A High-Reliability Approach Using the QSEN Framework Transforms Health System Initial Nursing Competency Validation

Jessica M. Phillips, MSN, RN, BCNP, Professional Development Specialist
Lee Galuska, PhD, RN, NE-BC, Director; Nursing Practice, Education, and Research
Kristine Traxler, BSN, Clinical Educator

Introduction/Gap Analysis

Why the Change: Variability in the structures and processes for unit-based nursing orientation and initial competency validation across UCLA Health

- Current state: decreased reliability in practice, gaps in regulatory compliance, potential gaps in staff preparation for practice and overall retention implications
- Desired state: standardization of competency assessment to establish clear expectations for new hires to succeed and provide safe quality care

Background/Review of Literature

- The overall goal for the QSEN project was to meet the challenge of preparing future nurses who will have the knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs) necessary to continuously improve the quality and safety of the healthcare systems within which they work
- High reliability healthcare organizations provide exceptionally safe, high-quality care
- Competent staff, standardization of practice, and outcome monitoring are a few elements of highly reliable organizations
- Nursing professional development scope and standards support the adoption of QSEN competencies in nursing practice

EBP Question/Purpose

Can a High-Reliability Approach Using the QSEN Framework Transform Health System Initial Nursing Competency Validation?

Methods

A modified Delphi technique was used with a group of Nursing Professional Development (NPD) Specialists, Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS), and clinical nurses to design a consistent process and structure for validating initial competencies

Strategies adopted to get to the desired state:
- QSEN Competencies Framework
- Knowledge, Skills, Attitude (KSA) Validation
- High-Reliability Approach to redesign structures, forms, and standard work

Interventions

Strategy #1 Adoption of QSEN Framework:
- Nursing orientation (system) – patient experience
- Newly licensed nurse – initial orientation*
- Preceptor development training (continuous education)
- Unit leadership, CNS, and educator training

Strategy #2 Knowledge, Skills, Attitude (KSA) Validation:
- Web-based competency validation checklist with KSA hyperlinks were developed to support navigation and standardization during unit orientation
- Competency Domain – on the left see hyperlinks of resources, links, live policies
- Method of Verification – on the right see methods preceptor, trainer, educator can verify

Strategy #3 High Reliability Approach
- Standardization of forms and practice (Toolkit: See below)
- Competent staff
  - Appreciate the rationale for changing to a QSEN (Quality and Safety Education for Nurses) Competency Based Orientation process when onboarding a new staff member (affective/attitude)
  - Describe how to give and receive feedback using the Daily Orientee Evaluation Tool and Weekly Orientee Evaluation Tool (cognitive/knowledge)
  - Demonstrate how to evaluate competency of a new staff member on key organizational priorities by using technology and online resources (Competency Validation Checklist, Department Specific Orientation Checklist, KSAs) (psychomotor/skill)

Results

Preceptors (n=13):
- 76% able to access forms
- 86% are using the forms
- 94% validate competency (validation checklist/KSAs)
- 56% able to validate use of forms by preceptors
- 58% meet weekly with preceptor/preceptee
- 71% able to explain use of forms with preceptors

Given the above findings ongoing support and education will be needed at the unit level to realize the full impact of this high-reliability approach using the QSEN framework.

Prior to the implementation of the Initial Competency Validation process, units were each determining unit level orientation standards for performance and competency.

Overall System Competency Program FY17 (n=965)
FY17 – 86% Clarity of Expectations/Requirements
FY17 – 84% Program “Meets My Needs”

Implications/Next Steps

- Continue to measure outcome/impact of QSEN competency framework adoption for newly licensed RNs in both system orientation and unit orientation
- Develop QSEN competency framework for initial new hires (all), population specific and mandatory education
- Adoption of QSEN in continuing education, educator competencies, clinical advancement programs, job descriptions, system needs assessment

References