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Faculty and Student Perceptions of Effective Clinical Teachers

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**FACULTY AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE
CLINICAL TEACHERS**

**By
Sylvia A. Counts**

A THESIS

Submitted to

Grand Valley State University

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ABSTRACT
FACULTY AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE
CLINICAL TEACHERS

By
Sylvia Counts

The purpose of this descriptive study was to identify which characteristics of clinical teachers were considered most important by associate degree nursing (ADN) students and faculty, and to investigate whether the perception of effective clinical teacher characteristics (ECTC) change as the student advances toward graduation. Imogene King's conceptual framework for nursing served as the framework for this study. Faculty and students were surveyed using the Clinical Teacher Characteristic Instrument (CTCI). The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. A Mann-Whitney U test was used to investigate if there were significant differences in perceptions between faculty and students. A Kruskal-Wallis test was completed to test for differences among first year ADN students, second year ADN students, and faculty.

The study indicated that ADN faculty and ADN students hold similar perceptions of ECTC, but perceive the ordered rank of importance differently. No significant differences were noted between first year students, second year students, and faculty. Both faculty and students rated characteristics from the category of professional competence as most important.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The importance of the clinical experience in undergraduate nursing education is well documented in nursing literature (Bergman & Gaitskill, 1990; Brown, 1981; Jacobson, 1966; Kanitsaki & Sellick, 1989; Mogan & Knox, 1987; O'Shea & Parsons, 1979; Pugh, 1986; Shoffner, Davis, & Brown, 1994; Windsor, 1987). In the clinical milieu, the student applies classroom theory to real patients in situations that often involve life and death decisions. Because of the risks involved, some learner and teacher anxiety is present. It is this anxiety and the environment itself that combine to make the clinical setting unique (O'Shea & Parsons, 1979).

Learning in the contextual setting of clinical practice brings with it many challenges not normally seen in the classroom. Many variables arise in a setting specifically established for the purpose of patient care. Some of these variables arise from the fact that normally the learning situation cannot be repeated and the setting cannot be controlled specifically for the teaching of students (Brown, 1981; Jacobson, 1966).

Teaching in the clinical area under these conditions is a complex process. Effective or ineffective teaching behaviors can either encourage or discourage learning. Yet, while much research has been conducted on the concept of effective teaching, little research has been carried out regarding faculty and student perceptions of the effective clinical teacher (Brown, 1981). Kirshbaum (1994) reports, "The need to identify

characteristics of effective clinical teaching for undergraduate nursing has increased in conjunction with the renewed interest in faculty practice and the thrust to revive nursing curricula to prepare students for the realities of practice” (p. 306).

According to some authors (Knox & Mogan, 1985; Pugh, 1986), any information obtained regarding student perceptions of helpful clinical teaching behaviors has implications for both nursing education and faculty development. It is essential that clinical teachers be able to identify and incorporate effective teaching behaviors and avoid wasteful, ineffective behaviors (Brown, 1981). In clinical settings, faculty must be educators, collaborators, generators of research ideas, and competent practitioners (Shoffner, 1994). Therefore, effective clinical instruction cannot be explained by examining only one or two teaching behaviors; rather, there appears to be many characteristics that promote effective teaching (Zimmerman & Waltman, 1986).

Research has shown that professional nursing education is saturated with methods passed from generation to generation of nursing faculty and identified as wisdom about effectiveness in clinical teaching. Yet, few aspects of clinical teaching have been thoroughly investigated and validated. A need exists for effective and efficient use of the knowledge that constitutes sound educational practice (Krishbaum, 1994). Identification and investigation of effective characteristics of clinical teachers would appear to be the first step.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify which characteristics of clinical teachers are considered most important by associate degree nursing students and faculty, and to

investigate whether the perception of effective clinical teacher characteristics changed as the student advanced toward graduation.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Conceptual Framework

King's (1981) conceptual framework for nursing served as the framework for this study. King's framework serves as a basis for definitions of concepts, and for proposing relationships among these concepts. King's assumptions (statements of facts), and propositions (statements that express the relationships between the concepts) are modified to define the interaction between clinical faculty and nursing students. Since conceptual frameworks are broad, abstract, and not specific to populations and practice settings, modifications in the above are used in development of the formulation.

King's conceptual framework is composed of three interacting systems: the personal system (individuals), interpersonal system (two interacting individuals forming a dyad), and social system (King 1981; see Figure 1). In the clinical milieu, the personal system (students and faculty) interact with each other in an interpersonal system, and with the environment that King calls the social system (see Figure 2).

According to King (1981), each individual is a personal system. The relevant concepts of the personal system include perception, self, growth and development, body image, and time. *Perception* is considered the major concept of a personal system, the concept that influences all behaviors and to which all other concepts are related (George, 1995).

Interpersonal systems are formed by human beings interacting. The relevant

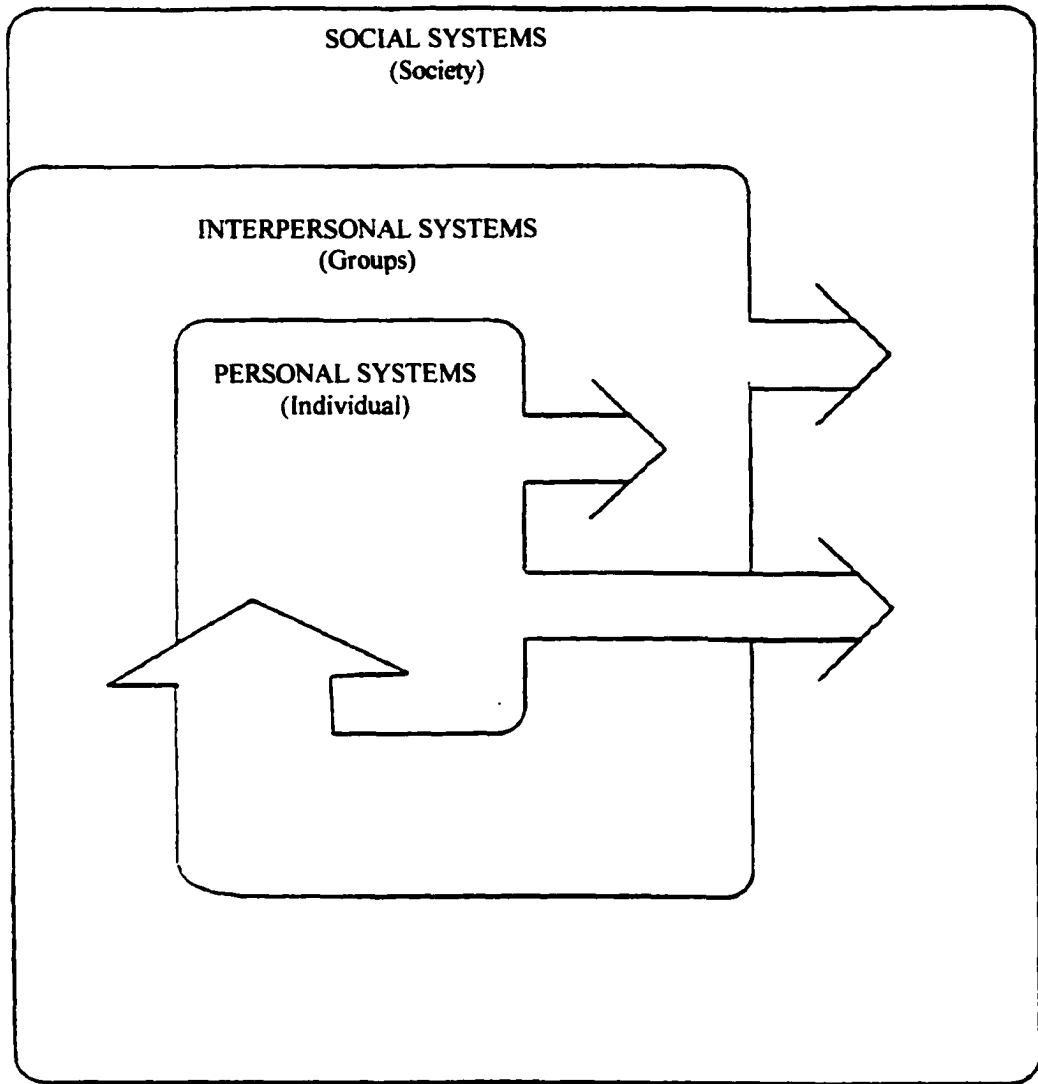


Figure 1. A conceptual framework for nursing: Dynamic interacting systems.
(Adapted from Toward a Theory for Nursing (p. 20), by I. M. King, 1971.
New York: John Wiley & Sons. Reprinted with permission of the author,
I. M. King, Ed.D., R.N.; and Delmar, a division of Thomson Learning.)

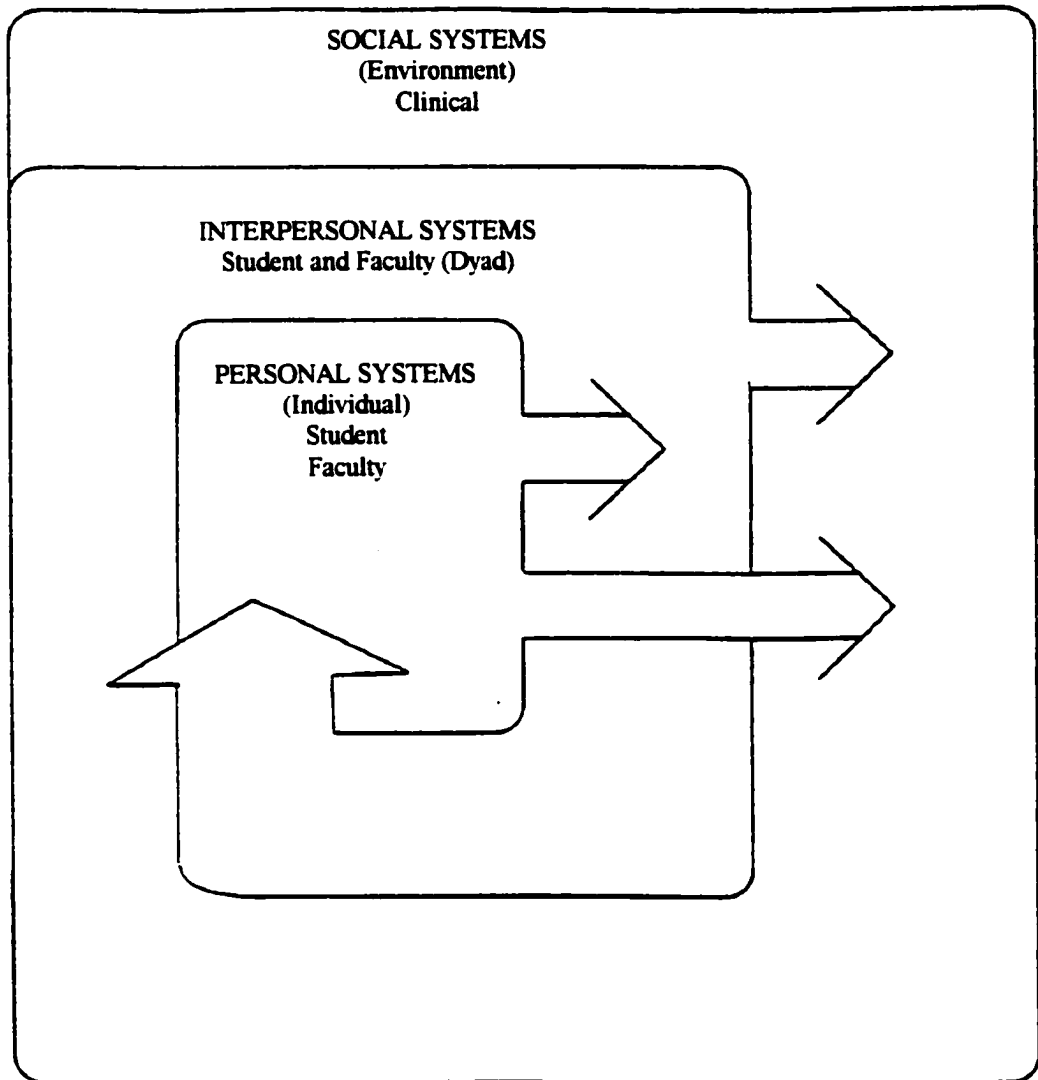


Figure 2. Relationship of students and faculty using King's conceptual framework.

concepts for interpersonal systems are interaction, communication, transaction, role, and stress (King, 1981). The comprehensive or major concept, interaction, is characterized as being influenced by perceptions. Communication and transactions are also influenced by perceptions (George, 1995). In the interpersonal system, perception is a characteristic of human interaction, and along with communication provides a passageway of information from one person to another (King, 1989).

Interpersonal systems join together to form larger systems known as social systems. A social system is defined as an “organized system of social roles, behaviors, and practices developed to maintain values and the mechanisms to regulate the practices and rules” (King, 1981, p. 115). The concepts relevant to social systems include organization, authority, power, status, and decision making. The major concept, organization, “is characterized by structure that arranges positions and activities and relates arrangements of individuals to achieve personal and organizational goals” (George, 1995, p. 215). All the concepts from the personal and interpersonal systems provide knowledge for use within the social system (George, 1995) (see Figure 3).

The concepts as listed are interrelated in the interactions of human beings with their environment. Therefore, placement within each of the three systems is an arbitrary determination. These concepts cut across all three systems and are interrelated. This demonstrates a characteristic of a general systems framework (King, 1989).

Perceptions, which are part of the personal system in King’s conceptual framework, are the foundation of this study. “Perception” is influenced by what we know, what we look for, and what is familiar to us. Perception is universal and experienced by all. It is subjective or personal, and selective for each person. Therefore, each individual

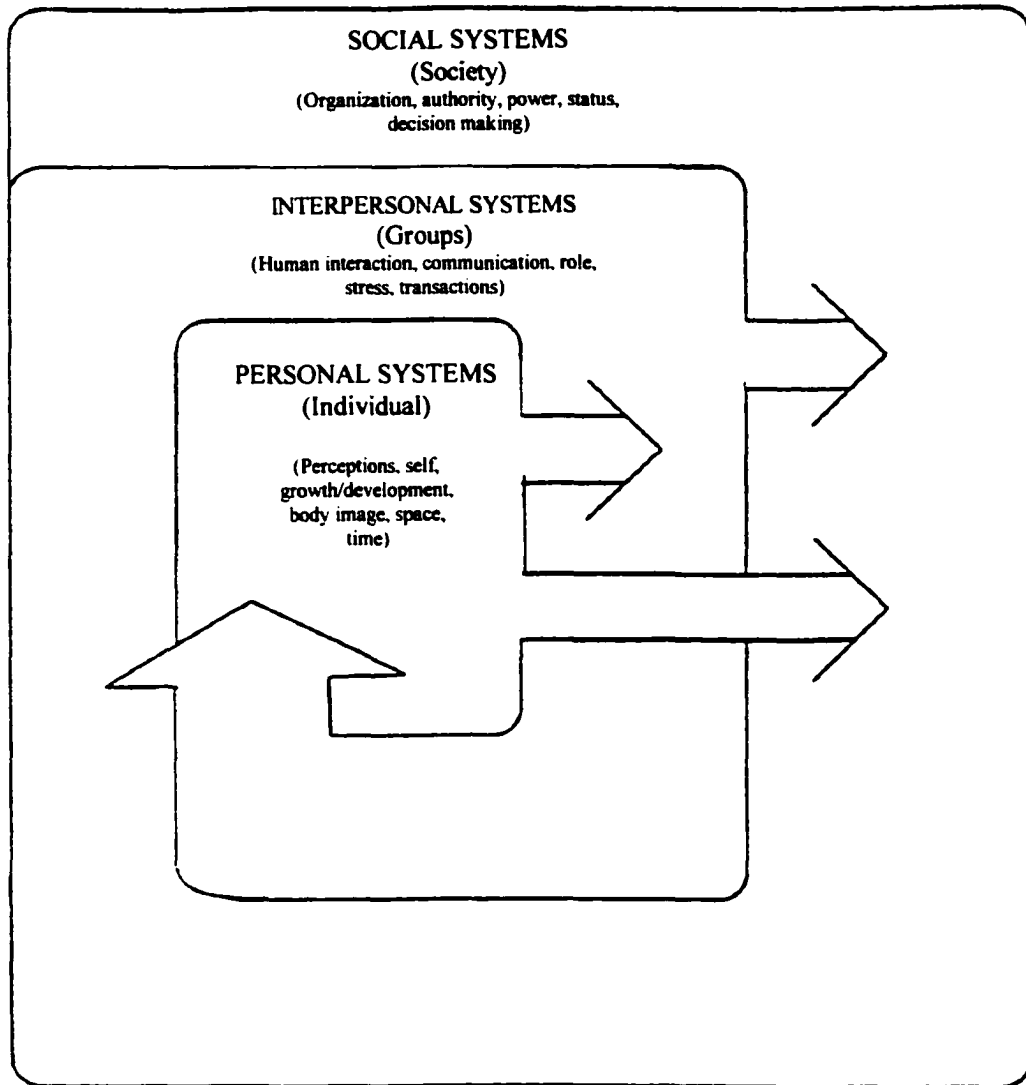


Figure 3. Concepts included in each system of King's conceptual framework.

involved will experience any given situation in a unique manner. Perception is action-oriented in the present and based on information that is available at the time. It gives meaning to one's experience and represents an individual's image of reality and influences one's behavior. Perceptions are subjective and involve organizing, interpreting, and transforming information (George, 1995).

In the clinical area, nursing faculty and students bring with them different backgrounds of knowledge, skills, abilities, needs, values, and goals. Perception varies from one individual to another because each person brings with them a unique background. It is this variety in the background of both the students and the faculty that allows for a complete evaluation of effective characteristics. Each level of nursing student and each faculty member allows for different perspectives due to additional and varied experiences (see Figure 4).

In summary, perception is an important concept used throughout King's conceptual framework. As faculty and students (personal system) interact (interpersonal system) in the clinical area (social system), they organize, interpret and transform information. Through these interactions they arrive at individual, subjective conclusions regarding effective characteristics of clinical faculty. Clinical faculty who are knowledgeable about these effective characteristics of clinical instructors may exhibit them when interacting with students in the clinical area and may ultimately increase the learning of the nursing student. As noted by Toth (1995), "Effective clinical teaching facilitates effective learning. Effective clinical learning facilitates the development of an effective clinician" (p. 6) (see Figure 5).

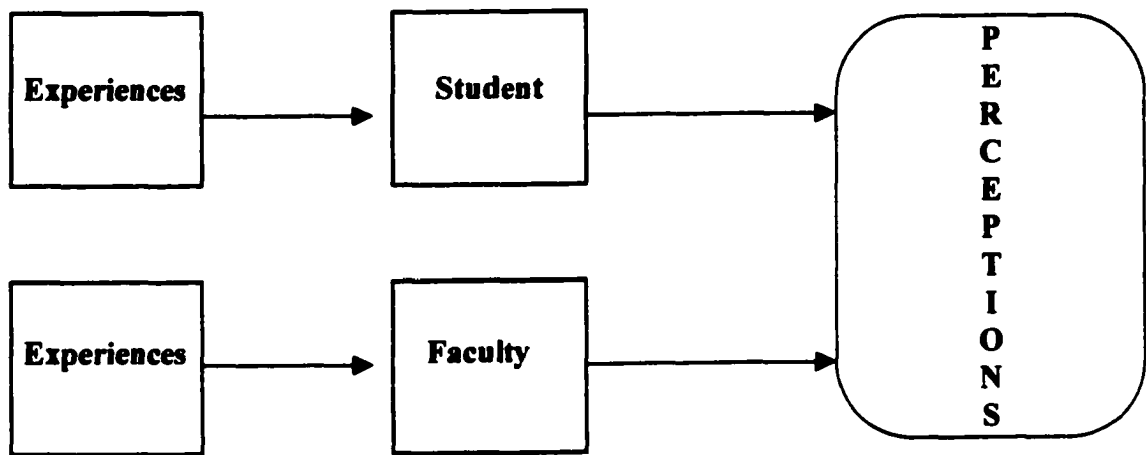


Figure 4. The relationship between experience and perceptions of the personal system.

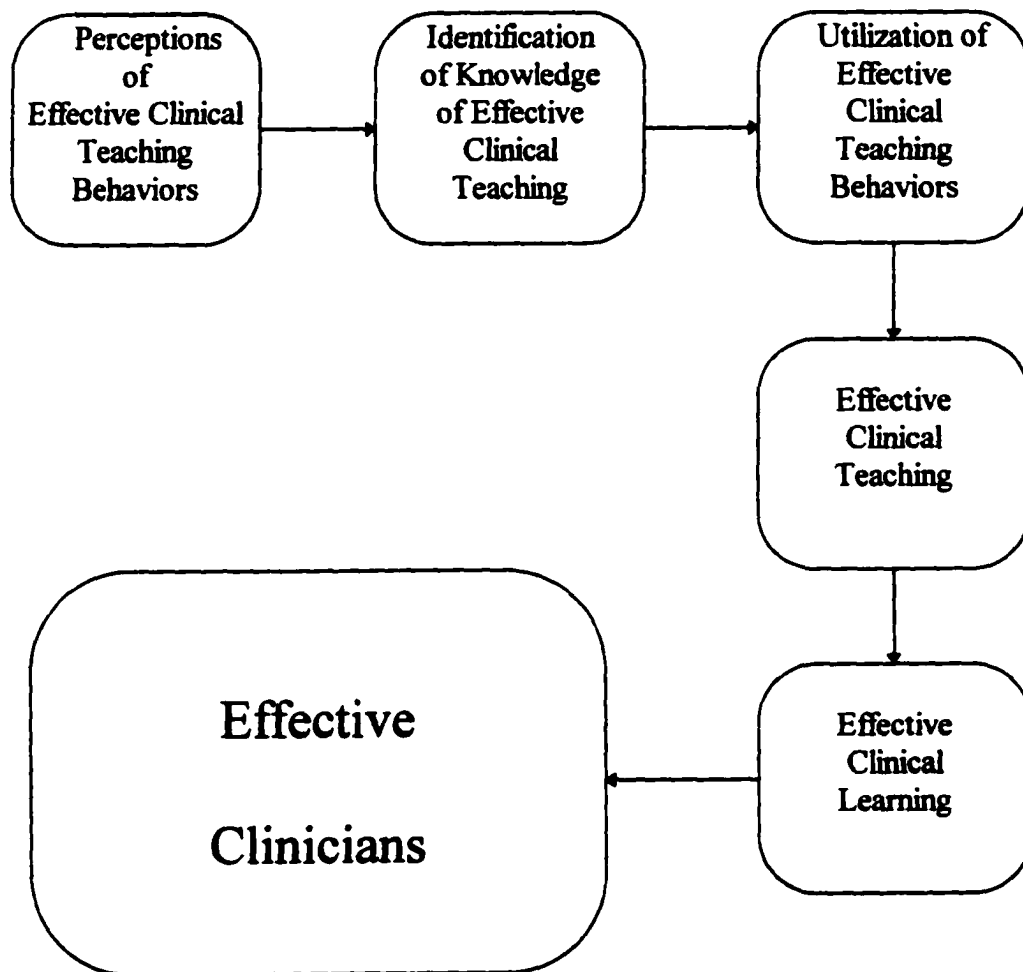


Figure 5. The relationship between perceptions of effective clinical teaching and the effective clinician.

Review of Literature

The focus of this study was on the identification and comparison of effective clinical teaching behaviors as perceived by students and faculty in one associate degree school of nursing. The foundation of this study was the work of Brown (1981). Her study along with similar studies are summarized in this chapter.

Barham (1965) was one of the earliest to use a critical incident technique to identify effective nursing behaviors of nursing faculty. The sample selected consisted of all teaching personnel and nursing students in 13 associate degree programs in California. The respondents included 64 instructors and 102 students at both the first and second year levels. A group interview was used to collect the data. The study identified 19 teaching behaviors which respondents considered critical. Teaching behavior was described in all areas - classroom, counseling situations, and clinical areas. Analysis of the data noted 53 different examples of effective, and 52 different examples of ineffective teaching behaviors. Interestingly, although eighty percent (80%) of the incidents collected described some aspect of relationship behaviors, the faculty wrote fewer incidents in the area of "relationships". The findings indicated that there was not complete agreement among the respondents as to which teaching behavior was the most critical.

Jacobson (1966) also used a modified form of the critical incident technique to identify effective and ineffective behaviors of faculty as described by undergraduate students in five university programs. The population sample included 961 of the undergraduate students in five university schools in the southern region. In this study, the students determined effectiveness or ineffectiveness. A total of 1,345 critical incidents were collected, of which 1,182 were usable according to stated criteria. The data were

analyzed for frequency and percentage and were tested for significance by the use of the chi-square and Kendall's Tau-c. "The critical requirements, stated in positive terms, were derived from the effective and ineffective incidents by content analysis, categorization, and final review by three judges" (Jacobson, 1966, p.220). The 1,182 usable critical incidents were categorized, grouped, and regrouped. From these findings 58 critical requirements for the teaching of nursing were derived and placed into six major categories. These six categories included: availability to the students, apparent general knowledge and professional competence, interpersonal relations with students and others, teaching practices, personal characteristics, and evaluation characteristics. These critical characteristics (requirements) were in agreement with those of Barham (1965) with few exceptions. As with Barham's (1965) study, teaching was described in all areas and not limited to the clinical setting.

Specific limitations noted in Jacobson's (1966) study include the data collection from only one region of the United States. Other regions need to be studied to test the reliability of the method and to rule out the possibility of regional differences. Also a more diversified sample should be used and both faculty and student responses collected.

O'Shea and Parsons (1979) focused on the clinical milieu and identified and compared effective and ineffective clinical teaching behaviors as described by students and faculty in one private baccalaureate school of nursing. Two hundred five students (junior and senior students) and 24 faculty members were surveyed as to what teaching behaviors they perceived as effective and ineffective. A simple two-question format was used with instructions to identify 3-5 teaching behaviors that facilitated or interfered with learning. Data analysis was completed with tallied key words and phrases and expressed in

percentages for each group and then sorted into three broad categories. These categories included evaluation, instruction/assistance, and personal behaviors. Effective behaviors noted by both faculty and students included positive feedback, honest feedback, faculty availability, and willingness to help.

Further analysis by O'Shea and Parsons (1979) indicated that faculty suggested role modeling as an effective behavior five times as often as students did. When students' responses were further analyzed according to class standing, more seniors than juniors identified effective and ineffective behaviors in the area of evaluations. More junior students saw faculty willingness to help as effective, while senior students stressed that allowing them to recognize and correct their own errors as more important. The author related this to the seniors' greater experience and independence.

Specific limitations within O'Shea and Parsons' (1979) study included the deficit of no statistical significance. It would have been relevant to examine demographic data including the educational preparation and clinical teaching experience of the faculty, and to conduct statistical tests of correlation of these variables. Also, as noted by the authors, the findings would be more generalizable if data were gathered from more than one school.

Brown (1981) examined baccalaureate students and faculty perceptions of effective clinical teachers. For the study, Brown developed a 20-item Likert-type questionnaire called the Clinical Teacher Characteristics Instrument (CTCI). The 20 characteristics were divided into three categories: professional competence, relationship with students, and personal attributes. Study participants included a convenience sample of 82 senior nursing students and 42 faculty members from an eastern university. A

descriptive research approach was utilized for Brown's (1981) study. The statistical measures used included frequency, percentages, and chi-square. Through the analysis of the collected data, these statistical measurements were used to determine how baccalaureate nursing students and faculty compared in their perceptions of characteristics of effective clinical teachers.

Brown (1981) hypothesized that students and instructors would be similar in their descriptions of effective characteristics of the clinical teacher. This hypothesis was not supported. The results indicated that the nursing students regarded the instructor's relationship with students as more important than professional competence. Faculty regarded professional competence as the most important characteristic. Both groups ranked personal attributes as the lowest. Brown also found significant differences between the values of the two groups in areas such as faculty relationship of theory to practice, supervision in experiences without taking over, self-control, cooperativeness, freedom of discussion, and venting of feelings. The items that both groups noted as being in the top five characteristics of an effective teacher included: provides useful feedback on student progress, and is objective and fair in the evaluation of the student. A noted limitation of the study by Brown (1981) was that the research was used on a small sample from a single institution. She suggests the study be replicated in other regions of the United States to rule out the possibility of regional differences.

A study that replicated and extended Brown's (1981) study, Bergman and Gaitskill (1990), included a comparison of the findings between the grade level of students. They also wanted to investigate whether the perception of effective teaching behavior shifts as students progress through the nursing program. Using Brown's instrument, the Clinical

Teacher Characteristics Instrument, the researchers used a convenience sample of 134 baccalaureate students from three grade levels and 23 faculty members from a college of nursing in southwestern Ohio. A descriptive research approach was used. The information was gathered, compiled and descriptive analysis was applied. Various statistical measures, such as simple frequency, percentage, and chi-square were used on the data.

In Bergman and Gaitskill's (1990) study, both groups valued the student-faculty relationship as more effective than professional or personal attributes of the instructor. Students were more concerned with communication-related characteristics, while faculty were more concerned with instructor interest in patients. Both faculty and students were found to value instructors who were well informed, effective communicators, objective and fair in evaluation, providers of feedback, and honest and direct. Faculty also ranked characteristics dealing with the clinical instructor's relationship with students as more important than those dealing with professional competence. This is contradictory to Brown's findings.

According to Bergman and Gaitskill (1990), the results of their study tended to show a relatively high degree of congruity between their study and Brown's. "That congruity appears to cut across the faculty-student line and geographic and time differences, suggesting that the findings are transferable" (p. 41).

The question of whether the student perceptions of the characteristics of effective clinical instructors would become more similar to faculty perceptions as the level of education increased was only partially answered by Bergman and Gaitskill (1990). There was no broad-based convergence between the views of students as the education level

increased with those of the faculty. However, there was a trend identified in responses concerning certain characteristics, including the characteristic of showing genuine interest in the patients and their care.

Limitations as noted by Bergman and Gaitskill (1990) included the sample size and the selection from only one institution. The authors also recommend that multiple measurements over time would have provided further data to be analyzed.

Miller (1992), in an unpublished master's thesis, replicated the study of Bergman and Gaitskill (1990) which was replicated from a study done by Brown (1981). As with Bergman and Gaitskill (1990), she not only compared the perceptions of students and faculty but also compared the perceptions by grade level of the student. The CTCI was used and distributed to 139 students and 19 faculty members at a university college of nursing in western Michigan to solicit their perceptions. Comparison of this study with the previous studies shows "a common direction in student and faculty perceptions of effective characteristics of clinical teachers" (Miller, 1992, p. ii). However, some differences were acknowledged. The student and faculty groups both perceived characteristics of clinical teachers related to professional competence to be most important. The nursing students also regarded professional competence and instructor's relationships with students equally important and personal attributes of clinical instructors as least important. The results of Miller's (1992) study do not agree with the results of the studies of Brown (1981) and Bergman and Gaitskill (1990) where relationships with instructors was found to be most important. Miller also noted that faculty did identify professional competence as the primary characteristics being most important. This is also

in agreement with Brown's (1981) study, but does not agree with Bergman and Gaitskill (1990).

In regard to the changes in perceptions as the student progresses through the educational program, few differences were seen in Miller's (1992) study at different student levels. However, the students did make a steady progression toward the same perceptions of the faculty.

In summary, there are differences between Miller's (1992) study and those of Brown (1981), and Bergman and Gaitskill (1990). For example, Brown noted a marked level of faculty interest in applying theory to practice. That type of interest was noted also in the Miller (1992) study, but not in the Bergman and Gaitskill study (1990). Also, as previously noted, the student groups in the Miller (1992) study did not feel instructor relationships were of any greater importance than professional competence. This is unlike both the two previous studies. However, as stated by Miller, "there is a great deal of congruence between this study, Brown's (1981), and Bergman and Gaitskill's (1990), which would suggest a clinical teacher would increase his/her effectiveness by concentrating on the characteristics identified as most effective" (p. 55).

Clinical teacher behaviors were also identified by Mogan and Knox (1985) as perceived by university nursing faculty, students, and practicing baccalaureate graduates. The instrument that was developed by the authors contained 47 items. Each item specified a clinical teacher characteristic which was clustered into five categories: teaching ability, nursing competence, personality traits, interpersonal relationships, and evaluation. The exploratory study was completed at a university school of nursing in western Canada. The instrument was completed by 393 students currently enrolled in the nursing program, 49

faculty members, and 45 randomly chosen baccalaureate graduates practicing nursing throughout British Columbia. Results showed similar perceptions of the importance of clinical behaviors between the three groups of participants. All three groups rated evaluation as most important, while personality characteristics were rated as least important. This supports findings by Brown (1981) and O'Shea and Parsons (1979). However, important differences were found between the three groups of participants when the perceptions of students in each of the 4 years of the nursing program, faculty and graduates were compared.

Characteristics of the best and worst clinical instructors were identified in another study by Mogan and Knox (1987). The Nursing Clinical Teacher Effectiveness Inventory (NCTEI), developed by the authors, was the research instrument and contained 48 clinical teacher characteristics grouped into the five categories used in the earlier study. Twenty-eight clinical teachers and their 173 undergraduate students participated in the study. Data collection for this descriptive study was conducted in seven university schools of nursing located in the western part of Canada and the United States. The highest rated characteristics of best clinical teachers were perceived similarly by both groups. Faculty and students perceived "best" clinical teachers as good role models who enjoyed nursing and teaching. O'Shea and Parsons (1979) have also cited role modeling as a critical clinical teacher behavior. There was less agreement between the two groups on characteristics of "worst" teachers. Student reluctance to comment on their clinical teachers' weaknesses was also noted by O'Shea and Parsons (1979). Eight of 10 items rated highest by students were among those rated highest by faculty, while only 6 of the 10 lowest rated characteristics were similar.

Nehring (1990) replicated the 1987 study of Mogan and Knox using the NCTEI with 63 baccalaureate nursing faculty and 121 baccalaureate nursing students in 11 collegiate schools of nursing located in Ohio. As with Mogan and Knox (1987), the results showed that the “best” clinical teachers are good role models, enjoy nursing, enjoy teaching, and demonstrate clinical skills and judgment. The most critical characteristics differentiating the “best” and “worst” clinical teachers were being a good role model and encouraging mutual respect. This finding is consistent with other research by O’Shea and Parsons (1979) and Knox and Mogan (1987).

In a study researched by Sieh and Bell (1994), a sample of students and faculty from associate degree nursing programs were selected to examine student’s and faculty’s perceptions of important characteristics of clinical teachers. Other than Barham (1965), all previous studies used baccalaureate faculty and/or students for their samples. A convenience sample of 199 students and 20 faculty from two southwestern community colleges was used for Sieh and Bell’s (1994) study. Perceptions of effective characteristics of clinical teachers were measured using a modified NCTEI. All 48 items were rated highly by both students and faculty. Students’ and faculty’s perceptions of important characteristics of effective clinical teachers by subsets were not significantly different. Considering few studies have been done at the associate degree level, the results were comparable except for the characteristic regarding “good role-modeling” which was not rated as highly in this study as in previous studies of baccalaureate students. The students’ rating of the personal subset as being of lowest importance is in agreement with the findings by Brown (1981) and O’Shea and Parsons (1979). The highest rating assigned to evaluation, and the lowest rating assigned to personality is congruent with

studies done by Brown (1981) and Mogan and Knox (1987). Students' and faculty's perceptions of important characteristic of effective clinical teachers were not statistically different. Differences were found by Barham (1965), Brown (1981), and O'Shea and Parsons (1979), but not by Knox and Mogan (1985) and Mogan and Knox (1987).

Regarding nursing students' perceptions changing as the student level of education increases, two subsets were found to have a statistically significant difference. Level 1/second-semester students rated teaching ability significantly higher than level 2/second-semester students. Level 1/second-semester students rated nursing competence significantly higher than both Level 1/first-semester and Level 2/first-semester. The students' perceptions did not become more similar to faculty's perceptions as the level of education increased. Level 1/second-semester students' perceptions were most similar to the faculty's in the subsets of teaching ability and nursing competence.

Summary

It is apparent that effective clinical instruction cannot be demonstrated by examining only a few teaching behaviors. It would appear that there are many characteristics that encourage effective teaching that have been identified in the review of the literature. However, as noted in the literature, there are similarities and differences when comparing these studies. This phenomenon indicates that further investigation is needed. Nursing education needs further research regarding clinical teaching as a basis for a theoretical approach to clinical instruction. Moreover, additional studies are needed at the associate degree level to determine if there are similarities with research being done at the baccalaureate level. Literature related specifically to teaching at the associate degree

level is limited. The importance of the current study is the focus on the associate degree nursing student and faculty.

Hypotheses

1. Associate degree nursing students and faculty will differ in their perceptions of the importance of selected characteristics of effective clinical teachers.
2. Associate degree nursing students will identify instructor-student relationships as the most important characteristic of effective clinical teachers.
3. Associate degree nursing faculty will identify professional competence as the primary characteristic of effective clinical teachers.
4. As progression in the educational program occurs, student perceptions of the characteristics of effective clinical teachers will become more similar to those of the faculty.

Definition of Terms

1. Associate degree nursing student - a student who has been admitted into a nursing program in a community college, is engaged in the study of nursing, and who will receive an associate degree in nursing upon graduation.
2. Associate degree nursing faculty - all teachers who are on staff at a community college and who teach nursing classes.
3. Characteristic - a distinguishing trait or quality.
4. Effective - producing a desired result: accomplishing goals and expectations.
5. Clinical teacher - an instructor of nursing students in the practice setting.
6. Perceptions - "a process of organizing, interpreting, and transforming information from sense data and memory. It is a process of human transactions

with the environment. It gives meaning to one's experience, represents one's image of reality, and influences one's behavior" (King, 1981, p. 24).

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Design

The goal of a descriptive study is to organize, summarize and present information in a usable understandable form. Descriptive studies do not focus on relationships among variables, but rather describe and document aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs. Descriptive study designs are formulated to gain more information about characteristics within a particular field of study and have as their main objective the accurate portrayal of the characteristics of the study group. The main objective of this study was the accurate portrayal of effective clinical teaching characteristics as perceived by both associate degree nursing students and clinical faculty. Therefore, a descriptive research approach was utilized.

Sample and Setting

According to Polit and Hungler (1991), “convenience sampling entails the use of the most conveniently available persons or objects for use as subjects in a study. The faculty member who distributes questionnaires to the nursing students in her or his class is using a convenience sample” (p. 257). Based on these facts, the sampling method used for this study is considered a convenience sample.

This study was conducted using associate degree nursing students and instructors at a community college located in southwestern Michigan. The student respondents were enrolled in clinical courses, and the faculty were concurrently teaching nursing courses and

had experience in clinical teaching. The sample included 45 first year nursing students, and 32 second year nursing students. Faculty numbered eight full-time and seven part-time instructors.

Instrument

The Clinical Teacher Characteristics Instrument (CTCI) was developed by Brown (1981) and also used by Bergman and Gaitskill (1990). Section one of the questionnaire identifies 20 characteristics of clinical teachers (See Appendix A). These characteristics are rated using a Likert-type scale with a stated rating code ranging from “of most importance” to “of no importance”. The characteristics are also divided into three categories: professional competence, relationship with students, and personal attributes (See Appendix B). Section two of the tool requires the subjects to select five characteristics from the list of 20 that they consider most important for a clinical teacher to utilize. Section three pertains to information used solely for demographic data.

According to Brown (1981), the process of establishing content validity of the tool was undertaken in a graduate level research course consisting of graduate nursing students and faculty. The content of the instrument was evaluated by this group and revisions were made accordingly. Since its development, several studies have been done using the CTCI in which reliability and validity have been tested. However, reliability coefficients were not published in these studies. Frontczak (1999) ran a reliability coefficient on the CTCI and found the reliability coefficient for the overall instrument as .85. The reliability coefficient on the overall instrument for this study was .88. According to Polit and Hungler (1989), for most purposes, reliability coefficients above .70 are considered

satisfactory. Also, according to Bergman and Gaitskill (1990), the ranking of five characteristics in order of importance also helped to determine reliability and validity.

Procedure

Permission to use the CTCI was obtained from the developer of the instrument, Sylvia Brown (1991). Additional authorization for revisions of the demographic questions was also obtained (See Appendix C). Permission was then obtained from the Human Research Review Committee at Grand Valley State University to proceed with the research project (See Appendix D). The Human Research Review Committee received copies of the CTCI along with specific documentation explaining the research purpose and protocol. The coordinator of the nursing program and the nursing faculty were then contacted to allow for participation in the research study (See Appendix E).

After obtaining the necessary permission, classrooms were entered based on the time frame given to this investigator by the faculty. All nursing students were tested on the same day. A verbal and written explanation was given to each potential participant describing the questionnaire and assuring confidentiality (See Appendix F). Return of the completed questionnaire implied voluntary participation. The investigator then distributed the survey to the participants and provided a container in the front of the classroom in which to return the surveys. Both the faculty member and the investigator left the room during the completion of the instrument. This was done to provide the greatest possible return of completed surveys and also help assure anonymity. Anonymous responses kept any risk to the participants at a negligible level. Time for questions was allowed after the instrument was distributed.

Full time faculty questionnaires were completed during a faculty meeting following the same procedure used with the students. Adjunct faculty members were contacted by mail and requested to complete the survey and return it by mail using the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Characteristics of Subjects

This study included 15 faculty members and 77 students (N=92). The student population consisted of 45 second semester first year associate degree nursing students and 32 second semester second year associate degree nursing students.

All subjects completed a demographic sample survey found in section three of the Clinical Teacher Characteristics Instrument (CTCI). Of the faculty sample, 73.3% (n=11) were 41 years or older in age. The remainder of the faculty sample were between 31 - 40 years of age (n=4). A majority of the faculty members were married (73.3%, n=11). A majority of the first year ADN students were between the ages of 20 - 25 (51.1%, n=23) and a majority of these students were single (60%, n=27). A majority of second year ADN students were between the ages of 20 - 30 (71.9%, n=33), and 65.6% were married (n=21) (Table 1).

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Through utilization of the collected data, statistical measures were implemented to identify which characteristics of clinical teachers were considered most important by associate degree nursing students and faculty, and to investigate whether the perception of effective clinical teacher characteristics changed as the student advanced toward graduation.

Table 1

Demographic Data of Surveyed Groups

	Age					Marital Status			
	20-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	+41	S	M	D	W
Group 1	First Year ADN Students								
n = 45	23	5	5	6	6	27	10	8	0
%	51.1	11.1	11.1	13.3	13.3	60.0	22.2	17.8	0
Group 2	Second Year ADN Students								
n = 32	12	11	5	4	0	8	21	3	0
%	37.5	34.4	15.6	12.5	0	25.0	65.6	9.4	0
Group 3	ADN Faculty								
n = 15	0	0	2	2	11	1	11	1	2
%	0	0	13.3	13.3	73.3	6.7	73.3	6.7	13.3

Note. S = never been married
M = married
D = divorced
W = widowed

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis states that associate degree nursing students and faculty will differ in their perceptions of the importance of selected characteristics of effective clinical teachers. A Mann-Whitney U test was applied to the ordinal data to determine the differences between students and faculty in their perceptions of the importance of selected characteristics. A $p < .05$ level was used as criteria justifying a significant difference. When all associate degree nursing students and faculty were compared, the results showed no significant differences for any of the 20 characteristics. Therefore, this hypothesis was not supported. A Mann-Whitney U test was then applied to the ordinal data to determine differences between first year associate degree nursing students and faculty, and again to determine differences between second year associate degree nursing students and faculty. The results showed no significant differences between first year nursing students and faculty, but did show a significant difference ($p = .045$) for one item when comparing second year nursing students to the faculty (Table 2). This item was number 3, "relates underlying theory to nursing practice." The response to item 3 was the only characteristic that reflected a significant difference between faculty and student groups. The remaining 19 items did not reflect any significant differences.

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis states that associate degree nursing students will identify instructor-student relationships as the most important characteristic of effective clinical teachers. Descriptive statistics including frequency distribution, percentages, and mean item ranking were completed on the obtained data from section one and section two of the CTCI. Also, as done in the studies of Brown (1981), Bergman and Gaitskill (1990), and

Table 2

Mann-Whitney U Test for Differences Between Second Year Nursing Students and Faculty Perceptions for Item 3, Relates Underlying Theory to Nursing Practice

Status	N	Mean Rank	U	Z	P
Student	32	26.58	157.500	-2.005	.045*
Faculty	15	18.50			

Note. *p < .05

Miller (1992), the 20 characteristics listed on the CTCI were classified into three categories (See Appendix B). The three categories were: professional competence, relationship with students, and personal attributes. Table 3 identifies the distribution of student responses by percentages to each of the items in section one of the instrument. As indicated by Table 3, the top five items selected by all students as being of most important include: item 6, "is well informed and able to communicate knowledge to students"; item 13, "encourages students to feel free to ask questions or to ask for help"; item 14, "is objective and fair in the evaluation of the students"; item 2, "shows genuine interest in patients and their care"; and item 5, "conveys confidence in and respect for the student." Of these five chosen items, items 6, 14, and 2 were listed as characteristics indicating professional competency. Items 13 and 5 were categorized as pertaining to instructor-student relationships. In addition, the student ranking of the five most important characteristics when listed by mean item ranking (Table 4) also indicate that three of the five top rankings are from the category of professional competency, and two of the five items are associated with instructor-student relationships. In order of mean item ranking (a=1, b=2, c=3, d=4, e=5), the findings of the student groups (Table 4) were congruent with the top five clinical teaching characteristics as listed in the percent distribution of responses (Table 3). Therefore, this hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis states associate degree nursing faculty will identify professional competence as the primary characteristic of effective clinical teachers. As indicated by Table 5, the top six characteristics noted in the percent distribution of

Table 3

**Percent Distribution of Responses by All Students
(n = 77)**

Item	Response Choices				
	a	b	c	d	e
	%	%	%	%	%
1	31.1	42.9	26.0	--	--
2	49.4	41.5	9.1	--	--
3	23.4	45.4	27.3	3.9	--
4	15.5	18.2	45.5	16.9	3.9
5	46.7	46.7	6.5	--	--
* 6	68.8	28.6	2.6	--	--
7	37.7	45.4	15.6	1.3	--
8	31.2	32.5	35.1	1.3	--
9	27.3	53.2	16.9	2.6	--
10	32.5	57.1	10.4	--	--
11	29.9	44.1	24.7	1.3	--
12	40.3	44.2	14.3	1.3	--
* 13	51.9	29.9	18.2	--	--
* 14	51.9	32.5	15.6	--	--
15	41.6	44.1	14.3	--	--
16	27.3	41.6	27.3	3.9	--
17	26.0	54.5	19.5	--	--
18	23.4	40.3	33.8	2.6	--
19	24.7	38.9	27.3	7.8	1.3
20	36.4	41.6	22.1	--	--

Note. * = 50% or more rated this item of most importance.
a = of most importance
b = very important
c = important
d = slightly important
e = of no importance

Table 4

10 Most Effective Clinical Teaching Behaviors Ranked by All ADN Students

Behavior (Item #)	Mean Item Rank	Standard Deviation
1. Well Informed (6)	1.34	.53
2. Shows Genuine Interest (2)	1.60	.65
3. Conveys Confidence (5)	1.60	.61
4. Objective and Fair (14)	1.64	.74
5. Encourages Students (13)	1.66	.77
6. Demonstrates Skills . . . (15)	1.73	.70
7. Is Honest and Direct (12)	1.77	.74
8. Is Patient and Cooperative (10)	1.78	.62
9. Helps Without Taking Over (7)	1.81	.74
10. Available to Students (20)	1.86	.76

Note. n = 77

Table 5

Percent Distribution of Responses by All Faculty
(n = 15)

Item	Response Choices				
	a	b	c	d	e
	%	%	%	%	%
1	33.3	60.0	6.7	--	--
* 2	53.3	46.7	--	--	--
* 3	53.3	26.7	20.0	--	--
4	46.7	46.7	6.7	--	--
5	40.0	53.3	6.7	--	--
* 6	73.3	26.7	--	--	--
7	33.3	46.7	20.0	--	--
8	26.7	46.7	26.7	--	--
9	40.0	53.3	6.7	--	--
10	26.7	60.0	13.3	--	--
11	20.0	73.3	6.7	--	--
12	40.0	60.0	--	--	--
13	46.7	46.7	6.7	--	--
* 14	60.0	40.0	--	--	--
* 15	60.0	40.0	--	--	--
16	40.0	53.3	6.7	--	--
17	46.7	33.3	6.7	13.3	--
* 18	53.3	40.0	6.7	--	--
19	13.3	40.0	33.3	13.3	--
20	26.7	53.3	20.0	--	--

Note. * = 50% or more rated this item of most importance.
a = of most importance
b = very important
c = important
d = slightly important
e = of no importance

responses by faculty include: item 2, “shows genuine interest in patients and their care”; item 3, “relates underlying theory to nursing practice”; item 6, “is well informed and able to communicate knowledge to students”; item 14, “is objective and fair in the evaluation of the student”; item 15, “demonstrates skills, attitudes, and values that are to be developed by the student in the clinical area”; and item 18, “is flexible when the occasion calls for it.” Six items rather than five are listed because items 2, 3, and 18 have the same percentage rate of 53.3%. Items 2, 3, 6, 13, and 14 are categorized as relating to professional competency. Item 18 relates to student-instructor relationships. It is interesting to note that the faculty group felt all of the items were of some importance; therefore, none of these subjects marked an item (e) - of no importance. Also, faculty listed only two items; “shows enthusiasm for teaching” (item 17), and “permits freedom of discussion and venting of feelings” (item 19), of slight importance. These findings are congruent with the mean item ranking by faculty (Table 6) where the first four items by ranking are from the category of professional competency. The fifth item is from the category of student-faculty relationships.

In section two of the CTCI, the subjects were asked to choose the five most important characteristics and rank them in order of importance. Table 7 indicates the frequency of each item that was ranked as one of the most important characteristics. The faculty’s (n=15) most frequent responses were to item 6, “is well informed and able to communicate knowledge to students”; item 3, “relates underlying theory to nursing practice”; item 15, “demonstrates skills, attitudes, and values that are to be developed by the student in the clinical area”; item 2, “shows genuine interest in patients and their care”;

Table 6

10 Most Effective Clinical Teaching Behaviors Ranked by All ADN Faculty

Behavior (Item #)	Mean Item Rank	Standard Deviation
1. Well Informed (6)	1.27	.46
2. Objective and Fair (14)	1.40	.51
3. Demonstrates Skills . . . (15)	1.40	.51
4. Shows Genuine Interest (2)	1.47	.52
5. Is Honest and Direct (12)	1.60	.51
6. Encourages Students (13)	1.60	.63
7. Conveys Confidence (5)	1.67	.62
8. Relates Theory (3)	1.67	.82
9. Provides Feedback (9)	1.67	.62
10. Stimulates Students (16)	1.67	.62

Note. n = 15

Table 7

Frequency of Responses to Section II Items

Item	First Year Students n = 45	Second Year Students n = 32	All Students n = 77	Faculty n = 15
1	15	8	23	3
2	16	16	32*	6*
3	10	4	14	8*
4	6	5	11	1
5	18	14	32*	4
6	25	15	40*	10*
7	12	9	21	1
8	4	4	8	3
9	6	6	12	6*
10	11	10	21	2
11	8	8	16	2
12	19	8	27*	3
13	13	9	22	5
14	12	6	18	5
15	21	10	31*	6*
16	5	9	14	5
17	6	6	12	5
18	5	1	6	0
19	5	3	8	1
20	8	10	18	0

Note. * = Items ranked most often in the top five.

and item 9, “provides useful feedback on student progress.” The faculty rankings of the top five characteristics from section two of the CTCI, indicate that all five of the top rankings are related to professional competency.

Hypothesis Four

The fourth hypothesis states as progression in the educational program occurs, student perceptions of the characteristics of effective clinical teachers will become more similar to those of the faculty. To determine if there was a significant difference between first year associate degree nursing students, second year associate degree nursing students, and associate degree nursing faculty, a Kruskal-Wallis test was applied. Again, a $p < .05$ level was used to indicate a significant difference in responses. The statistical evidence of the 20 characteristics failed to demonstrate any significant differences between the surveyed groups. Therefore, this hypothesis was not supported.

In addition, descriptive statistics including frequency, percentages, and mean item ranking were completed on the obtained data from section one and section two of the CTCI to examine what clinical teacher characteristics were important to first year ADN students and second year ADN students. Although the Kruskal-Wallis test showed no significant differences, comparisons of the descriptive statistics did indicate some important similarities and differences between the groups.

Table 8 demonstrates the percent distribution of each item of the CTCI by first year nursing students. Those items listed by more than 50% of these nursing students as being most important include items 6, 13, and 14. These items include: “is well informed and able to communicate knowledge to students,” “encourages students to feel free to ask

Table 8

**Percent Distribution of Responses by First Year Students
(n = 45)**

Item	Response Choices				
	a	b	c	d	e
	%	%	%	%	%
1	40.0	33.3	26.7	--	--
2	46.7	44.4	8.9	--	--
3	26.7	44.4	22.2	6.7	--
4	15.6	22.2	48.9	11.1	2.2
5	44.4	51.1	4.4	--	--
* 6	73.3	24.4	2.2	--	--
7	37.8	48.9	11.1	2.2	--
8	28.9	42.2	26.7	2.2	--
9	26.7	51.1	22.2	--	--
10	24.4	68.9	6.7	--	--
11	31.1	44.4	22.2	2.2	--
12	40.0	44.4	15.6	--	--
* 13	53.3	31.1	15.6	--	--
* 14	60.0	28.9	11.1	--	--
15	44.4	44.4	11.1	--	--
16	28.9	33.3	31.1	6.7	--
17	26.7	55.6	17.8	--	--
18	26.7	35.6	37.8	--	--
19	22.4	46.7	20.0	6.7	2.2
20	33.3	48.9	17.8	--	--

Note. * = 50% or more rated this item of most importance.
a = of most importance
b = very important
c = important
d = slightly important
e = of no importance

questions or to ask for help,” and “is objective and fair in the evaluation of the student.” In addition, 40% or more of the first year nursing students also listed items 2, 5, and 15 as being most important. These items include: “shows genuine interest in patients and their care”; “conveys confidence in and respect for the student”; and “demonstrates skill, attitudes, and values that are to be developed by the student in the clinical area.”

Table 9 shows the percent distribution of responses by second year students. Fifty per cent or more of this group of students marked items 2, 5, 6, and 13 as being most important. These items include: “shows genuine interest in patients and their care,” “conveys confidence in and respect for the student,” “is well informed and able to communicate knowledge to students,” and “encourages students to feel free to ask questions or to ask for help.” Additionally, over 40% of the second year nursing students indicated items 10, 12 and 20 as most important. These items include: “is self-controlled, cooperative, and patient”; “is honest and direct with students”; and “is available to work with students as situations arise in the clinical setting.”

Tables 10 and 11 list the mean item ranking of first year nursing students and second year nursing students. In order of mean item ranking, the findings of the two student groups are congruent with the top five clinical teaching characteristics as listed in the percent distribution of responses. It is interesting to note that when viewed in terms of the mean item ranking, the same top ten characteristics of clinical teachers are perceived by both first year students and second year students. However, while both groups considered these characteristics as important, there were differences in the degree of importance they held for certain items.

Table 9

Percent Distribution of Responses by Second Year Students
(n = 32)

Item	Response Choices				
	a	b	c	d	e
	%	%	%	%	%
1	18.8	56.3	25.0	--	--
* 2	53.1	37.5	9.4	--	--
3	18.8	46.9	34.4	--	--
4	15.6	12.5	40.6	25.0	6.3
* 5	50.0	40.6	9.4	--	--
* 6	62.5	34.4	3.1	--	--
7	37.5	40.6	21.9	--	--
8	34.4	18.8	46.9	--	--
9	28.1	56.3	9.4	6.3	--
10	43.8	40.6	15.6	--	--
11	28.1	43.8	28.1	--	--
12	40.6	43.8	12.5	3.1	--
* 13	50.0	28.1	21.9	--	--
14	40.6	37.5	21.9	--	--
15	37.5	43.8	18.8	--	--
16	25.0	53.1	21.9	--	--
17	25.0	53.1	21.9	--	--
18	18.8	46.9	28.1	6.3	--
19	25.0	28.1	37.5	9.4	--
20	40.6	31.3	28.1	--	--

Note. * = 50% or more rated this item of most importance.
a = of most importance
b = very important
c = important
d = slightly important
e = of no importance

Table 10

10 Most Effective Clinical Teaching Behaviors Ranked by First Year Students

Behavior (Item #)	Mean Item Rank	Standard Deviation
1. Well Informed (6)	1.29	.51
2. Objective and Fair (14)	1.51	.69
3. Conveys Confidence (5)	1.60	.58
4. Shows Genuine Interest (2)	1.62	.65
5. Encourages Students (13)	1.62	.75
6. Demonstrates Skills (15)	1.67	.67
7. Honest and Direct (12)	1.76	.71
8. Helps Without Taking Over (7)	1.78	.74
9. Is Patient and Cooperative (10)	1.82	.53
10. Available to Students (20)	1.84	.71

Note. n = 45

Table 11

10 Most Effective Clinical Teaching Behaviors Ranked by Second Year Students

Behavior (Item #)	Mean Item Rank	Standard Deviation
1. Well Informed (6)	1.41	.56
2. Shows Genuine Interest (2)	1.56	.67
3. Conveys Confidence (5)	1.59	.67
4. Is Patient and Cooperative (10)	1.72	.73
5. Encourages Students (13)	1.72	.81
6. Honest and Direct (12)	1.78	.79
7. Objective and Fair (14)	1.81	.78
8. Demonstrates Skills (15)	1.81	.74
9. Helps Without Taking Over (7)	1.84	.77
10. Available to Students (20)	1.87	.83

Note. n = 32

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis, associate degree nursing students and faculty will differ in their perceptions of characteristics of effective clinical teachers, was not supported by the collected data. When all associate degree nursing students and faculty were compared, the results showed no significant differences ($p < .05$) for any of the twenty characteristics. In addition, the frequency of responses to section two of the CTCI verify that both the faculty and students ranked the same three characteristics most often in the top five (Table 7). The aggregate responses of faculty and students tend to suggest that certain characteristics are uniformly important. All participants look for clinical teachers who are well informed and able to communicate this knowledge to their students; who show a genuine interest in patients and their care; and who demonstrate skills, attitudes, and values that are to be developed by the student in the clinical area. All three characteristics represent the importance that both students and faculty place on professional competency. In addition, faculty also look for clinical instructors who relate underlying theory to nursing practice and provide useful feedback on student progress. Again, both characteristics represent the importance faculty place on professional competency. Students, on the other hand, also look at the relationship the faculty have with them. They look for clinical teachers who convey confidence in and respect for the student, and are honest and direct with the students.

