Development and Implementation of Skills Check-off Blitz to Evaluate and Validate Unit Based Competencies

Quality Improvement
By Sandy Davidson, RN, PCCN, CVRN
Assistant Nurse Manager
Intermediate Care Unit Salem Hospital
Objectives

- Define competency and how it relates to nursing practice.
- Learn strategies for developing and implementing skills competency validation.
- Identify cost saving measures beneficial to the Nursing Unit.
- Recognize benefits of interpersonal collaboration and how it impacts staff satisfaction and patient outcomes.
Development and Implementation of Skills Check-off Blitz to Evaluate and Validate Unit Based Competencies

Background:
- While the hospital has basic skills that are required of all nursing staff, each individual unit has a unique set of skills which nurses are required to perform competently. Competency is defined as the ability to safely and adequately perform a specific task or roll. To ensure that nurses are competent to perform certain low-volume/high-risk tasks we developed a unit based competency check-off system.

Purpose:
- The purpose of this presentation is to describe how we developed and implemented a skills competency check-off blitz for nursing staff while staying within budget.
Competence

“An individual who demonstrates competence is performing successfully at an expected level” (Dixon, 2010).

The four key components of competence are:

1. **Knowledge** – Thinking and understanding.
2. **Skills** - Psychomotor, communication, interpersonal and diagnostic.
3. **Ability** – Capacity to act effectively.
4. **Judgment** - Critical thinking, problem solving, ethical reasoning and decision making.
Formulating the Idea /Developing the Plan

Competencies Chosen Based on Unit Needs:

- Low volume/High risk
- High Volume/problematic
- Never event/near miss
- New or changes in procedure/policy
  (Limited to 4-5 per year)

Presentation of Competencies:

- Present each skill individually at staff meetings
- Provide hands-on demonstration
- Provide Power Point, hand outs, videos, other resources
- Provide each nurse with quiz
Planning (First Blitz)

- Combined all previously demonstrated skills into one patient care scenario for hands-on staff check-off.
- Calculated time needed for individual check-offs/Blitz.
- Scheduled time needed in skills lab.
- Gathered patient mannequins and supplies (some were improvised others were outdated supplies from our unit).
- Recruited volunteers from staff to assist with check-offs.
- ... and we PRACTICED!!!
Scheduling (First Blitz)

- Our first Blitz team was comprised of 2 staff members running the check-off scenarios with 2 mannequins in the skills lab over a period of 3 different 8 hour shifts.
- We recruited 1 RN from our staff to remain on the unit during the Blitz to provide “helping hands” so that the RNs with assignments could safely leave the area for their check-offs.
- Knowing that budget and overtime is always an issue, we strategically scheduled RNs to check-off during their already scheduled shifts.
- We scheduled our night shift RNs 2 at a time in 3 different 15 minute increments to check-off immediately following their night shifts.
- By doing this we minimized the amount of overtime accrued by staff having to come in on their day off as has always been the practice in the past.
The First Check-Off Blitz

The first Blitz rolled out much better than anticipated...

- Staff we able to participate in a hands-on non-threatening environment.
- Staff was able to ask questions and try new skills.
- Unit leaders were running the check-offs and were therefore able to observe first hand the technical and critical thinking skills of the staff first hand.
- Staff gave glowing feedback stating they had learned a lot and had fun doing it... they were so excited they even offered suggestions for the next time!

Competency skills we validated were...
- ABG Interpretation
- SBAR reporting
- Blood Administration
- Passey Muir Valve Competency
- Trach Care
Plan... Do... Study... Act...

Our findings...

✓ What was thought to be nearly impossible can be done!
✓ We can validate the competencies of our entire staff in a limited amount of time!
✓ We can save money!!!
✓ We can make this even better next year!

Based on staff feedback...

✓ Hands on learning and validation is well-accepted.
✓ Staff feel engaged and want to be more involved.
✓ CNAs also want to be included.
✓ Staff has specific validation requests, including Code Blue.
Plan... Do... Study... Act...

How We Improved

For our Second Annual Blitz...

- We continued with the same strategic scheduling plan in intervals (adding more time for night shift immediately before their scheduled shifts).
- We added a third mannequin and check–off station.
- We recruited 3 more Education Team members for a total of 6, enabling us to maximize our check-off process while providing better assignment coverage on the unit.
- We included CNAs and their own competencies.
- We incorporated Code Blue into our scenario.
- We continued to save money!!!
Results

✓ We effectively improved our process of validating the competency of our entire nursing staff which included 57 RNs and 19 CNAs over a span of three twelve hour day shifts.

✓ We were able to strategically schedule the majority of our staff while they were already working enabling us to drastically reduce overtime and save money.

✓ Estimated savings in just overtime alone is approximately $5,000.

✓ Feedback from staff indicates increased satisfaction and engagement while promoting learning in non-threatening and even “fun” environment.

✓ Unit leadership team was able to assess and evaluate critical thinking skills first hand which is an improvement over the previous computer based validation.
Reference: