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### E-Dates: Enhancing Competency of Novice/Advanced Beginner RNs

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## Background

With the current nursing shortage it is found that experienced nurses are limited in number, and healthcare systems use new graduates to help fill the gap (Blevins & Millen, 2016). In 2015, an increase in novice/advanced beginner nurses was identified in the medical/surgical areas. The 2015 physician satisfaction survey scores showed that the physicians' perception of nurses' competency decreased. An initiative for improvement aimed to improve communication, critical thinking and decision making of novice nurses was implemented. The interprofessional relations with physicians and nurses is greatly valued in our organization. Novice/advanced beginner nurses must feel comfortable and confident when communicating with physicians, reporting findings, and documenting.

## Purpose

The purpose of the implemented initiative was to improve physician and peer satisfaction of working with clinically competent nurses by improving communication, critical thinking and decision making of novice advanced/beginner nurses in the acute medical surgical area.

## Intervention

In 2016, Educational Dates, or "E-Dates", were implemented as an intervention to improve novice advanced/beginner nurses' competency. Novice/advanced beginner nurses (< 2 years experience) from each of the medical/surgical units were identified. Nurses were notified via email that they were selected to participate in the E-Date initiative. Clinical Nurse Educators (CNE) shadowed and mentored selected nurses during specific times of the work day for intervals of two to three hours on two separate occasions, on a 1:1 basis. For a period of six months (March to August, 2016), each CNE assessed each identified nurse in the areas of hand off report, patient assessment, documentation, medication administration and communication and target the areas identified for improvement (Figure 1). A tool for the documentation of the E-Dates developed by the CNE's was used (Figure 2). As opportunities for improving critical thinking were identified the CNE addressed findings with the nurses and encouraged nurses to reflect on the experience.

## Results

A significant improvement in the physician satisfaction survey scores (Figure 3) and nursing perception of clinical competency (Figure 4) was seen. The ARNPs also reported improvement in communication with novice advanced/beginner nurses.

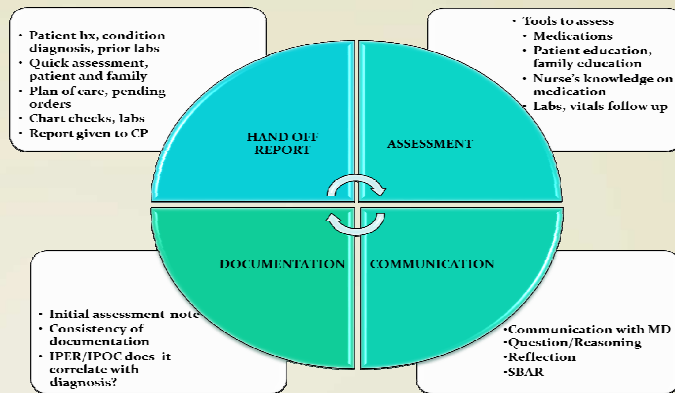


Figure 1: Plan/Areas to be assessed

Handoff Report	Done	Not done	Comments
Patient history/info/diagnosis			
Current condition			
How was day/night			
Outstanding labs			
Quick assessment			
Addresses patient/family questions			
Plan of care			
Pending orders			
Goal of the day			
Chart checks/look over labs			
Vitals			
Report to the CP			
Assessment/Medication Admin.	Done	Not done	Comments
Tools to assess patient			
Patient/family educated on meds			
Nurse knowledge of meds			
Labs/Vitals follow up			
Documentation	Done	Not done	Comments
Initial assessment/note			
Consistency of documentation			
IPER/IPOC appropriate for patient dx			
Communication	Done	Not done	Comments
Communication with team/MD's			
Questioning			
Reasoning			
Reflection			

Figure 2: E-Date documentation tool

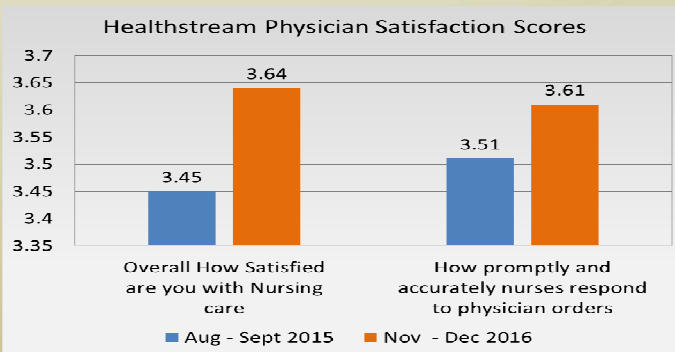


Figure 3: Physician satisfaction scores

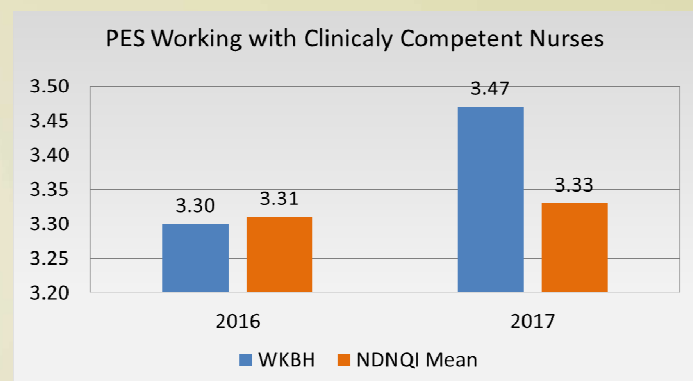


Figure 4: Nursing perception of clinical competence

## Discussion

The implementation of the E-Dates by the CNE in the acute med-surg areas improved the communication, critical thinking and decision making of the novice advanced/beginner nurses. The result was an increase in physician and peer satisfaction improving the interprofessional relationships valued by our organization.

## Implications for Practice

It is known that the nurse's ability to critically think effectively is linked to high quality, safe, effective and efficient patient-centered care. Improving the competency of nurses reflects on a delivery of safer patient care. As nurses develop and advance in their roles it is important to address their skills in all levels of practice. Enhancing nurses' communication skills and assisting with their critical thinking will not only elevate nurses' competency but also improve nursing practice.

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