

This report presents the results of the focus group workshop using Nominal Group Technique (NGT) to develop consensus on what might be the Graduate Attributes for students undertaking any Postgraduate Certificate in Neonatal Intensive Care in Australia.

Graduate Attributes 2014

Postgraduate Certificate
Neonatal Intensive Care
Nursing in Australia

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Results from the Focus Group Workshop using Nominal Group Technique (NGT) for the Graduate Attributes for any Postgraduate Certificate in Neonatal Intensive Care in Australia

Introduction

This report presents the results of the focus group workshop using Nominal Group Technique (NGT) to develop consensus on what might be the Graduate Attributes for students undertaking any Postgraduate Certificate in Neonatal Intensive Care in Australia.

These Graduate Attributes, once ratified by the Australian College of Neonatal Nurse (ACNN), will be used to inform course coordinators and students as to what is expected of a graduate in neonatal intensive care studies in Australia.

Feedback (member check) has been undertaken whereby the participants of the NGT have examined the analysis of the results of the research and confirmed the interpretations (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1986; Keeves & Sowden, 1997).

Rationale:

The primary goal for the workshop was to develop a consensus on a set of Graduate Attributes for nurses undertaking any Postgraduate Certificate in Neonatal Intensive Care Nursing.

Scope:

The discipline grouping who participated in the NGT focus group included neonatal nurses with a special interest in neonatal nurse education. This comprised Neonatal Nurse Unit Managers, Clinical Neonatal Nurse Educators and Academic Neonatal Nurse Educators, employed in Special Care Baby Units, Neonatal Intensive Care Units, and Tertiary Education Centres. The NGT focus group workshop was incorporated into the Australian College on Neonatal Nurses (ACNN) Neonatal Nurse Education Special Interest Group (NNE SIG) annual face to face meeting in August 2013.

Demographic data

There were eight Participants (n=8) in the workshop: Unit Managers (n=1), Nurse Educators in the clinical area (n=3), Nurse Educators in the tertiary sector (n=3) and Other (n=1). There was a range of experience from 5 to 30 years, with a cumulative Neonatal Intensive Care experience of 157 years. The demographic data were collected via a free electronic survey (Survey Monkey®) following the workshop.

Nominal Group Technique

Nominal Group Technique (NGT) involves small face-to-face focus group discussion to reach consensus. The process gathers information by asking individuals to respond to questions posed by a moderator and then asking participants to prioritise ideas (Delbecq et al., 1986).

Nominal Group Technique is a five step process involving:

1. Generating ideas: each individual in the group silently generates ideas and writes them down.
2. Recording ideas: Group members engage in a round-robin feedback session to concisely record each idea.
3. Discussing ideas: Each recorded idea is then discussed to obtain clarification and evaluation.
4. Voting and ranking: Individuals vote privately on the priority of ideas, and the group decision is made based on these ratings.
5. Thematical grouping: the items are thematically grouped to aid analysis.

Research Question

The facilitator presented the question *“What do you think should be the graduate attributes of nurses who successfully undertake a postgraduate certificate in neonatal intensive care nursing?”* to the participants of the workshop. After analysis of the data generated from the NGT workshop several graduate attributes have been identified.

Graduate Attributes for Postgraduate Certificate in Neonatal Intensive Care Nursing in Australia

The Australian College of Neonatal Nurses (ACNN) NNE SIG has defined a set of Graduate Attributes that can be expected of all graduates of any Postgraduate Certificate in Neonatal Intensive Care Nursing in Australia. The ACNN expects graduates to demonstrate a range of skills and capabilities related to the professional area in which they have studied.

By completing any Postgraduate Certificate in Neonatal Intensive Care in Australia students should have attained the following graduate attributes related to:

1. The provision of care
 - Provide skilled nursing care to sick and preterm neonates by being able to:
 - Explain rationale behind technical skills, have the ability to manage technical equipment, and manage mechanical ventilation techniques;
 - Understand pharmacokinetics and administer medications safely; and
 - Facilitate breastfeeding.
 - Understand the pathophysiology of the neonate by being able to:
 - Perform a comprehensive physical assessment of the neonate, identify deviations from the norm and complex needs;
 - Recognise and manage signs of deterioration; and
 - Optimise neurological outcomes.
 - Multi task and have situational awareness in:
 - Crisis management;
 - Time management; and
 - Ability to prioritise.
 - Adapt the model of care to the environment and be flexible in practice
 - Utilise critical thinking skills through:
 - Ability to problem solve; and
 - Intuitive nursing knowledge.
2. Ethical and professional responsibilities
 - Advocate for the patient and family;
 - Practice is underpinned with ethical and professional insight; and
 - Demonstrate a social responsibility through the delivery of culturally appropriate care.
3. Communication and teamwork
 - Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team approach; and
 - Have good communication skills through:
 - Understanding and communicating therapeutically with families; and
 - Communicating with peers, the multidisciplinary team and families.
4. Knowledge
 - Understand that the graduate certificate is the beginning of lifelong learning
 - Preceptorship and being able to encourage others in their learning
 - Research focused through:
 - Application of evidence based learning to provide care;
 - Evidence-based specialist knowledge; and
 - Information literacy.

References

- Delbecq, A. L., Van de Ven, A. H., & Gustafson, D. H. (1986). Group techniques for program planning: a guide to nominal group and Delphi processes. Wisconsin: Green Briar Press.
- Keeves, J., & Sowden, S. (1997). Educational research, methodology and measurement: an international handbook (2nd ed., pp. 296-306). New York: Pergamon Press.