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An exploration of formal mentoring experiences of junior faculty in associate degree nursing programs

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In the United States, a shortage of nurses exists and one of the reasons for this shortage is the lack of nurse educators. Schools of nursing have experienced an increase in qualified applicants but are unable to accommodate the increase because of a lack of nurse educators. Often, novice nursing faculty encounter struggles as they acclimate into the nurse educator role because of the different roles and responsibilities. A study of junior faculty in associate degree nursing programs in the Southeast provided insight into the formal mentoring of new faculty. The findings revealed that formal mentoring of junior faculty can foster a sense of belonging which may result in job satisfaction and a desire to remain in nursing education. The participants trusted that their mentors would provide the best mentoring and learning experiences. The study identified institutional as well as mentor responsibilities that can aid in the effectiveness of formal mentoring programs. Activities performed by nursing faculty mentors which facilitate new faculty development were identified as sitting in the classroom and observing instruction, providing constructive criticism, providing guidance with instructional development, serving as a role model, and assisting with test construction. These mentoring actions enabled the new faculty members to grow as nurse educators. All of the participants believed that mentoring programs are beneficial and needed for new nursing faculty. Recruitment and retention of qualified nurse educators is crucial to overcoming the nursing faculty shortage, and a means to address this problem is the mentoring of new educators.

Biography

Marsha Cannon has received her Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Nursing degrees from the University of South Alabama and a Doctorate in Education for Nurse Educators from the University of Alabama. She has taught in licensed practical and registered nursing programs with a theoretical and clinical focus in adult health nursing. Her areas of interest/expertise include cardiac nursing, test taking strategies, test construction, and mentoring of faculty and students. She has reviewed numerous nursing resources and textbooks and serves on the Editorial Board of a journal of nursing and women's health.

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