

# Building collaborative teams: Teaching graduate students strategies for effective hiring

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## Introduction

Master's level nurses will assume leadership positions that require the development of collaborative teams

Some of the leadership skills essential to team building include communication, collaboration, negotiation, and coordination (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2009)

Key component to building quality teams includes recruiting the most qualified candidate(s), yet new leaders have limited experience with hiring practices.

## Background

Hiring new employees remains a challenge for nurse leaders because of the need to rapidly fill empty positions (Roussel, 2012).

Cottrell's (2002) *Monday Morning Leadership* book emphasizes the need to "hire tough"

- This principle allows leaders to "manage easy" in the future
- May require more time initially

## Learning Activity

Nursing students in a graduate leadership healthcare course participated in a hiring learning activity

Students worked in groups and role-played that they were serving on an academic search committee

Each group was provided with fictitious case scenarios of potential search candidates for 1-2 faculty positions

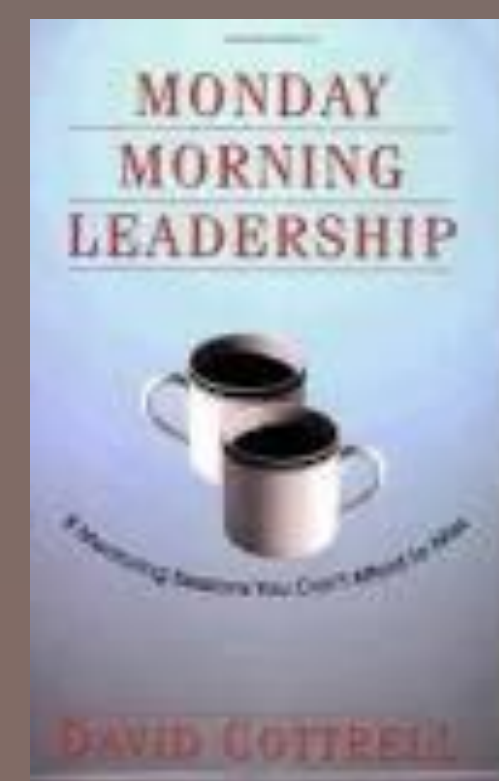
Students had to openly discuss the candidates within their group and reach consensus on the candidates strengths and weaknesses to determine the best candidates for the positions

## Implementation of Leadership Skills

Students used a variety of skills to reach consensus on ranking the candidates

Learning activity allowed the students to work together in a group and required the use of principles such as communication, collaboration, and negotiation to reach consensus

Groups shared areas where they disagreed and how they discussed the program's needs in relation to the candidates' strengths/weaknesses to reach agreement



## Sample Case Scenarios

You are a member of the search committee for the School of Nursing at a local university. The following applicants have applied for positions in the department. You are following the guidelines in *Monday Morning Leadership* and want to hire the "right people." You have four applicants listed below. You currently have openings in multiple areas and have several faculty who may retire in the next few years leaving teaching needs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Consider the following and then select who you would recommend. Work within your group to reach consensus on your ranking for the four candidates listed below.

Dr. Susan Smith has been teaching in the department for several years as an adjunct faculty. She has a full time administrative position at the hospital and is applying for a full time faculty position. She is well qualified and has extensive teaching experience, has scholarly work (publications and presentations), service, and has strong contacts within the hospital and the community. She has a strong teaching background at the undergraduate level and has taught some graduate courses. She could potentially serve in leadership roles within the department due to her administrative background.

Ms. Kelly Johns is a newer faculty member who has been working part-time at the university. She has a strong clinical background in medical-surgical and critical care nursing. She will complete her PhD prior to hire. Although she is new she has some beginning scholarly work and service. With her medical/surgical and critical care background she could teach across multiple levels.

Dr. Mackenzie Miller has never taught at the university. She is currently teaching at another university but is willing to relocate if hired. She has taught in all areas except for psychiatric and obstetrical nursing. She has scholarly work and service and has current clinical skills.

Ms. April Cook is also a newer faculty who recently completed her PhD. She has taught part-time at the university for several years. She is well qualified and has teaching experience in pediatrics. She has a good foundation of scholarly work and some service. She is also well liked in the department.

## Conclusions

Each group placed their rankings of the candidates on the board and all the rankings were compared/contrasted.

After reviewing all of the recommendations the groups shared the rationale for their ranking.

Groups shared their reasoning and opinions related to the potential candidates.

The class used team building skills within the group and reached final consensus on the candidates.

## Key Points

Graduate students recognized the challenges associated with hiring well to build strong teams

Learning activity focused on the nurse leader's role as a search committee member

Scenarios and use of group learning provided opportunities for students to collaborate and negotiate

## References

Cottrell, D. (2002). *Monday morning leadership*. Dallas, TX: Cornerstone Leadership.

Roussel, L. (2012). *Management and leadership for nurse administrators* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Burlington, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishing.