practice

As a nurse educator, I have often heard from previous nursing graduates about their challenging experiences once they graduated from our program and entered the nursing field. Many of those students have expressed concern about the process for being onboarded without proper preceptor training. It is also well documented and supported in the literature that in order to develop confidence and competence, new nurse graduates

must receive targeted support during their first year of practice (Haggerty et al., 2012). Prior to entering the nursing education field, I had personal experiences of being told to precept a new nurse graduate without any training. When placed in that position, I felt stressed, overwhelmed, confused and overworked. Those experiences led me to the research and development of the QI project that I have recommended for future implementation and evaluation at the partnering agency site. The development of this project has been shared with the partnering organization in the hope that the organization will implement it for future preceptors. Clinical practice would benefit from effective preceptor training programs if successfully implemented. Effective training programs are important for retention rates, job satisfaction, and quality of care (Robitaille, 2013). Planned preceptor training, education, and preparation have all been found to positively affect confidence, critical thinking ability, and competence, leading nursing in a positive direction (Haggerty et al., 2012).

Research

There is no doubt that the role of preceptor has been pivotal in onboarding new nurse graduates. It is well represented in the literature that the complexity of the preceptor's role leads to increased stress, new challenges, and feelings of being overwhelmed at times (Harrison-White & Simons, 2013). Formalized training and education have been shown to increase satisfaction within the preceptor's role and with the onboarding of the new nurse graduate (Hardy & Smith, 2001). If this QI project is implemented at the organizational level, future research studies may be needed to focus on the method of presentation (i.e., whether the experience is optimized in the classroom

or preferred online) to best meet the needs of preceptors. Another research concept to consider after successful implementation is the need for a specific number of years of experience prior to completing the Precepting 101 workshop.

Social Change

Educational interventions for preceptors lead to improvements in critical thinking skills, conflict resolution, stress management, balancing personal and professional achievements, and time management (Schaubhut & Gentry, 2010). Studies have shown that new nurse graduates need assistance as beginning practitioners in nursing to mold and develop their clinical judgment to ensure patient safety (Etheridge, 2007). It is well supported that in order to develop confidence and competence, new nurse graduates require support and mentoring during their first year of practice. Preceptorship has helped to bridge the gap between theory and practice, support the socialization process, increase new nurse graduates' level of confidence, and promote new nurse graduates' job satisfaction (Haggerty et al., 2012).

Project Strengths, Limitations, and Recommendations

Project Strengths

The project's anticipated strengths echo many of the findings of the literature regarding preceptorship programs cited in this paper. A preceptor-training program will have a positive impact on recruitment, retention, employee satisfaction, competency, and quality of care. Another main strength of the developmental project is effective communication with the partnering agency. The collaborative team worked well in discussing and sharing information and ideas related to development and future

implementation and evaluation of the quality improvement project. The team discussed the potential for implementation within the organization after this DNP project is finalized. Within one year after DNP completion, I will partner with the organization to assist with the presentation of content in the training program and the development of an evaluation process to assess short-term and long-term outcomes of the workshop. The specific details for implementation and evaluation have not been finalized and are still up for discussion once the developmental proposal is approved. For project implementation and evaluation to be effective, communication must remain open and efficient in order to disseminate new and innovative ideas to promote clinical practice through research and evidence (Oermann & Hays, 2011).

Project Limitations

This quality improvement project has incorporated much research and collaboration with the partnering organization, yet the main limitation of the project is that the investigation has included experiences of only the preceptors and preceptees within the organization. It has been considered that the needs of preceptors and new nurse graduates in other organizations may be slightly different, depending on the type of organization and specialties within that facility. Different academic requirements and training would also impact the curriculum of the program for other organizations. For example, the needs of a baccalaureate-prepared nurse may differ from the needs of a postgraduate diploma preceptor (Harrison-White & Simons, 2013).

Despite the fact that the quality improvement project generated discussions and a partnership with an organization for future implementation, another limitation of the

project is that it has not been completely implemented. Statistical analysis and the evaluation process could not be completed.

Limitation Recommendations

For the future implementation of the quality improvement project, anticipating the barriers previously mentioned as well as incorporating needed strategies will ensure applicability of the proposed project to various organizations. Furthermore, implementation of the project would provide valuable statistical data.

Analysis of Self

Scholar

By obtaining the practice doctorate in nursing, I have been provided terminal academic preparation in order to practice at a higher level and reflect upon the complexities of practice. The DNP program has prepared me to use analytical methods to appraise literature and evidence in order to implement best practice. I have grown in the ability to design, implement, and evaluate quality improvement methodologies to promote patient-centered care. I have learned to apply relevant findings to develop and improve practice. Lastly, an important concept that has been emphasized throughout my educational journey has been the dissemination of findings from research to improve healthcare outcomes. Through this journey, I have been able to identify a practice gap and develop a quality improvement project to promote formalized training for preceptors when onboarding new nurse graduates. Future implementation of the QI project may increase retention rates, improve job satisfaction, and promote consistent, high-quality care.

Practitioner

This academic journey has prepared me to integrate nursing science with knowledge about ethics and biophysical, psychosocial, analytical, and organizational sciences. I am now able to use science-based theories and concepts to determine the significance of health care delivery as well as to describe actions and strategies to enhance the delivery of care and outcomes. Lastly, I have learned to develop and evaluate practice approaches based on a variety of nursing theories and theories derived from other disciplines to promote innovative nursing practice (AACN, 2006).

Project Developer

Throughout the process of developing this quality improvement project, I have received many scholarly reviews and recommendations for improvements. I have gained a greater understanding of the procedure for planning, developing, revising, and editing a developmental project proposal as well as collaborating with nursing experts. I have gained knowledge in identifying goals, creating objectives, and planning a project to improve practice for nursing. As a project developer, I found it exciting to collaborate with a partnering organization to discuss further plans for implementation and evaluation after gaining IRB approval to move forward with the developmental proposal.

Project Contribution for Future Professional Development

Developing the precepting workshop has allowed me to increase my knowledge, critical thinking, and analytic abilities to promote advancements in evidence-based practice and quality of care. In conducting research and preparing the literature review, I was able to develop a proposal to ease the transition into practice for new nurse graduates

through adequate training and education. The impact of this effort may extend to improved job satisfaction, better retention rates, and improved quality of care.

Summary and Conclusions

The DNP developmental proposal was designed to enable preceptors for new nurse graduates to be confident, competent, and comfortable in their role (Harrison-White & Simons, 2013). With the successful implementation of this preceptor program, nurses may be empowered as they increase their knowledge and skill levels. The literature also indicated that effective preceptoring and mentoring create strong bonds between nurses and establish a support system within the discipline (Grossman, 2013). This proposal also has the potential to increase job satisfaction and quality of care through effective mentoring and training by qualified preceptors (Kingsnorth-Hinrichs, 2009).

The quality improvement proposal was developed with three theoretical frameworks in mind. Watson's theory of human caring, Benner's novice-to-expert model, and Wright's domain specific, accountability-based competency assessment model were all incorporated into the curriculum of the precepting workshop. The curriculum focuses on eight ideas found repeatedly within the literature related to new nurse graduates and preceptors. The modules describe the roles and responsibilities of the preceptor, how to be an effective preceptor, nurse competency, professional and interdisciplinary communication, critical thinking, organization, time management, and transition to practice.

Section 5: Scholarly Product

Introduction

This section includes background regarding the developmental proposal for a precepting workshop to assist in onboarding new nurse graduates. The proposal and future project strengths are discussed in this section as they relate to the proposed quality improvement initiative. This section also contains recommendations for future project studies. In this section, I explain the dissemination plan, poster presentation, and publication aspirations for this work.

Background

Preceptorship takes the form of a time-limited experience in which education is provided to new nurse graduates related to their new role in the clinical environment. Preceptor programs vary from organization to organization based on resources, time constraints, and staffing. In these programs, a preceptor's role is to give the best assessment of the confidence and competence of new nurse graduates and whether they are prepared and qualified to continue independently in their role (Harrison-White & Simons, 2013). Healthcare organizations that do not use these types of programs are ultimately setting their facilities up for problems later on, whether in relation to retention rates, job satisfaction, or quality of care.

Many studies in the past have focused on preceptor models and the use of preceptors by educational institutions; however, few studies have focused on perceptions of new nurses following graduation by looking at the benefits, downfalls, and sustainability of preceptorship programs (Kelly & McAllister, 2013). It is imperative for

future implementation and evaluation that key stakeholders are involved in the process to ensure that needs are met for the new nurse graduate, the preceptor, and the organization (Kelly & McAllister, 2013).

Proposal and Future Project Strengths

The proposed project is essential for nurse preceptors to gain the knowledge and skills needed to be effective in the role of onboarding new nurse graduates into the nursing profession. The project would enable preceptors to be confident, competent, and comfortable in their role (Harrison-White & Simons, 2013). This proposal includes many concepts from literature reviews and research articles, which helped to form the curriculum of the preceptor workshop based on the challenges of new nurse graduates and barriers to being an effective preceptor. This project uses a face-to-face presentation format with the option for viewing a recorded version electronically. Future project strengths will be related to which methods are most effective for working nurses serving in the role of preceptor.

Recommendations for Future Project Study

This developmental project has not currently been implemented. After successful implementation, review of evaluation outcomes may be used to determine any need for future adjustments to the precepting workshop. Future studies could focus on specific requirements for participants in the workshop, such as experience level. Additionally, the method of delivery is an area that may need to be altered. Nursing is an ever-changing field; to ensure that the information in the workshop remains current and reflects best practice, the evaluation process will need to be continuous.

Dissemination Plan

The final stage of the DNP project includes the dissemination or diffusion of research findings. Dissemination methods include oral presentations, publications, poster presentations, flyers, brochures, policy briefs, newsletters, conferences, and seminars (Zaccagnini & White, 2011). My priority in developing this proposal has been to use the research findings to promote formalized training and education for nurses serving as preceptors for new nurse graduates. Preceptor training has great implications for nursing practice, both at the employee level and at an organizational level.

A dissemination plan depends mainly upon the goals of the author and the targeted audience. If a project needs to be viewed longer and there is a need for dialogue, podium presentations, poster presentations, webinars, and media communications may be most appropriate. Journal publication may be advantageous to some authors, depending on the timeline from publication to dissemination (Zaccagnini & White, 2011).

Poster Board Presentation

For dissemination of this developmental proposal, I have chosen to pursue a poster presentation. Poster presentations are valuable tools for teaching not only at professional meetings, but also at conferences. Effective poster presentations engage colleagues to converse about the content and main points of the project. This is a great way to advertise or disseminate work to a large number of people at one event. In order to be effective, a poster presentation should be highly condensed, consisting of visual aids, displays of data, supporting text, interpretation, and conclusions (Hess, Tosney, & Liegel, 2009).

Some authors prefer poster presentations to other dissemination methods. A poster presentation can reach a large audience in one convenient setting. An oral presentation is likely to reach only those individuals in a related field, whereas individuals from different fields may stroll through a poster presentation session. It can be easier to communicate and network through small talk during poster sessions. Alongside a poster presentation, the author can use handouts, photographs, simulations and brochures to promote further conversation with colleagues. When receiving criticism regarding the scholarly work, an author can immediately respond and offer ideas to improve the approach if necessary. In addition, a poster presentation can be less stressful than conducting an oral presentation in front of a large group of colleagues (Hess et al., 2009).

I plan to present and disseminate the DNP project in the form of a poster presentation at the 12th Annual Nurse Educator Conference sponsored by the Kentucky League for Nursing. I will also display the poster presentation at the main entrance to the partnering organization for employee education and feedback.

Publication Aspiration

As a nursing professional, I am a member of the American Nurses Association (ANA), Kentucky Nurses Association (KNA), National League for Nursing (NLN), and Kentucky League for Nursing (KLN). Throughout the DNP process and my professional endeavors, I have found that understanding the significance of research dissemination is essential. Conducting research and reviewing the literature are important; however, without dissemination, I would not be fulfilling the purpose of the DNP program. As a

member of the KLN, I plan to disseminate my project through a poster presentation and have the abstract of the presentation published in the *Kentucky Nurse* journal. Publishing the abstract in the *Kentucky Nurse* will be a great way to access all nurses in Kentucky. I will also explore publication in other journals to disseminate my developmental proposal.

As a member of the American Nurses Association, I will request information on how to offer my developmental project abstract for publication in the *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing* (OJIN). *OJIN* is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal that publishes any manuscript that advances previous topics and/or adds new insights, information, experiences, or research in nursing. *OJIN* typically presents issues relevant to nurses and the nursing profession (ANA, 2015).

Conclusion

The developmental proposal was not only completed to fulfill requirements for the DNP program through Walden University, but also developed to make an impact on nurses in my community. Disseminating the scholarly product will assist in advancing nursing practice by increasing the confidence, competence, and comfort of nurse preceptors in onboarding new nurse graduates. This precepting workshop will impact retention rates, job satisfaction, and the quality of care provided to clients within the organization.

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Appendix A: Preceptor Workshop Curriculum

Course Modules:

Module One: Preceptor's Roles and Responsibilities

This module defined a preceptor and provided an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the preceptor. Watson's Caring theory has been incorporated into this module to emphasize the preceptor's responsibility and role is to exhibit caring behaviors towards co-workers, clients and families. The preceptor must demonstrate caring behaviors and holistic actions to create an environment conducive to healing (Sitzman, 2007). Completion of this module should take approximately 45 minutes. (Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015).

Preceptor's Roles and Responsibilities

- Define a preceptor.
- Examine the differences of a preceptor and a mentor.
- Functions of a preceptor.
- Responsibilities of a preceptor.
- Time commitment in precepting a new nurse graduate. (Zahner, Tipple, Rather & Schendzielos, 2009).

Module Two: Effective Preceptorship

This module identified the characteristics of an effective preceptor to aid in determination of suitable candidates for precepting new graduates. Watson's Caring theory has been incorporated into this module to ensure that preceptors are exhibiting caring behaviors and provide holistic actions (Sitzman, 2007).

Completion of this module should take approximately 30 minutes. (Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015).

Effective Preceptorship

- Characteristics of an effective preceptor.
- Strategies for developing relationships with new nurse graduates.
- Discuss rationale for wanting to be a preceptor.
- Strategies for initiating and nurturing new nurse graduates. (Zahner, Tipple, Rather & Schendzielos, 2009).

Module Three: Nurse Competency Levels

This module emphasized the various levels of competency from novice to expert so that the preceptor understood and expected the level of competency of the new graduate (Benner, 1982). Donna Wright's *Domain-Specific Competency Assessment Model* was incorporated into this module so that the preceptor could assess the new graduates technical, cognitive skills, knowledge, psychomotor skills, and technical understanding (Roth, Figueroa & Swihart, 2014). Completion of this module should take approximately 55 minutes. (Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015).

Nurse Competency Levels

- Assessing new nurse graduates learning needs.
- Assessing new nurse graduates level of practice.
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses in critical thinking and clinical skills.

- Identify appropriate yet challenging learning opportunities for new nurse graduates.
- Evaluating new nurse graduate performance level. (Zahner, Tipple, Rather & Schendzielos, 2009).

Module Four: Professional and Interdisciplinary Communication

This module described the importance of effective communication, collaboration and conflict management for all preceptors. Donna Wright's *Domain-Specific Competency Assessment Model* was incorporated into this module to emphasize interpersonal and effective use of communication skills when collaborating with others (Roth, Figueroa & Swihart, 2014). Completion of this module should take approximately 90 minutes. (Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015).

Professional and Interdisciplinary Communication

- Use of structured communication tools
 - SBAR tool supported and mandated by the Joint Commission's National Patient Safety Goals
 - S Situation (the problem)
 - B Background (data related to the problem)
 - A Assessment (assessment of the problem)
 - R Recommendation (addressing the problem)

(Clochesy et.al, 2015).
 - Role play exercise- nurses will call the healthcare provider giving them an update utilizing the SBAR acronym.

