CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
AND
SOUTHWESTERN
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

#90-0031
# Cost-Effective Competence: Proposal to Utilize Preceptors in Nursing Clinical Education

## FISCAL YEAR
1990-91

## ID NUMBER
90-0031

## COLLEGE
Southwestern

## DISTRICT
Southwestern

## PROJECT TITLE
Cost-Effective Competence: Proposal to Utilize Preceptors in Nursing Clinical Education

## FUNDING CATEGORY & AWARD
Grant = $14,600

## ELIGIBLE PROGRAM
A --- Nontraditional Instruction

## PROJECT CATEGORY
Developmental Model

## PROJECT PRODUCT
Resource Materials

## PROJECT TOPIC #1
Curriculum Develop

## ACADEMIC SUBJECT
Nursing

## PROJECT DIRECTOR
Charlotte Erdahl, Asso Dean Health Sciences

## PROJECT SUPERVISOR
Charlotte Erdahl, Asso Dean Health Sciences

## PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION
This project implemented a comprehensive two-year preceptorship approach for the clinical experience component of the Southwestern College nursing program. The nontraditional employer-based approach improves efficiency and cost effectiveness of the program by expanding class size and student/faculty ratio and increasing enrollment and graduation by 25%. The program also serves to provide more relevant, individualized, work-related instruction to the Southwestern College underrepresented student population as well as strengthening the working and hiring relationship between the college and local hospitals. The model is replicable for other community college nursing programs.
Southwestern College (SWC) is proposing to design and implement a comprehensive two-year preceptorship approach for the clinical experience component of its nursing program. This nontraditional, employer-based approach will greatly improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the nursing program; it will also open the program to such underrepresented students as single parents and working adults. It addresses both AB 1173 and 1989-90 Basic Agenda Criteria.

Nursing programs are among the most costly vocational programs to administer, with the student/instructor ratio for the clinical experience component averaging 12:1. Southwestern College’s proposed approach to providing preceptors for the entire two-year nursing program will

1. Provide more efficient, cost-effective clinical supervision, expanding class size from 12:1 student/faculty ratio to 20:1.
2. Increase nursing student enrollment and graduation by 25%.
3. Provide more relevant, individualized, work-related instruction to the SWC underrepresented student population.
4. Strengthen working (and hiring) relationships between SWC and local hospitals through involvement in both the planning and implementation phases of the program.
5. Serve as a replicable model for other community college nursing departments.

Four project objectives have been identified:

1. Identify strong elements of preceptorship programs that SWC’s nursing program can successfully utilize in designing its comprehensive, two-year preceptorship approach.
2. Strengthen program relationships with local nurse/employers through securing their active involvement in planning the proposed preceptorship program.
3. Develop curriculum, syllabi, materials and schedule for the preceptorship program which will best provide a relevant, flexible and individualized student clinical experience.
4. Obtain formal approval for the revised curriculum from SWC Curriculum and Instruction Committee and from State Board of Registered Nursing.
Southwestern College is requesting $14,725 for this proposed FII project, of which $14,225 will be utilized as faculty stipends to pay nursing department faculty for their development and writing of the new nursing program standards, curriculum, materials and approach.
Cost-Effective Competence: Proposal to Utilize Preceptors in Nursing and Clinical Education

1. Specific Educational Program Being Addressed

STATEMENT OF NEED
Educational Program Addressed by this Proposal

Southwestern College is proposing a nontraditional, employer-based preceptorship approach to its two-year nursing program. This comprehensive approach to providing student clinical experience will 1) provide more relevant, individualized instruction for our underrepresented students, and 2) improve the efficiency (cost-effectiveness) of the nursing program. It will serve as a model for other community colleges that have found nursing programs to be among the most costly vocational programs to administer.

Purpose of the Project as Related to Funding Priorities

The purpose of this project as related to AB1173 funding priorities is to provide a nontraditional form of instruction within the SWC traditional nursing program. A two-year preceptorship approach is proposed so that 1) students will have greater access to relevant clinical experiences, 2) individual learning objectives can be formulated for students, 3) the traditional instructional program can be enhanced, and 4) the nursing program can become more cost-effective. A preceptorship approach will open the nursing program to new clientele (especially single mothers and working adults) by providing them options and flexibility to conduct their clinical experience during evenings and weekends rather than weekdays only. After the project period, no additional funding will be needed to maintain this cost-effective approach to providing nursing education.

The purpose of this project as related to the 1989-90 Basic Agenda Criteria is to improve the educational quality of the nursing program. Preceptors will serve as role models, instructors, and resource personnel in technical, administrative, and philosophical areas within hospitals and clinics. They will thus extend and enhance the resources of community college instructors in the clinical laboratory component of the nursing program.
2. Specific Problems Being Addressed

Specific Problem Being Addressed

The current method of providing required clinical practice for nursing students is costly. It involves sending between 7-15 students to a clinical site together with one instructor. That one instructor is responsible for supervising all patient care given by each student. The instructor must be on or in close proximity to each unit on which s/he has students.

This method has been in effect at Southwestern College (SWC) and at other community colleges for many years. It is costly and inefficient from an institutional viewpoint as the student/faculty ratio is very low, averaging only 12:1. It is costly for students as well, as this traditional supervisory approach limits the scope and variety of relevant, individualized clinical experiences they could receive.

Recent developments in patient care have also indicated a need for a better method for providing the supervision of student clinical experiences. With the advent of prospective payment, hospital stays have become much shorter. Therefore, those who are hospitalized are sicker and require very complex care.

The traditional 12:1 student:faculty member approach to providing student clinical experience has the following limitations:

1. Any one hospital unit can take only a limited number of students (usually 7 or 8). Yet a consistent 7:1 student/faculty ratio is unacceptably low from a college standpoint.

2. The number of units suitable for any particular nursing course in any one hospital is limited. This prevents SWC from utilizing some good, smaller units and hospitals for clinical experience.

3. If only one lab schedule is used (due to limitations on faculty availability), hospitals may not have that particular schedule available for the required minimum number of students.

4. Some students are prevented from enrolling for clinical practice because they cannot take traditional day class schedules. This limits the number of students (especially underrepresented students) taking nursing classes, including single parents and those with full- or part-time jobs.

5. Expanding health care technology in which students need training requires more 1:1 supervision of students than one instructor can provide. The result is that students are forced to forego many opportunities in practice with a specific technology because their instructor is busy with another student.
6. The number of patients assigned to one student must be limited to the number of patients the instructor can safely be responsible for.

All of the above mandates a low instructor/student ratio which contributes to making nursing programs among the most expensive on college campuses. In turn, the expense and the lack of available appropriate clinical sites limit the number of students SWC can accept into and graduate from the nursing program. It also limits the variety of clinical experiences necessary to assure student access to employment opportunities. Thus a more cost-effective method of providing supervised clinical experience to students is necessary.

Summary of Proposed Project as Related to Need

The proposed program will utilize local hospital and clinic staff as preceptors to improve the effectiveness of the clinical experience component of SWC's nursing program. A preceptor is a nurse with the practical, on-the-job knowledge necessary to train and guide students throughout their clinical experience. Essentially, a preceptor is an instructor, but one that is totally "industry-based"; one that has been part of the hospital staff for a long-enough time to understand and interpret regulations, philosophy and work practices.

A preceptor helps provide the necessary on-site transition from school to work, while also further advancing the student's clinical and technical education. Finally, the preceptor serves as a role model for the student, one who can help the student adjust to the reality of hospital and clinical work.

The use of preceptors will allow SWC to expand the clinical experience component to students as follows. Each nursing instructor may be assigned as many as 20 students. Each of these students would then be assigned to a staff nurse preceptor who would have immediate supervisory responsibility. The 20 students could be scattered throughout the hospital, and the instructor would be in the facility and on call by any student or preceptor.

Exhibit 1

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Source: SWC MIS IOA
There will be a general orientation of all preceptors and then a specific orientation to the needs of a particular class of students. The preceptor will be aware of the objectives for the week for his/her student and will assign the student to patients and experiences designed to promote achievement of those objectives.

The instructor will confer weekly with each student/preceptor dyad and more frequently as needed. Evaluation will be the responsibility of the instructor with input from the preceptor and self-evaluation by the student.

This system will permit the instructor to concentrate on students with special needs and difficulties while the preceptors give individual attention to their assigned students.

Many precedents exist for the use of preceptors in the health care system. At SWC, both the Paramedic and Surgical Technology Programs function with individually assigned preceptors and roving instructors. Since instructors are available to students during lab hours, the courses are eligible for ADA. We expect that hospitals will be willing to provide nurse preceptors for the same reason they provide preceptors in the operating room: the preaccepted students are a source of graduate employees and the preceptorship experience can help to socialize students to a hospital so that they will choose to work there as graduates. Hospitals may also perceive the system as leading to better preparation with resultant reduced orientation for graduates.

Utilizing preceptors will radically improve the effectiveness of the nursing program by providing more efficient clinical supervision, thus expanding maximum class size, improving patient assignment to students, and allowing better individualization of programs for students.

No precedent exists, however, for providing preceptorships for more than the final phase of any one nursing program. SWC is proposing to design and provide a comprehensive preceptorship approach for as much of the first year of the two-year nursing program as possible, as well as for the entire second year.
3. Population To Be Served

Populations to be Served

Southwestern College is located in the southern portion of San Diego County and serves a diverse ethnic population of some 350,000 people. The community college is located 12 miles south of the City of San Diego and eight miles north of the U.S.-Mexican border. Over 15,000 students take classes at this campus. Because of its location, SWC attracts a wide range of students from all ethnic origins, including those with limited-English proficiency.

About 63 percent of SWC students come from minority groups, the largest of which (37 percent) is Hispanic (see Exhibit 1 for ethnic profile of students enrolled at SWC 1984-89). While SWC enrollment is growing in absolute numbers, the percentage of minority enrollment is also steadily increasing (up from 47 percent in 1980), a trend which is expected to continue as indicated by the ethnicity of students currently enrolled in the area junior and senior high feeder schools--73 percent minority students.

SWC's nursing program currently graduates over 80 nursing students each year, with approximately 140 students enrolled at any one time. The minority enrollment within the nursing program has been steadily increasing and is now at 58 percent. Additionally, one quarter of our current nursing students speak English as their second language, with varying levels of proficiency.

The proposed preceptorship program will affect all enrolled nursing students, as all students are required to take the necessary clinical experience components to the nursing program. It will also increase the number of underrepresented students through offering greater flexibility in schedule and lab options.
4. Objectives

Project Goal and Objectives

The overall goal of this proposed FII project is to design and implement a comprehensive two-year preceptorship approach for the clinical experience component of SWC’s nursing program. This new approach will:

1. Provide students with intensive, individualized and relevant clinical experiences supervised by local hospital nurse/employer preceptors:

2. Increase the cost-effectiveness of SWC’s nursing program by expanding class size through the use of trained preceptors plus faculty rather than through faculty alone;

3. Serve as a model for other community colleges needing a more cost-effective method of providing relevant nursing training.

The achievement of four project objectives will lead to attainment of this goal.

1. Identify strong elements of preceptorship programs that SWC’s nursing program can successfully utilize in designing its comprehensive, two-year preceptorship approach.

2. Strengthen program relationships with local nurse/employers through securing their active involvement in planning the proposed preceptorship program.

3. Develop curriculum, syllabi, materials and schedule for the preceptorship program which will best provide a relevant and individualized student clinical experience.

4. Obtain formal approval for revised curriculum from SWC Curriculum and Instruction Committee and from State Board of Registered Nursing.
5. Workplan Narrative

Project Activities, Timeline and Budget, by Objective

OBJECTIVE 1.
Identify strong elements of preceptorship programs that SWC’s nursing program can successfully utilize.

BACKGROUND:
Ohlone College has been identified as having developed a strong preceptorship program for its nursing students. Funded through a Kellogg grant, Ohlone has developed good materials and procedures. However, their preceptorship program is limited to the last few weeks of their two-year nursing program, while SWC is proposing an extended preceptorship program for as much of the first year as possible plus the entire second year. Consultation with a representative from Ohlone will enable SWC staff to 1) identify strong preceptorship program elements, and 2) adapt/extend such elements to SWC.

ACTIVITY:
- One-day consultation with instructor from Ohlone College.
- Initial design of SWC preceptorship program.

DATE: July 1990.

BUDGET: FII funds--$500 consultant fee; stipend for 7 SWC nursing faculty @ $125 each = Total = $1,375.

OBJECTIVE 2.
Strengthen program relationships with local nurse/employers...

ACTIVITY:
- SWC nursing faculty and administration will meet with representatives from eight local hospitals to design and formalize the preceptorship program and to establish procedures and guidelines for its implementation. Eight hospital representatives have already indicated their strong interest in and necessity for a formalized preceptorship program (see attached letters of support). As a result of the conference, agreement will be reached on how hospital staff can best be selected/utilized as preceptors and on how SWC students can receive the best clinical experience. It is anticipated that different agreements will be reached with the hospitals due to their diversity in size, patients and administration. Two-day conference among SWC faculty and 8 hospital representatives.

DATE: July 1990.

BUDGET: FII funds--Stipend for 7 SWC faculty @ $250 each = $1,750.
In-kind (local hospitals)--8 hospital representatives @ 16 hrs each @ $20/hour = $2,560.
b. Formal preceptorship training for 50 hospital preceptors will be conducted in June 1991 to allow time to prepare for September 1991 program implementation. Subject to hospital schedules and needs, the training will be conducted in two different sessions on the SWC campus and/or at certain individual hospitals.

DATE: June 1991.

BUDGET: FII funds—Stipend for 2 SWC faculty presenters @ $100 each = $200.
       In-kind (local hospitals)—50 preceptors x 4 hrs each @ $20/hr = $4,000.

OBJECTIVE 3.
Develop curriculum, syllabi, materials and schedule for the preceptorship program...

BACKGROUND:
An effective preceptorship program requires detailed syllabi, clinical objectives and materials. Clinical objectives are developed for each week and are given to both preceptor and student, since faculty will not be present for every hour of every preceptorship. Additionally, preceptor materials must be individualized according to the clinical area and to the level of the student. Detailed course outlines must be developed for new and/or revised courses to submit for December approval by the college Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) committee (see Objective 4 below).

ACTIVITY:
The affected curriculum totals 72 units. Of that total, 10 current courses (38 units) will be substantially revised, and up to 5 new ones may be developed.

Develop all required course outlines, curricula, syllabi, clinical objectives and preceptor materials.


BUDGET: FII funds—Faculty stipends paid to SWC nursing faculty by each developed unit: 38 units x $296.71 per unit of credit = $11,275

OBJECTIVE 4.
Obtain formal approval for revised curriculum...

ACTIVITY:
New and/or substantially revised courses will be approved by SWC’s Curriculum and Instruction Committee and by the Board of Registered Nursing before being implemented or sent to the State Chancellor’s Office for approval. Detailed course outlines will be provided to the C&I Committee in December 1990 for revised and/or new courses to be offered beginning September 1991.

DATE: December 1990.

BUDGET: FII funds—none.
PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL

The preceptorship program will be operated under the auspices of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The project director and person with overall supervisory responsibility for the program will be Charlotte Erdahl, Associate Dean, Health Sciences. Approximately five percent of her time (in-kind) will be devoted to directing and coordinating this project, at approximately $3,686. Clerical support for this project will also be provided (in-kind) at $1,800.

All seven SWC nursing faculty involved in the project development are instructors in the nursing program, and their average length of tenure at SWC is 15 years. They are currently reviewing the SWC nursing curriculum and course outlines and making needed basic content changes to assure that it meets National League for Nursing accreditation, reflects the needs of our underrepresented student population, and reflects the cultural differences encountered among both patients and students. They will be instrumental in designing and incorporating the preceptorship approach to the existing student clinical experience.
6. Expected Outcomes

PROJECT OUTCOMES
Expected Impact
Objectives.

The proposed FII project will have considerable impact in several areas:

1. Immediate impact will be to
   a. Allow increased enrollment (with subsequent increase in number of graduates) in SWC nursing class admitted in fall semester 1991 and in subsequent semesters.
   b. Strengthen and enhance working relationships with participating hospitals.
   c. Improve the quality of instruction for nursing students by making it more individualized, relevant and job-related.

2. Long term impact will be to
   a. Demonstrate an innovative, cost-effective approach to clinical laboratory for nursing students that can be easily imported to other community colleges.
   b. Attract and retain more non-traditional students.
   c. Increase employer satisfaction with SWC graduates.

Potential for Continued Support

The proposed project was designed to be totally self-supporting after expiration of the FII Grant. The new preceptorship program will be implemented beginning September 1991. Thereafter, an increased number of students (25 percent) with no increase in faculty will result both in increased ADA income and in program efficiency. The project will thus better help to support the nursing program yet will not increase costs.

Potential for Adaptation to Other Institutions or Programs

Colleges are now seeking more cost-effective teaching methods in nursing that will enhance or maintain the current level of quality. Hospitals want to recruit nurses to address the current nursing shortage, and they also need to recruit from graduates with higher levels of skills.

