

# Healthcare Redesign Learning: Developing Essential Leadership Skills in Nurses

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## ABSTRACT

### *Introduction/Background*

The provision of safe, effective and efficient patient-centred care has received increased worldwide attention. Florence Nightingale stressed the need for understanding context in determining what is required to be done, in addition to how and when it needs to occur. It has been suggested that well supported care improvement projects undertaken within nurses' own work environment not only lead to the development of leadership skills but more importantly to better care.

### *Aim/Purpose of the project*

To understand the experience and learning of nurses undertaking a workplace project-based postgraduate course in Healthcare Redesign. The course was designed to empower nurses to diagnose, generate and evaluate solutions to complex patient care delivery issues.

### *Methods/Process/Who is being studied*

To examine student experience and the achievement of learning outcomes, a validated survey tool, eVALUate, was administered to students. Thematic analysis of free text survey responses, learning artefacts, newsletter articles, emails and feedback received from students was also performed to provide a more complete understanding of student experience and learning.

### *Results/Outcome*

Work-integrated projects offer nurses the opportunity for contextual development of effective engagement, communication and problem-solving skills. Graduates (n=70) implemented solutions for 'wicked' problems, through the application of best practice frameworks. Survey data revealed a high level of student satisfaction. Thematic analysis demonstrated that work-based learning opportunities lead not only to the attainment of new knowledge, but the confidence and know-how to improve patient care. Graduates developed strong leadership skills and reported an increased capacity to make changes to deliver patient-centred outcomes and the ability to mentor others in the workplace. Identified barriers to student learning included lack of time, poor access to organisational stakeholders and unsupportive organisational culture.

### *Recommendations/Conclusion*

The authors argue that combining tertiary education with contextual work-integrated learning, designed to improve patient care, is an important investment. Many graduates can be regarded as (emerging) leaders and complete the course work-ready to drive better patient centred care, contributing to sustainable improvements.