

# Respiratory Care Education Annual Abstract

Vol. 24, Fall 2015, 28



## The Transitional Experience of Therapist to Educator

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### Abstract

**Background:** Respiratory care programs often hire clinical therapists into new faculty positions. These clinicians typically have excellent clinical skills and often are seeking or have earned a graduate degree. However, few new educators have formal preparation for teaching or working in the academic world. This qualitative study investigated the transitional experiences of respiratory therapists who pursued a second career as respiratory care educators. The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of respiratory therapists as they transition from clinical therapists to educators. **Method:** Purposeful sampling was used to select 11 junior respiratory faculty from across the United States who had taught less than five years in a baccalaureate degree program. Each participant had previously worked as a clinician. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant. **Results:** Thematic analysis revealed five common experiences: under-preparation, challenges, overwhelmed feelings, personal responsibilities, and rewards. **Conclusion:** From this study, respiratory care department chairs and school administrators may better understand the challenges and needs of new faculty as they transition from clinician to educator. Positive experiences such as improved orientations and effective faculty support may promote a more rewarding and long-term career for new faculty.

**Key words:** New respiratory care faculty, transition experience, respiratory education, second career respiratory practitioner

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