While there was a meaningful difference in emphasis, these results provide strong evidence that certain readily identified behaviors are most important to both students and faculty. This is similar to the results of Miller (1992) and Bergman and Gaitskill (1990), but differs from the Brown (1981) study in which there was a significant difference noted between both groups.

The second hypothesis states that associate degree nursing students will identify instructor-student relationships as the most important characteristic of effective clinical teachers. The descriptive statistics completed on the student responses indicate that students rated professional competency characteristics more frequently than characteristics dealing with student-faculty relationships or personal attributes. Therefore, hypothesis two was not supported by the collected data. Similar results were reported by Miller (1992), but differ from the studies of Brown (1981), and Bergman and Gaitskill (1990) in which students ranked the category of instructor-student relationships as most important.

The emphasis on professional competency by students may be explained by the importance that the clinical faculty place on professional competency in the clinical area. Because the teaching and learning of clinical skills takes place in an environment where errors can have grave consequences for a patient, these results might reflect a concern for patients' well-being, and thus account for the emphasis that both students and faculty place on instructor competency. Although the concept of modeling has not been included in the CTCI, the students' desire to model the behaviors of their instructors might also explain the importance that students place on the characteristics of professional competency.

The third hypothesis states that associate degree nursing faculty will identify professional competence as the primary characteristic of effective clinical teachers. The descriptive statistics applied to the collected data of both sections one and section two of the CTCI verified that faculty overwhelmingly rated characteristics related to professional competency as being the most important. Therefore, hypothesis three was supported by the collected data. This is similar to the results of Brown (1981) and Miller (1992), but differs from the study by Bergman and Gaitskill (1990), in which both students and faculty ranked instructor-student relationships as being most important.

These results might be explained by recognizing the emphasis faculty place on the teacher-practitioner role that must be used to facilitate application of theoretical knowledge in the clinical area. The faculty's ranking of professional competence before instructor-student relationships might be a direct reflection of the fact that the nursing faculty were educated as nurses before they became nursing faculty. Also, Sieh and Bell (1994) note that the emphasis at the associate degree level tends to be on attaining critical clinical skills used on the job. This emphasis might well explain why both associate degree nursing students and faculty stress nursing competency in the clinical environment.

The fourth hypothesis states as progression in the educational program occurs, student perceptions of the characteristics of effective clinical teachers will become more similar to those of the faculty. The statistical evidence of the 20 characteristics failed to demonstrate any significant difference between first year associate degree nursing students, second year associate degree nursing students, and associate degree nursing faculty. Therefore, this hypothesis was not supported. Bergman and Gaitskill (1990) reported that this hypothesis was only partially supported by their collected data and that

several significant trends were noted that are consistent with the hypothesis. Few differences were observed at different students levels in the study by Miller (1992), however Miller noted that a steady progression was made. Brown (1981) did not investigate different grade levels of students.

It is interesting to note that when a Mann-Whitney U test was applied to the data, the results showed no significant differences between first year nursing students and faculty, but did show a significant difference ($p=.045$) for one item when comparing second year nursing students to the faculty. This item was number 3, "relates underlying theory to nursing practice." This could be based on the fact that second year students are functioning more independently than first year students, and therefore they do not depend on their instructor's assistance in relating theory to clinical to the same extent as first year students.

It is also interesting to note that when viewed in terms of the mean item ranking, the same top ten characteristics of effective clinical teachers were perceived by both first year students and second year students. This could be interpreted as indicating no remarkable change in the perceptions of the students as they progressed through the program, only a difference in the degree of importance they held for certain items.

The lack of significant differences between level of students and faculty in this study, may indicate there are inherent characteristics of effective clinical teachers that are recognized by all students and faculty. These characteristics appear to cut across the faculty-student line and time differences in the nursing curriculum.

Comparison with Previous Studies

When comparing the results of this study to the results of previous studies, there are notable differences between the groups as well as congruence. Although this study identified the five top ranked characteristics of clinical teachers, Bergman and Gaitskill (1990) and Miller (1992) compared their results with Brown (1981) and included the top ten characteristics. For consistency sake, this researcher also compared the top ten characteristics from this study to that of Brown (1981), Bergman and Gaitskill (1990), and Miller (1992). Table 12 identifies five items cited by all eight groups as characteristics which were most frequently identified. These five items include: item 5, “conveys confidence in and respect for the student”; item 6, “is well informed and able to communicate knowledge to students”; item 13, “encourages students to feel free to ask questions or to ask for help”; item 14, “is objective and fair in the evaluation of the student”; and item 15, “demonstrates skills, attitudes, and values that are to be developed by the student in the clinical area.” All characteristics were from the professional competence (6, 14, & 15) and relationship with students (5 & 13) categories. This provides strong evidence that certain readily identified behaviors are most important to both students and faculty. Although there is a significant difference in emphasis, it is clear that a fundamental set of most critical behaviors for effective instruction can be established. It is apparent from these combined studies that clinical instructors need to develop and apply clinical teaching strategies that emphasize these areas. Clinical faculty who are knowledgeable about these effective characteristics of clinical instructors will exhibit them when interacting with students in the clinical area and may ultimately increase the learning of the student. Effective clinical learning facilitates the development of an effective clinician.

Table 12

The Ten Items Most Frequently Selected for Ranking

Item	Brown		Bergman & Gaitskill		Miller		Counts	
	Student	Faculty	Student	Faculty	Student	Faculty	Student	Faculty
1		x	x	x		x	x	
2	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
3		x				x		x
4								
*5	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
*6	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7	x		x		x		x	
8								
9	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
10					x		x	
11	x		x	x	x	x		
12	x			x	x	x	x	
*13	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
*14	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
*15	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
16	x	x		x		x		x
17						x		x
18								
19								
20							x	

Note. * = Items cited by all eight groups as characteristics which were most frequently identified.

Some columns indicate more than ten items due to ties.

The importance of faculty interest in applying theory to practice is apparent in this study. More than 50% of the total faculty rated this item in the top five rankings of section two of the CTCI. This interest is not apparent in the ADN student response. Brown (1981) and Miller (1992) also found a marked level of faculty interest in applying theory to practice that was not replicated in the study of Bergman and Gaitskill (1990). Brown (1981) stresses the importance of the nursing students' application of theory to practice for providing optimum health care to the consumer. Brown's response to this finding is to note that nursing educators must face up to their responsibilities and to recognize that in order to be an effective practitioner, the student must be able to relate theory to practice. As addressed by Brown (1981), this researcher would also recommend that administration remind faculty of the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice and allow time for nursing faculty to engage in research and attend classes so that their theoretical knowledge can be increased. Continued emphasis should also be placed in the clinical milieu on the application of theoretical knowledge to emphasize this importance, and to allow for students to model this behavior.

Perception, which is part of the personal system in King's (1971) conceptual framework, was the foundation of this study. As defined by King, perceptions are subjective and selective for each person. In the clinical area, perception varies from one individual to another because each person brings with them a unique background. In order for teachers to interpret actions and reactions of their students, it is essential that they recognize the elements in the perceptual milieu that motivate or hinder achievement of student learning. This research, as well as the research done by Miller (1992), Bergman and Gaitskill (1990) and Brown (1981), indicate there are certain perceived characteristics

that both faculty and students rate as being most effective in the achievement of student learning. Effective clinical teaching may be the result of utilizing specific patterns of instruction which are based on the characteristics noted by both nursing students and faculty. While students' viewpoints are certainly one important source of data for identifying characteristics of effective clinical teachers, faculty viewpoints are important because they allow us to better understand the perceptual world of the person enacting the behavior.

Limitations

The limitations of this study include limited variability related to the small, non-random sample of ADN students and ADN faculty and the disproportionate size of the ADN faculty sample in comparison to the ADN student sample. The study being conducted at only a single community college, further added to its limitations. This relatively small sample size must be taken into account with regard to the comparison of different classes of students. Replication to generalize these findings is needed. Repeated measurement of the same students over the course of their educational program might also provide more definitive findings.

Implications for Nursing

It is apparent that effective clinical instruction cannot be demonstrated by examining only a few teaching behaviors. As evidenced by this and other studies, it is imperative that characteristics of the effective clinical teacher be identified and utilized. Clinical faculty who are knowledgeable about these effective characteristics and choose to incorporate them into their methodology, will improve their level of teaching. Through a review of these identified characteristics, clinical teachers can become more effective and

can best accomplish their responsibilities to their clients, to their students, and to the field of nursing.

