This is has been accepted for publication in Evidence Based Nursing following peer review and the article is accessible at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/ebnurs-2020-103307>

*“©BMJ Publishing Group Ltd” “Reuse of this manuscript version* (*excluding any databases, tables, diagrams, photographs and other images or illustrative material included where a another copyright owner is identified) is permitted strictly pursuant to the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC-BY-NC 4.0) http://creativecommons.org*

**Title:** Registered nurses require increased time allocation and improved placement support measures to enhance student nurse placement learning experiences.

**Commentary on:** Cusack L, Thornton K, Drioli-Phillips PG, et al. Are nurses recognised, prepared and supported to teach nursing students: Mixed methods study. Nurse Educ Today. 2020 Apr 11; 90:104434. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104434>

**Implications**

* Registered nurses require time to deliver high quality experiential learning and where possible, this should be reflected in workload allocation.
* Placement learning outcomes, assessment criteria and reporting mechanisms should be transparent.
* This study provides a theoretical basis upon which clinical education practices could be developed to improve support provision for registered nurses involved in teaching, supervising, mentoring, and assessing nursing students.

**Context**

Clinical placements provide nursing students (NSs) with experiential learning opportunities to; practice professional values, socialise into the clinical context, enhance clinical skills competence, and integrate theory into practice.1, 2 While on placement NSs are assigned to one or more registered nurse (RN).Mentors, preceptors, assessors, and practice supervisors are just some of the titles assigned to RNs who teach, supervise, mentor, and assess NSs.1 These RNs provide professional role-modelling and facilitate NS education in addition to continuing their patient facing nursing role.3 Cusack and Colleagues2 explore RNs experiences of teaching and supervising NSs in clinical practice.

**Methods**

Cusack and colleagues2 sequential mixed methods study recruited RNs from twelve wards across two different hospitals in South Australia. Researchers designed a survey to collate RN demographic details and evaluate whether RNs felt acknowledged, equipped and supported to educate NSs. This survey was initially piloted for validity. Thereafter, 59 RNs completed the survey and findings were analysed using IBM SPSS 24. Focus groups were used to explore findings which emerged from the survey. 46 RNs participated and qualitative findings were analysed using Ritchie and Spencer4 analysis for applied research. Researchers facilitated feedback sessions and participants validated the findings.

**Findings**

Teaching, supervising, guiding, and assessing NSs on placement is considered to be an important professional nursing role.2 Balancing the provision of high quality patient care and NS learning experiences appears to be challenging.2 Factors which impact NSs learning experiences include; differing levels of RN teaching and assessment training, scarcity of time, challenges in completing varied education provider competency assessment documents, and students who are poorly organised.2 These factors also contribute to RN stress. NS’s who took the initiative, understood their placement learning objectives, and their developmental needs were appreciated by RN’s.2 These findings suggest that RN’s would benefit from enhanced managerial and nurse education provider support.

**Commentary**

Balancing the provision of high quality patient care and NS learning experiences is considered to be challenging. Cusack and Colleagues2 described how RNs take the role of educating NSs seriously with some RNs completing assessments outside of rostered hours. While this example demonstrates dedication, it also illustrates that some RNs are struggling to find the time to balance their educational and clinical nursing role. Lack of role recognition,2,5 lack of time,2, 3, 5 and lack of support,1, 3, 5 are frequently reported by RNs involved in teaching and assessing NSs in clinical practice.These issues are considered to place RNs under increased stress and compromise NS learning experiences.2, 5 Cumulative findings suggest that nurse managers and educators need to work collaboratively to ensure RNs are suitably trained, supported and enabled to facilitate optimal clinical learning experiences.2,3,5

Nurse managers should be cognisant of the increased time required to successfully facilitate meaningful learning and assessment experiences2 and factor this into delegated workloads for RNs involved in teaching and assessing NS’s. Further, nurse educators should ensure that NSs and RNs have the resources required to develop a clear understanding of the required learning outcomes, assessment documentation and reporting processes prior to the commencement of each placement.1, 2 Future studies should work toward the generation of collaborative strategies to improve RN support provision.

1. Tuomikoski AM, Ruotsalainen H, Mikkonen K, et al. Nurses' experiences of their competence at mentoring nursing students during clinical practice: A systematic review of qualitative studies. Nurse Education Today. 2020 Feb 1; 85:104258. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2019.104258>
2. Cusack L, Thornton K, Drioli-Phillips PG, et al. Are nurses recognised, prepared and supported to teach nursing students: Mixed methods study. Nurse Educ Today. 2020 Apr 11; 90:104434. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104434>
3. Jokelainen M, Jamookeeah D, Tossavainen K, et al. Finnish and British mentors' conceptions of facilitating nursing students' placement learning and professional development. Nurse education in practice. 2013 Jan 1; 13(1):61-7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2012.07.008>
4. Ritchie J, Spencer L. Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research. Analyzing Qualitative Data 1994 Sep 9; 173-194. London: Routledge.
5. Devlin N, Duggan S. An evaluation of nurses' experiences of mentoring pre-registration students. British Journal of Nursing. 2020 Mar 12; 29(5):308-13. <https://doi.org/10.12968/bjon.2020.29.5.308>

**Author’s Details:**

Úna Kerin,

Department of Adult Nursing,

School of Nursing and Midwifery,

Birmingham City University,

Birmingham,

B15 3TN.

Email: Una.Kerin@bcu.ac.uk.

Phone: 0121 331 6185

**Competing Interests**

The author has no competing interests.