- “Ask Me 3” tool to improve communication between the nurse and the patient.
 - 1. What is my main problem or issue?
 - 2. What do I need to do?
 - 3. Why is it important for me to do this? (Clochesy et.al, 2015).
- Role play exercise- nurses will use the “Ask Me 2” tool to communicate with a patient regarding an issue.

Module Five: Developing Critical Thinking Skills

This module examined strategies for developing critical thinking skills for new nurse graduates. This module also focused on prioritization. Benner’s model is be incorporated in this module to emphasis the new graduates level of experience related to critical thinking which should be expected at a novice to advanced beginner level. Donna Wright’s *Domain-Specific Competency Assessment Model* was incorporated into this module to focus on improving and developing critical thinking ability in new nurse graduates (Roth, Figueroa & Swihart, 2014).

Completion of this module should take approximately 55 minutes. (Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015). Developing Critical Thinking Skills:

- Definition and Introduction to Critical Thinking
 - Discuss various definitions of critical thinking
- Importance of Critical Thinking In Nursing

- Nurses must be able to learn facts and procedures as well as be able to apply them to unique patient situations.
- Do not be a superficial thinker. Do not memorize information; devote time to apply knowledge to situations to think on a deeper level. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012).
- Clinical Judgements
 - Perceptual judgements
 - Involves collecting and validating data within a specific situation
 - Inferential judgements
 - Determines significant data, eliminates insignificant data and identifies relationships in the data collected
 - Diagnostic judgements
 - Linking clusters of data with patterns of specific nursing diagnoses. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012).
- Levels of Critical Thinking
 - Basic thinker
 - Building from a novice database of knowledge and experience
 - Complex thinker
 - Explore options based on patterns and an understanding of commonalities and differences. One can identify cues,

cluster data, choose appropriate actions and evaluate responses.

- Expert thinker
 - Develops reasoning based on patterns, standards or models to understand the uniqueness of each situation. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012).
- Strategies To Promote Critical Thinking
 - Use a method of organize information
 - Validate information
 - Establish assumptions
 - Identify patterns of responses
 - Identify gaps in information
 - Set priorities (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs)
 - Formulate Goals
 - Evaluate actions and outcomes (Nugent & Vitale, 2012).
- Critical Thinking Application Activity
 - Thinking Aloud
 - A proficient critical thinker is able to verbalize thought processes and rationales. Verbalizing processes helps one to solidify their thinking. Thinking aloud can be utilized while engaged in an activity or during reflection time afterwards. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012). Think of a situation

and difficult process that you went through recently.

Review the process and rationale for actions verbally with a partner. Were you able to learn reviewing your performance in that situation?

- Set Priorities
 - Pressing/Important Tasks
 - Non Pressing/Important Tasks
 - Pressing/Non Important Tasks
 - Non Pressing/Non Important Tasks (Nugent & Vitale, 2012).

Module Six: Tips for Organization

This module identified methods and tips for maintaining organization throughout the shift. Often times new graduates struggle with keeping up with the demanding pace of busy units and staying organized is essential. Completion of this module should take approximately 30 minutes.

Tips for Organization:

- Get Organized
 - Create a daily calendar to organize your activities so that you can achieve daily goals.
 - Organize your thoughts to help reduce anxiety (Nugent & Vitale, 2012).
- Develop Self-Discipline
 - Set goals and priorities for each day.

- Establish firm boundaries when things must be done.
- Recognize when you can be flexible and when you must stick to your daily plan. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012).
- Learn to Say “No”
 - When saying “no” to someone, ask yourself the following questions:
 - Is this task consistent with my goal or priority?
 - Is this something that I must do?
 - Is this something that I really want to do?
 - Is this something that I do not want to do?
 - Is this person able to do the task without me?
 - Is there someone else that can help with this task? (Nugent & Vitale, 2012).
- Avoid Time Traps
 - Avoid unwanted phone calls (small talk).
 - Conclude long-winded conversations that are not going anywhere.
 - Redirect long responses to open-ended questions that are not necessary for providing quality care.
 - Avoid excessive socializing with patients and families.
 - Avoid assuming the role of a counselor to meet emotional needs (utilize resource personnel within the organization). (Nugent & Vitale, 2012).

