

Short, Sweet, Teach, and Repeat: A Competency-Based Skills Fair



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Objectives

- Objective 1:** The learner will be able to discuss educational topics to enhance skills acquisition.
- Objective 2:** The learner will be able to identify how hands on competency-based learning improves knowledge retention.
- Objective 3:** The learner will be able to apply teaching strategies discussed to enhance nursing practice.

Background

Rapid evolving changes in nursing within the last 10 years, have increased the challenge of developing critical thinkers and clinically competent nurses which will succeed to meet the evolving healthcare system (Felton & Royal, 2014). Nursing skills and education must be ongoing, updated, and fortified in order for a nurse to perform to the best of their abilities. The key in achieving effective nursing education is to address everyone's learning needs and have students partake in their own learning (McCausland & Meyers, 2013).

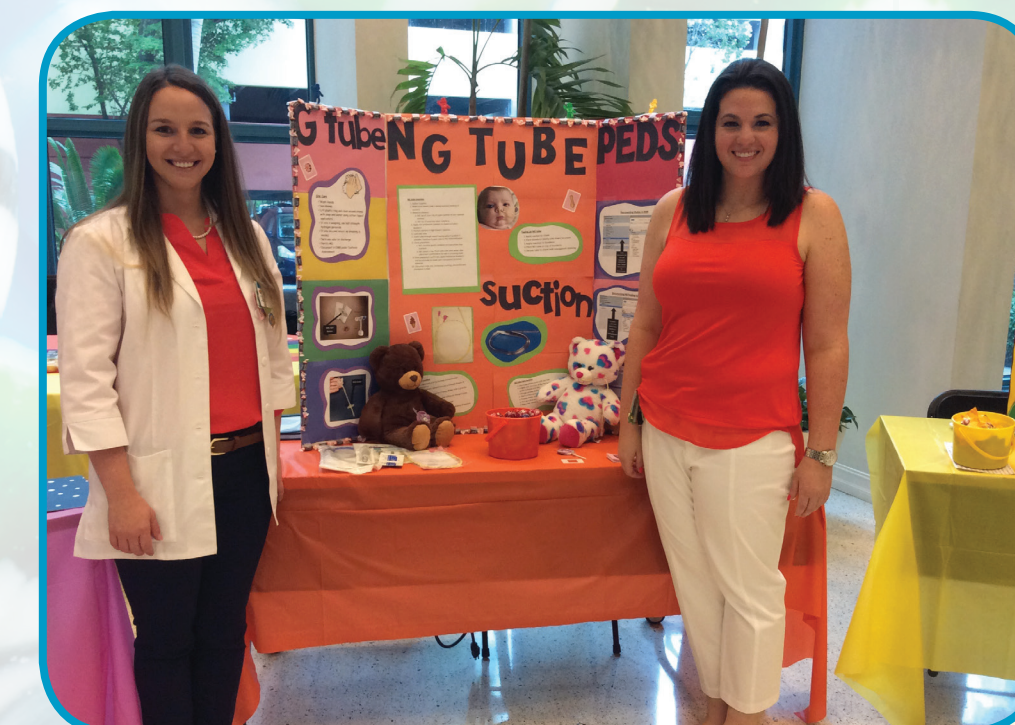
Teaching strategies, such as a skills fair, engages a nurse to learn at their own pace. Learning styles such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning are captured through social interaction and hands on experience, allowing the opportunity to provide immediate feedback, real-time questions and answers, and peer to peer learning (McCausland & Meyers, 2013).

Skills fairs are highly supported in the literature as a way of validating competencies (Windt, 2016). Competency-based learning for experienced nurses, benefits level of practice by refreshing their knowledge on different skills, best practice guidelines, and institutional policies. Additionally, competency-based learning influences novice nurses' level of practice by educating on new knowledge. This will increase their confidence, enrich their knowledge, and contribute to enhancing a delivery of care model and approach to an error-free, safe practice environment. Competency assessment identifies knowledge deficits, strengths, and opportunities for practice improvement (Windt, 2016). In turn, return demonstration of the learned skills, allowed clinical educators to identify nurses who can be future mentors, preceptors and/or leaders within their clinical setting.

Standardization of care and knowledge on nurse sensitive indicators was found to be lacking in medical-surgical units across the organization. As evidence through the literature, when there is a deviation in standardization of care across an organization, a skills fair is a way to reinforce practice guidelines and add new knowledge to all nurses utilizing the same technique.

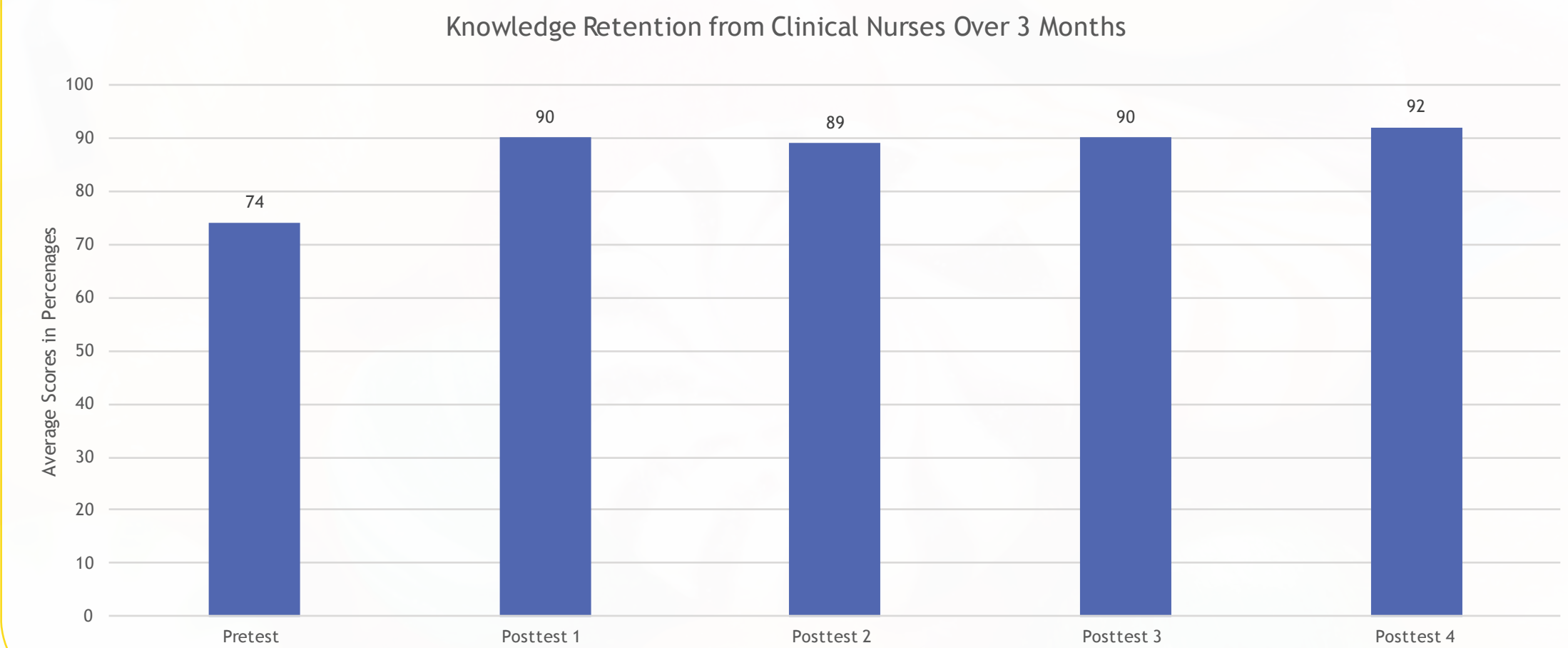
Process

- The clinical education team completed an assessment of nurses practicing general nursing skills, the knowledge of organizational practice guidelines, and new knowledge that had been provided to each unit. Even though nurses were practicing high quality care to the patients, standardization of these methods and knowledge about new guidelines was lacking across the organization. Therefore it was evident a skills fair was needed, with an aim to meet the needs of the learners who had varied experiences and degrees of interests in learning, to reinforce and educate on nursing skills and practice guidelines in order to achieve standardization of care throughout all units.
- New practice guidelines, as well as accreditation and regulatory standards, were included with the goal of introducing the content in a fun, engaging learning environment. The clinical education team collaborated with different specialists in the organization to include a vast array of education. In order to aid in attracting the nurses in a fun way, the theme of candy land was chosen to engage the nurses in "sweetening their skills".
- Live presenters were utilized to provide opportunities for interactive education. Each station was designed to easily portray the content for the learners to identify the benefits in learning in a clear format; spark curiosity and introduce best practices. Visual, auditory, and kinesthetic stimulations were incorporated to achieve active learning. Photographs, pictures and equipment were used to provide visual stimulation. Educators incorporated auditory presentations, hands on learning, and used games to deliver the learning. Teaching stations included kinesthetic items such as intravenous site dressings, blood administration tubing, chest tube set up, dolls with gastrostomy and nasogastric tubes, and a resuscitative code cart.
- After the completion of the skills fair event, nurses completed a post test on the education provided. Nurses were also handed an evaluation to gather feedback on the presentations, education provided and their overall experience. At the end of each event, all the passports were compiled and 5 winners were chosen for a raffled prize. These prizes were distributed by the clinical education team on the winner's respective unit to facilitate more engagement in future skills fair events.



Outcomes

In total, 200 nurses attended the annual skills day event.



Conclusions

- In conclusion with the overall feedback, comments, and ratings obtained, post-survey of the annual skills day event, it was evident the fair was a complete success. This was validated with an average skills fair event rating from the attendees, which resulted in 4.1 on a scale from 1-5. Comments such as, "Was an overall good experience and I learned a lot," would indicate that the staff was pleased. It was also stated their wish to have this event held annually. The teaching strategies were conducive to the learning as evidenced by the pre and post test knowledge retention results.
- This event provided opportunities for the structural empowerment of nurses within the organization. The event also gave the clinical education team the opportunity to continue to provide the framework for nursing excellence within the organization.

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