The proposed project, because it is cost-effective and because it better prepares nursing graduates for employment in a greater variety of situations, has high potential for replication and/or adaptation by other colleges. The preceptorship approach requires an initial period of development, during which relationships between nursing programs and hospitals are strengthened. Thereafter, the preceptorship approach is self-supporting and can be sustained with little additional effort on the part of either educational institution or hospital.
7. Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Plan

In addition to cooperating fully with any third-party evaluation conducted by the State, two additional levels of evaluation will be conducted by the project director, with assistance from the College Planning and Research Office.

Level 1: Evaluation of Short-term Project Objectives.

This evaluation includes the achievement of objectives during the FII funded project period July 1, 1990-June 30, 1991.

a. Effectiveness of consultation with representative from Ohlone College as evidenced by 1) SWC nursing department identification of elements to be included in new preceptorship program, and 2) written/oral feedback from SWC faculty and from Ohlone representative.

b. Strengthened program relationships with local nurses/employers as evidenced by 1) written/oral feedback, and 2) mutual establishment of formal procedures and guidelines with SWC for preceptorship program.

c. Effectiveness of formal preceptorship training for 50 hospital preceptors as evidenced by written/oral feedback at time of training and also at end of first and second semesters of program implementation.

d. Evidence of formal approval for revised curriculum from SWC's Curriculum and Instruction Committee and by the Board of Registered Nursing.

e. Evidence on file of detailed syllabi, clinical objectives and materials for each course affected by implementation of preceptorship approach.

Level 2: Evaluation of Long-term Project Objectives.

Although this evaluation will take place after FII project funding ends, its purpose is to determine whether the FII project had the following desired effects on instruction and learning.

INCREASED PROGRAM EFFICIENCY AND COST EFFECTIVENESS:

a. Expansion of student:instructor ratio for clinical experience from 12:1 to 20:1, with subsequent increase in ADA.

b. Admit 25 percent more students per year to SWC nursing program.

c. Graduate 25 percent more students per year from SWC nursing program.
INCREASED STUDENT ACCESS, INDIVIDUALIZATION AND RELEVANCY:
a. Evidence that the provision of more than one clinical lab schedule improves student access to the program as measured by increases in numbers of single mothers, students who work, and evening students.

b. Evidence that the assignment of two or more patients per student improves the student clinical experience as measured by student retention and success (improved GPA).
c. Evidence that individualized, relevant preceptorship program improves student school-to-work transition as measured by increase in numbers of students obtaining and retaining related employment at end of two-year program.
8. Dissemination Plan

Dissemination and Transferability

The plan for disseminating information about this project within the institution is as follows:

1. Written summary reports and/or oral presentations will be made by participating faculty members and the project director to be disseminated among the College management team, Academic Senate, Curriculum and Instruction Committee, and faculty.

2. Periodic reports will be made by the project director on the impact and coordination of the project with SWC matriculation activities--such reports will be made to the SWC Matriculation Committee and/or appropriate subcommittees.

3. Participating faculty members will make oral presentations with accompanying visual aids to members of the College staff during staff inservice sessions/workshops offered between semesters--such inservice will be on industry cooperation and on individualizing instruction College

The plan for disseminating project information outside of the College will include the following:

1. Periodic reports will be made at regularly-scheduled meetings of San Diego County Deans and Directors of Nursing Programs. Invitations will be issued at that time to discuss and/or view the new preceptorship program and to adopt/adapt its design elements.

2. Periodic reports will be made at meetings of California Directors of Associate Degree Nursing Programs and at the AND/BSN Educators Conference in Spring 1991. Increased cost-effectiveness and efficiency of nursing program will be stressed.

3. Articles on the program design, implications and implementation will be published in such journals as Nursing and Health Care and Nurse Administrator.

4. A final project report detailing the approach to providing a comprehensive preceptorship program will be disseminated upon request.

5. All requests for further information from community colleges will be honored by the SWC Health Sciences office.
9. Budget Narrative

PROJECT BUDGET

Total budget for the proposed FII project is $29,309, of which $14,725 is requested in FII funds. With the exception of $500 to pay for a consultant from Ohlone College, the rest of the requested funding ($14,225) will be utilized as faculty stipends to pay seven nursing department faculty for their development and writing of the new nursing program standards, curriculum, materials and approach. Please see the next page for a detailed budget summary.