- Motivate Yourself
 - Focus on gaining internal motivation by learning something new, achieving a goal, and excelling at a skill or performance of a procedure.
 - Visual attaining future goals (personally and professionally). (Nugent & Vitale, 2012).
- Delegate
 - Identify person whom which you may delegate appropriately.
 - Explain the anticipated outcome to be achieved.
 - Discuss any necessary resources to accomplish the task.
 - Relinquish the accountability for the task being delegated. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012).
- Overcome Procrastination
 - Do not delay tasks.
 - Change your mind from completing chores to accomplishing task to reach a goal of being a competent, successful, and efficient nurse.
 - Identify what you are procrastinating; challenge the procrastination with positive thoughts; justify why this task is necessary to be completed now. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012).

This module examined strategies for improving time management skills for new graduates. Completion of this module should take approximately 30 minutes.

(Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015).

Effective Time Management

- Time Management equals self-management
 - How you use your time reflects on how successful you manage the efforts to meet your goals.
- Reflect on barriers to productivity
 - Consider internal and external factors that can affect productivity.
- Develop a corrective action plan to maximize your productivity during the day. (Nugent & Vitale, 2012).

Module Eight: Transition to Practice

This module discussed the challenges in transitioning from a student to a healthcare professional and identified some tips for preceptors to aid in easing that transition. Benner's model has been incorporated into this module to ensure that preceptors are aware of the various levels of proficiency in performance. This is to acknowledge that most new graduates enter the practice arena in the novice level meaning that they have no experience in the tasks that they are being expected to perform (Benner, 1982). Completion of this module should take approximately 50 minutes. (Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, 2015).

Transition to Practice

- New nurse graduates are excited and eager to learn however they are easily overwhelmed with time management, interruptions, and increased stimulation from within the department.
- New nurse graduates are not attuned to subtle change with patients or critically thinking
- Preceptors must set simple goals that can be met quickly to build confidence.
- Encourage baby steps toward a larger goal to promote success and confidence.
- Preceptors must continually provide support, real-time feedback and positive affirmation. (Kingsnorth-Hinrichs, 2009).

Module Nine: Evaluation and Feedback

Each preceptor will need to complete an evaluation survey through Survey Monkey upon the conclusion of all educational modules. This evaluation will provide feedback and suggestions for improvement for future updates. The evaluation survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Appendix B: Postworkshop Short-Term Evaluation Survey

Part I: Demographic Information:

1. What is your age? (18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; 65-74; 75 or older)
2. What is your gender? (Male or Female)
3. What is your employment status? (Full time; Part Time; PRN as needed)
4. How many years of nursing experience do you have? (1-3 years; 4-6 years; 7-9 years; 10-12 years; 13-15 years; 16-18 years; 19+years)
5. Do you have previous preceptor experience? (Yes or No)
6. What is the highest degree you have received? (ADN, BSN, MSN, DNP or PhD)

Part II: Workshop Evaluation

7. Did you complete the preceptor workshop? (Yes or No)

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. The course objectives identified in the workshop modules were met.
9. The preceptor workshop prepared me to serve in the role and function as a competent preceptor for new nurse graduates?
10. The preceptor workshop developed or improved my ability to promote critical thinking in new nurse graduates.
11. I found the tips for organization helpful in my role as a preceptor?
12. I felt that the time management aspect of the workshop would benefit me as I serve in the role of a preceptor?

13. I felt that the prioritization aspect of the workshop would benefit me as I serve in the role of a preceptor?

14. I would recommend this preceptor workshop to other registered nurses who may serve in the capacity of a preceptor for new nurse graduates?

15. This workshop will increase my satisfaction level in my role as a preceptor.

16. Does your organization have an effective mandatory preceptor-training course/program?

(Yes or No)

Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns about the workshop?

Appendix C: Structured Communication Tools

SBAR	S	Situation (the problem)
	B	Background (data related to the problem)
	A	Assessment (assessment of the problem)
	R	Recommendation (addressing the problem)

- Ask Me 3
1. What is my main problem or issue?
 2. What do I need to do?
 3. Why is it important for me to do this?
- (Clochesy et al., 2015).