



Dental Hygiene and Nursing Students: Opportunities to Influence In-patient Oral Health Outcomes

Susan A. Seibert, MSN RN; Lorinda L. Coan, RDH, MS;
Emily R. Holt, RDH, MHA, CDA, EFDA ; Amanda R. Reddington, LDH, BS, MHA; CDA
Angela Stroud BSN, RN, CMSRN, NE-BC; Lilly Cassel BSN, RN



Background

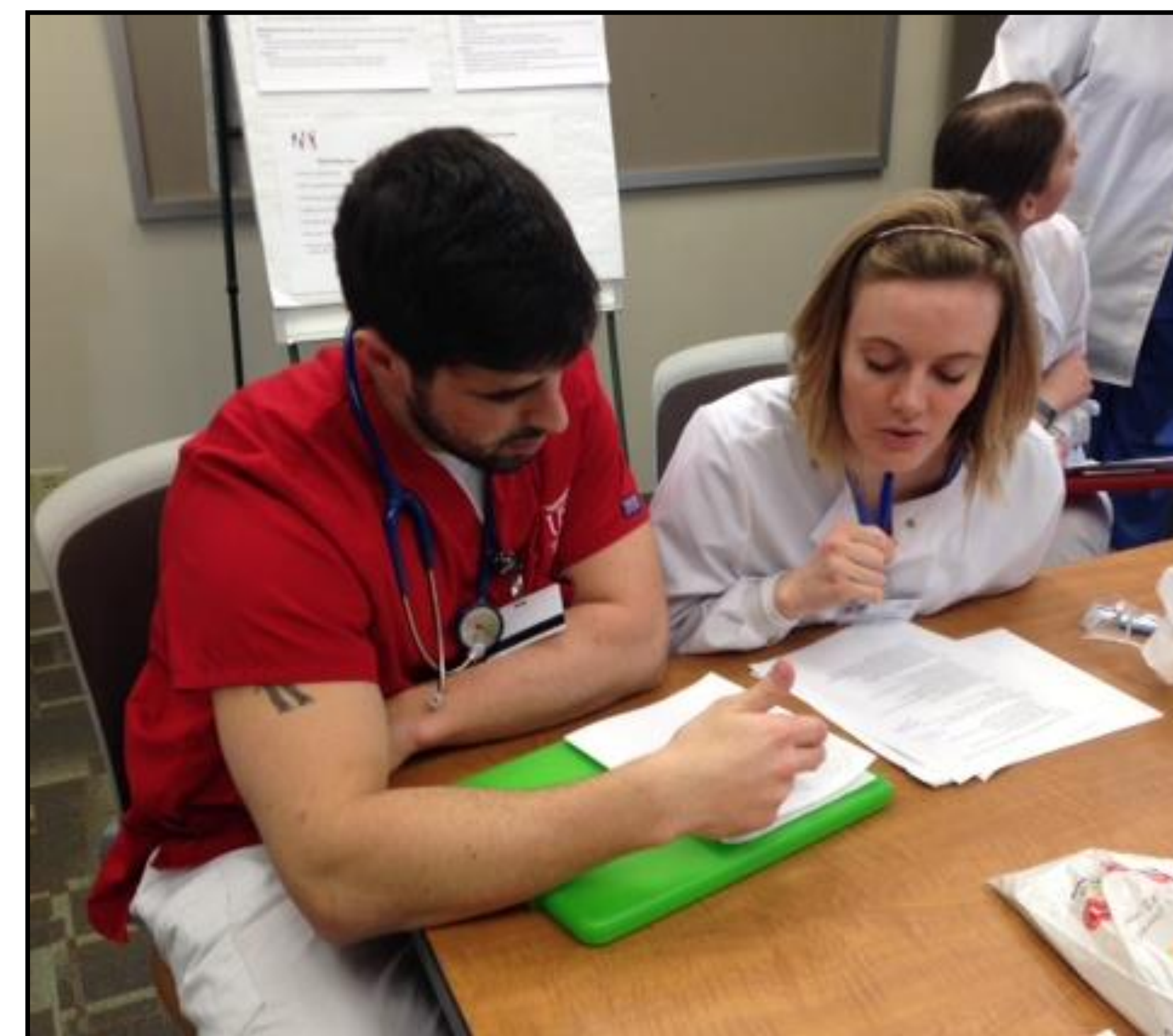
- Dedicated Education Units (hospital units committed to student learning) offer opportunities for interactions patient populations to deliver care and develop collaborative practice skills.
- Studies report nursing and auxiliary staff have motivation to deliver oral care but do not routinely provide it.
- Consequences of inadequate oral health are documented (systemic links between oral health and systemic diseases: aspiration pneumonia, diabetes, heart disease).
- Improvements in oral health lead to improved overall health outcomes and cost savings.
- Nursing and Dental Hygiene Programs include curricular competencies directly related to Healthy People 2020 goals and Interprofessional Education.

Project

- Faculty within the Dental Hygiene and Nursing programs developed an interprofessional, clinically-based learning activity to enhance interprofessional communication and oral health outcomes for patients in two hospitals having Dedicated Educational Units (DEUs).
- **Expectations:**
 - Student appreciation of collaborative practice
 - Improvement in patient oral health outcomes

Conceptual Framework

- A Healthcare Community of Practice is a group of health care workers sharing a common domain of interest who collaborate to enhance the practice, further professional expertise, and augment institutional knowledge.



Method

- After a TeamSTEPPS™ introduction, nursing students were paired with dental hygiene students on the DEUs.
- A report of the patients' status was followed by the pair:
 - Developing an oral health assessment plan
 - Completing the Oral Health Assessment Tool™ (OHAT)
 - Providing oral hygiene care
 - Delivering dental education
 - Recommending dental products
 - Initiating appropriate referrals
- **Evaluation included: OHAT findings, student reflections, and Interprofessional Collaborative Competency Attainment Survey™ (ICCAS)**

Student Outcomes

Reflection survey themes

- Understanding of the roles of each profession
- Appreciation of interprofessional collaboration
- Acquisition of oral health skills for acute care patients
- Awareness of viable dental hygienist workforce options in hospital settings

ICCAS™ results demonstrated an improvement in application of TeamSTEPPS™ principles.

Unit Outcomes

Oral Health Assessment Tool™ findings:

- Student identification of Xerostomia and Candidiasis, other lesions
- Recommendation of appropriate dental products
- Establish location of “Dental Home”

Implications for Practice

- The nursing and dental hygiene IPE provided opportunities to partner with DEU staff improving nursing care, patient outcomes, and student learning.

References

Seibert, S. The meaning of a healthcare community of practice. *Nursing Forum*. 2015 50(2), 69-74. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/nuf.12065

Furgeson D, Kinney JS, Gwozdek Ae, Wilder R, Inglehart MR. Interprofessional Education in US Dental Hygiene Programs: A National Survey. *J Dent Educ*. 2015 Nov;79(11): 1286-94.

Stull CL, Blue CM. Examining the influence of professional identity formation on the attitudes of students towards interprofessional collaboration. *J Interprof Care*. 2016 Jan; 30(1): 90-6, doi:10.2109/12561820.2015.1066318.

ADHA White Paper Highlights Changes Occurring in Dental Hygiene Education *Dent Today*. 2015 Dec; 34(12): 40, 44.

Brame JL, Mitchell SH, Wilder RS, Sams LD. Dental and allied dental students' attitudes towards and perceptions of interprofessional education. *J Dent Educ*. 2015 Jun; 79(6):616-25.