

# The role of the Qualified Dental Nurse in the development of Student Nurses in clinical training

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**ABSTRACT:** This research was undertaken in the Cork Dental School and Hospital during the academic year of 2015/2016 as part of my postgraduate masters in teaching and learning in 2015/2016.

The stakeholders included student dental nurses (SDN) and qualified dental nurses (QDN). The study examined the clinical training aspect of the dental nurse training programme.

This section of the training is undertaken in a clinical environment where knowledge gained in lectures and tutorials is transferred into the practical application.

Observations made in the clinical setting both by QDN and SDN in relation to the opportunities that were perceived to be lost in the learning environment and the practical involvement of the QDNs, in the teaching and development of the SDNs, lead to this study/ research.

The aim of the study was to highlight and encourage both stakeholders in the clinic using the Teaching for Understanding framework (TFU, Wiske 1998). The intention was to see the clinic as a learning space equal to the lecture hall or tutorial room, thereby allowing knowledge gained in lectures to transfer to the practical skill application, enhancing and supporting the overall opportunities and experience for the students' learning which forms an element of SoTL.

A mixed methodology format which including a questionnaire for both groups and a random sample of four semi-structured interviews, two with the QDN and two with the SDN. The student group at the time was made up of 17 (1st and 2nd year) SDNs. There were 27 QDNs included in the questionnaire out of 34 staff, with varying amounts of experience in the hospital as staff or mentors for the SDNs. One section of the findings, the role of the QDN as mentor was referred to 21 times. This finding is relevant to transforming the patterns of training for the SDNs.

The role of the QDN in identifying the learning opportunities and how best to support the SDN learning was validated from the research. Using the format of a poster the finding became visible at a glance.

## REFERENCES

Wiske M.S(ed) (1998) Teaching for Understanding: Linking research with Practice. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass