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Celebrating nursing student innovation and creativity: an approach to bridge the theory-practice gap through quality improvement proposals to improve healthcare.

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Celebrating Nursing Student Innovation and Creativity An Approach to Bridge the Theory-practice Gap through Quality Improvement Proposals to Improve Healthcare

Fiona Bastow and Bruce Harper-McDonald

Final year students on the pre-registration Bachelor of Nursing programme in the School of Health and Social Care have developed new and innovative quality improvement (QI) proposals to improve care as part of the new "Effective Leadership for Healthcare (Theory 6)" blended module.

The QI ideas are wide ranging and have the potential to have impact in real life day-to-day practice. Our students are uniquely positioned to improve care because they are encouraged to be curious, they are educated to use evidence-based knowledge and skills, and they have "fresh eyes" to spot opportunities to make a difference. As students transition through a diverse range of placements, they are ideally placed to identify where improvements can be made in care.

One of our Adult Nursing students, Rebecca Price, summed up the experience "I feel passionate about applying research to my nursing practice. While I was on placement in Cardiothoracic ICU, I noticed that we needed a better understanding of the potential implications for what happens in ICU that could affect patient recovery. I used a range of research to support my QI proposal including work by Edinburgh Napier lecturers on supporting people after an ITU experience".

We wanted to involve our practice partners in this process and so invited keynote speakers from our healthcare partners and Scottish Government to share their vision and experience of QI, leadership and change management with our students. Students were actively encouraged to discuss their QI proposal ideas with nurse mentors in placement to identify small manageable changes that could have meaningful impact in the real world. This supported students to consider barriers and enablers in development of their proposal, and influenced their choice of leadership and change management approach for their portfolio assessment. The module team developed interactive workshops and supervised students to enable them to transform raw ideas into workable QI proposals.

We are delighted to report that this innovative assessment approach is already having a positive impact in practice. Two of our students have had their QI proposals adopted by local organisations for implementation into practice, and one student has so

impressed the QI team in her practice area, that she has been offered a job with them on qualification.

The range of student QI ideas was vast, here are some of the ideas that they proposed:

- Checklists to improve safety on discharge home.
- Development of simple interventions to support patients recovering from stroke.
- Process to improve patient understanding of medications on discharge to improve adherence.
- Processes to make handover of information more effective.
- Posters to aid early identification of sepsis.
- Tools to increase staff communication of patients at risk of dehydration and malnutrition or needing assistance with mobility.
- Improving mobility and wellbeing through changes in care rounding process.

Module Leader, Fiona Bastow, said "This was the first run of this module, and the module team were very impressed with the QI proposal ideas that students have created and developed. The ideas reflect the enthusiasm, innovation and hard work that the students have put into this module. We hope that as newly qualified nurses, our students will share and develop their QI proposals for implementation, especially as this is actively encouraged by the Lothian Health Board during the Flying Start Programme. Building towards our new Nursing Programme in 2020, this approach will help to inform and shape future curriculum development." ●



Qualified Adult Nursing student, Rebecca Price, with her prize-winning QI poster