In this study, faculty and students ranked characteristics dealing with professional competency to be most important. Similar results were identified by both students and faculty in the study completed by Miller (1992), and by the faculty in the study completed by Brown (1981). It is the educator's responsibility to keep current and capable in the clinical area. However, nursing administration can assist their faculty by supporting opportunities to continue development of clinical skills. By understanding what is perceived to be most important, nursing program administration can also better evaluate the clinical instructors to determine if they are effective as nurse educators. In addition, inservices and faculty development might be implemented in existing programs to improve teacher effectiveness. Instructor characteristics that have a positive effect on students should be recognized and encouraged for use in the clinical area.

Literature related specifically to teaching nursing at the associate degree level is extremely limited. The significance of this study is the focus on the associate degree nursing program. However, more studies at the associate degree level should be implemented to determine if there are similarities to studies done at the baccalaureate level. Although there were similarities noted in this study when compared to baccalaureate programs, the sample size limits the applicability to other studies of baccalaureate students.

Recommendations

On the basis of findings from this investigation and consideration of the limitations of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Further studies be conducted that investigate student and faculty application of theory to clinical practice.
2. Replication studies be conducted with a larger sample involving a number of ADN programs along with a study comparing ADN and BSN students.
3. Longitudinal studies be conducted to track changes in the perceptions of students as they progress through the nursing program.
4. Further studies be completed that differentiate responses of faculty according to the level of student they teach, and differentiate responses of faculty according to the years of teaching experience.
5. Further studies be conducted to explore how gender and age influence student perceptions of effective clinical teachers.

Concluding Statement

The purpose of this study was to identify which characteristics of clinical teachers are considered most important by associate degree nursing students and faculty, and to investigate whether the perception of effective clinical teacher characteristics changes as the student advances toward graduation. Through statistical measurement, these characteristics were identified and the results were compared to other research studies. However, nursing education needs further research regarding clinical teaching as a basis for a theoretical approach to clinical instruction. If we are to prepare the practitioners of the future, it is imperative that we continue to research areas in education that will benefit the student, and ultimately benefit the consumer in the health care system.

Appendix A

CLINICAL TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS INSTRUMENT

Purpose: The following tool is designed for the participant to rate the characteristics of an effective teacher.

Instructions: Please indicate your response to each item, using the code stated below. Do not include your name or I. D. number. The code is:

- a = of most importance
- b = very important
- c = important
- d = slightly important
- e = of no importance

- ___ 1. Facilitates students' awareness of their professional responsibilities.
- ___ 2. Shows genuine interest in patients and their care.
- ___ 3. Relates underlying theory to nursing practice.
- ___ 4. Displays a sense of humor.
- ___ 5. Conveys confidence in and respect for the student.
- ___ 6. Is well informed and able to communicate knowledge to students.
- ___ 7. Supervises and helps in new experiences without taking over.
- ___ 8. Admits limitations and mistakes honestly.
- ___ 9. Provides useful feedback on student progress.
- ___ 10. Is self-controlled, cooperative, and patient.
- ___ 11. Is realistic in expectations of students.
- ___ 12. Is honest and direct with students.
- ___ 13. Encourages students to feel free to ask questions or to ask for help.
- ___ 14. Is objective and fair in the evaluation of the student.
- ___ 15. Demonstrates skills, attitudes, and values that are to be developed by the student in the clinical area.
- ___ 16. Possesses the ability to stimulate the student to want to learn.
- ___ 17. Shows enthusiasm for teaching.
- ___ 18. Is flexible when the occasion calls for it.
- ___ 19. Permits freedom of discussion and venting of feelings.
- ___ 20. Available to work with students as situations arises in the clinical setting.

Section II

Instructions: Please choose five characteristics from the above items (1-20) which you consider to be most important for a clinical teacher to have and rank them in order of importance.

1. ____
2. ____
3. ____
4. ____
5. ____

Section III

Demographic Data:

- ____ 1. Please indicate whether you are a student or faculty member.
 - (a) student
 - (b) faculty member

- ____ 2. If a student, indicate your current class status.
 - (a) second semester, first year.
 - (b) second semester, second year.

- ____ 3. Marital status.
 - (a) never been married.
 - (b) married.
 - (c) divorced.
 - (d) widowed.

- ____ 4. Age.
 - (a) 20 - 25 years
 - (b) 26 - 30 years
 - (c) 31 - 35 years
 - (d) 36 - 40 years
 - (e) 41 years or older

Appendix B

Categorization of 20 Characteristics of Instrument

Professional Competence

1. Facilitates student's awareness of their professional responsibilities.
2. Shows genuine interest in patients and their care.
3. Relates underlying theory to nursing practice.
6. Is well informed and able to communicate knowledge to students.
7. Supervises and helps in new experiences without taking over.
9. Provides useful feedback on student progress.
14. Is objective and fair in the evaluation of the student.
15. Demonstrates skill, attitudes, and values that are to be developed by the student in the clinical area.
16. Possesses the ability to stimulate the student to want to learn.

Relationship with Students

5. Conveys confidence in and respect for students.
11. Is realistic in expectations of students.
12. Is honest and direct with students.
13. Encourages students to feel free to ask questions or to ask for help.
19. Permits freedom of discussion and venting of feelings.
20. Available to work with students as situations arises in the clinical area

Personal Attributes

4. Displays a sense of humor.
8. Admits limitations and mistakes honestly.

10. Is self-controlled, cooperative, and patient.

17. Shows enthusiasm for teaching.

18. Is flexible when the occasion calls for it.

Appendix C



School of Nursing
East Carolina University
Rivers Building • Greenville, NC 27836-4353
252-328-4300 fax
www.ecu.edu

Office of the Dean
328-4099

Department of
Adult Health Nursing
328-4101

Department of
Community Nursing Systems
328-4113

Department of
Perinatal-Child Nursing
328-4077

Academic Affairs
Crawford Student
328-4102

Student Services
Undergraduate Student
328-4075

Learning Resource Center
328-4009

Clinical Coordinator
328-4117

RN-MSN Student
328-4307

May 10, 2000

Dear Ms. Counts:

As requested in your phone conversation with me yesterday, you have my permission to use the Clinical Teacher Characteristics Instrument with the revisions in demographic questions that you have proposed. I hope that you will find this instrument helpful in your research study. It is my understanding that this research is being conducted as part of your graduate studies at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan. Best of luck with the research.

I would be interested in seeing your findings from the study. Please let me know if I can be of additional assistance.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.

Sylvia T. Brown, EdD, RN
Professor

Appendix D



GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY

1 CAMPUS DRIVE • ALLEDALE, MICHIGAN 49401-9403 • 616/895-6611

February 7, 2001

Sylvia Counts
4144 Hailey Dr.
St. Joseph, MI 49085

RE: Proposal #01-124-H

Dear Sylvia:

Your proposed project entitled **Faculty and Student Perceptions of Effective Clinical Teachers** has been reviewed. It has been approved as a study, which is exempt from the regulations by section 46.101 of the Federal Register 46(16):8336, January 26, 1981.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

Paul A. Huizenga, Chair
Human Research Review Committee

Appendix E



LAKE MICHIGAN
C O L L E G E

Changing Minds... Changing Lives... Transforming the Region.

May 1, 2000

Dear Mrs. Counts:

As requested, you have my permission to conduct a survey analysis of Lake Michigan College nursing students and nursing faculty. It is my understanding that this research is being conducted as part of your graduate studies at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan. I have reviewed both the instrument you plan to use as well as the cover letter. As we discussed, the instrument may be given to the nursing students during a regularly scheduled class period. I will arrange time during a scheduled faculty meeting for the survey to be given to all full-time faculty. I recommend that the part-time faculty be surveyed by mail.

Best of luck with the research. I would be interested in seeing your findings from this study.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Alice Rasmussen.

Alice Rasmussen RN, MSN
Nursing Coordinator

ac

Appendix F

VERBAL INSTRUCTION TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS of “Faculty and Student Perceptions of Effective Characteristics of Clinical Teachers”

The purpose of this research study is to identify your perceptions of effective characteristics of clinical instructors. Your participation in the study cannot be identified. It will be offered to all the students in the nursing curriculum and the faculty. You have been chosen to participate in this study because of your role as a nursing student or a nursing faculty member at Lake Michigan College. The tool lists 20 characteristics of clinical instructors. You are to rate each item using the “Likert” type scale at the top of the tool. The ratings are: a = of most importance; b = very important; c = important; d = slightly important; and e = of no importance.

Section II of the tool asks you to choose from this list of 20 characteristics the five that you think are the most important. These top five should be listed in priority, 1 = most important to 5 = least important, on the lines provided.

The second page of the tool has four items related to demographics. Please do not forget to complete these four items. It will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete the entire survey.

Your participation is voluntary. Completing the survey implies your consent. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator or Grand Valley State University. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you have questions about this research project or the survey you may contact the investigator, Sylvia Counts, at (616) 429-7651.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator, you may contact the Grand Valley State University Human Resource Subjects Review Committee Chair, telephone (616) 895-2472.

Appendix G

Global Rights Group
800-730-2214 Fax 800-730-2215
www.thomsonrights.com
Email: thomson.rights@thomsonlearning.com

THOMSON
—★—
LEARNING

6 April 2001

Permission Grant # 43253
Faxed To: 616-982-7449

Sylvia Counts
4144 Hailey Drive
St. Joseph, MI 49085

RE: Your fax on 4.6.01

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Christopher Rockwell
Grant Coordinator, Global Rights Group

Appendix H

Subject: Hello!

Date: Mon, 21 May 2001 19:05:51 -0400

From: "Imogene M. King" <imk@juno.com>

To: sylvia@qtm.net

Thank you for your response. Your masters thesis sounds like it will make a contribution to the nursing science literature and to the use of my framework and theory of goal attainment.

I give permission to Sylvia Counts to use quotes from my 1981 book A theory for nursing: Systems Concepts, Process relative to my concept of perception Permission is also granted to use my conceptual framework of three dynamic interacting systems (personal, interpersonal, and social.

May 21, 2001

Imogene M. King, RN. EdD, FAAN

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