

Integrated Dedicated Education Unit commences on the West Coast with a new collaborative approach

The Canterbury Dedicated Education Unit (CDEU) model of clinical teaching and learning is now meeting the needs of students from two educational institutes in the same place at the same time on the West Coast.

Traditionally Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT) and Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) have allocated undergraduate nursing students to inpatient and community clinical placements on the West Coast at different times throughout the academic year.

While preceptorship is working well in community settings on the West Coast, the increasing number of students at NMIT and CPIT, and students from multiple curricula were the drivers for changing to a model of clinical teaching and learning at Grey Hospital. Staff at Grey Hospital also acknowledged that “preceptor fatigue” (Barker, 2010; Maginnis & Croxon, 2007; Edgecombe, Wotton, Gonda, & Mason, 1999; Jamieson et al., 2008) was another ongoing concern. Staff are not only supporting undergraduate nursing students but NetP and NESP nurses, and other new staff including medical and allied health. It was identified that the preceptorship model was not going to be able to sustain this activity at the hospital.

NMIT and CPIT Heads of Schools, the Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB) Executive Director of Nursing and West Coast District Health Board (WCDHB) Director of Nursing were all committed to supporting staff and students at Grey Hospital (WCDHB).

Following discussions between 2009 and 2014 it was decided to implement the Canterbury Dedicated Education Unit (CDEU) model of clinical teaching and learning at Grey Hospital. CPIT and CDHB already utilises the CDEU model in a number of hospitals, community and mental health settings throughout the Canterbury Health System. The DEU model has become widely accepted, with some variations to reflect local needs, as an alternative to the preceptorship model in New Zealand, Australia, Europe and America (Betany & Yarwood, 2010; Edgecombe et al., 1999; Grealish & Kaye, 2004; Jamieson et al., 2008; Sims & Cook, 2013). In 2012 when NMIT and CPIT began to collaboratively share the same Bachelor of Nursing (BN) curriculum, the DEU discussions became a reality.

Alongside CDEU educational sessions, a joint working group was formed, facilitating a DEU workshop at Grey Hospital in May 2014. The WCDHB appointed an onsite DEU lead, and one integrated DEU encompassing students from both NMIT & CPIT was implemented across the

medical and surgical wards at Grey Hospital, starting with the July 2014 clinical rotations. The WCDHB appointed three Clinical Liaison Nurses, which has now increased to four to accommodate leave, and to cover students working across two wards on different floors.

Key to the establishment of the integrated DEU was the appointment of one Academic Liaison Nurse working across both NMIT and CPIT. This has led to continuity for staff and students and ensured all students met the required standard of practice. The other benefits of sharing an Academic Liaison Nurse and curriculum are the consistency and reliability of assessment within the clinical component of the curriculum. Staff have an opportunity to become more familiar and confident with student learning outcomes and assessment criteria from both organisations.

The integrated DEU commenced with six nursing students from each institution, including two from each who were transition to practice students. Initially there were difficulties in aligning the start dates of the second and third year students across both NMIT and CPIT students. The challenges were acknowledged and initiatives put in place to lessen the impact on students, clinical staff and patients.

During the establishment phase, staff, Academic Liaison Nurses and Clinical Liaison Nurses encouraged both formal and informal peer teaching amongst all students. One instance of this was second year students presenting their case studies, and third year students were encouraged to direct and delegate the second year students, under the direction and delegation of the Registered Nurse. Third year students often would undertake ad hoc clinical teaching sessions and facilitated this workplace learning. Peer teaching is one of the key principles of the DEU. Living away from their usual residence and together in backpacker accommodation also encourages informal peer discussion and learning.

As part of the DEU quality improvement processes, focus group evaluations were undertaken and recommendations made for 2015. Anecdotally a practice area will take a minimum of three rotations of students to move from working in a preceptorship model to embedding the DEU model. This year both CPIT and NMIT students have commenced together in March on the same day, which assisted in an efficient orientation programme for all of the nursing students. As the majority of students are from outside the West Coast and don't always know each other, this day is important for facilitating team building and developing collegial friendship between students while away from their "usual" support systems.

Staff from CPIT, NMIT, CDHB and the WCDHB continue to work together building on already strong and collegial relationships to support our future workforce in rural communities.

Footnote

Clinical Liaison Nurse (CLN) is a registered nurse employed within the clinical environment/ DEU, whose role is to promote, coordinate and support the student learning and their clinical practice during placement.

Academic Liaison Nurse (ALN) is a nurse lecturer employed by the education institute. THE ALN works in collaboration with the CLN and DEU staff providing consistent support to assist the student to link theory to practice, monitor progress and assist the student and clinical DEU staff set realistic learning goals.

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Grey Hospital, Greymouth.

Back row - Jackson Gregory student NMIT; Matthew Keown student CPIT; Brittany Fenwick student CPIT

Middle row – Rachel Whitcombe ALN CPIT and NMIT; Sophie Penno student CPIT; Elousie Chicksen student CPIT

Front - Jenny Wright NMIT Senior Lecturer; Tessa McLaughlin student NMIT; Ritsuko Hirose student CPIT; Deb Sims CPIT Senior Lecturer; Christine Traynor student CPIT

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