

45th Biennial Convention (16-20 November 2019)

Student Motivation to Participate in Asynchronous On-Line Discussions

Michelle L. Nelson, PhD

Kristy L. Oden, DNP

Laura L. Williams, PhD

Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL, USA

Participation in online learning environments, especially in asynchronous discussions, is an essential element for student engagement in online learning. Research is plentiful related to online discussions, but there is little information related to nursing student perceptions of and participation in online discussions. Learner motivation is associated with student success in the online learning environment. There are two different types of learner motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation, doing something because it is interesting, is associated with participation in discussion topic choices. External demands, both work and personal, can also affect a student's intrinsic motivation through altering their control. The purpose of this study is to examine if discussion topic choice is associated with student motivation to participate in asynchronous online discussions. Post-licensure undergraduate (RN-BSN/RN-MSN) and graduate (RN-MSN) students (N=350) were distributed an online anonymous survey consisting of 10 (ten) questions. Email communication was utilized to obtain informed consent along with inclusion of the confidential survey link, which was available to students for approximately eight (8) weeks. Students were sent one email reminder approximately two (2) weeks after initial survey distribution. The survey was composed of five (5) demographic questions, four (4) motivation to participate in asynchronous online discussion questions, and one (1) preference of discussion topic question. A response rate of 20% (N=69) was achieved, with 49% MSN (graduate) students (n = 33) and 51% RN-BSN/RN-MSN (undergraduate) students (n= 36), participating in the survey. Seventy-nine percent of MSN students were employed full-time, 86% of RN-MSN students were employed full-time, and 76% of RN-BSN students were employed full-time. MSN (79%) and MSN-RN students (86%) felt that their motivation to participate in discussions was related to their employment status, whereas RN-BSN students reported a much lower relationship (38%). Seventy-nine percent of MSN students and 71% percent of RN-MSN students reported that the current demands in their life affected their motivation to participate in online discussion, whereas only 57% of RN-BSN students reported the same. The majority of students felt that instructor participation in the discussion had no effect on their motivation to participate. When classified into undergraduate and graduate groups, graduate nursing students preferred a choice of discussion topics in which to participate ($\chi^2 10.851, p=.004$). Providing students with discussion topic choices is associated with intrinsic motivation and increased online discussion participation.

Title:

Student Motivation to Participate in Asynchronous On-Line Discussions

Keywords:

Motivation to participate, Nursing students participation in online asynchronous discussions and Online asynchronous discussions

References:

- Chan, K., Lai, S., Leung, H., & Wan, K. (2016). Engagement in online asynchronous discussions: Roles of students' interests and preferences. In Idrus, RM & Zainuddin, N (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on e-Learning, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2-3 June 2016*, p. 32-36. Kidmore End, UK: Academic Conferences and Publishing International Limited.
- Hall, M. T., & Marshall, J. E. (2016). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation within the context of modern education. In E. Railean, G. Walker, A. Elçi, & L. Jackson (Eds.), *Handbook of research on applied learning theory and design in modern education* (pp. 292-308). Hershey, PA: IGI Global. doi:10.4018/978-1-4666-9634-1.ch014
- Lee, J. & Martin, L. (2017). Investigating students' perceptions of motivating factors of online class discussions. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 18 (5), 148-172.
- Schunk, D. H., Meece, J. L., & Pintrich, P. R. (2014). *Motivation in education: Theory, research, and applications*. Boston: Pearson.
- Sun, J. C.-Y., & Hsieh, P.-H. (2018). Application of a gamified interactive response system to enhance the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, student engagement, and attention of English learners. *Educational Technology & Society*, 21 (3), 104–116.
- Xie, K. (2013). What do the numbers say? The influence of motivation and peer feedback on students' behaviour in online discussions. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 44, 288-301.

Abstract Summary:

Asynchronous discussion is a commonly used tool for engaging students in the online learning environment. The purpose of this research was to examine the impact of discussion topic choice on a student's motivation to participate in an online discussion.

Content Outline:**Student Motivation to Participate in Asynchronous Online Discussions****Content Outline**

I. Introduction

A. Participation in online asynchronous discussions

B. Lack of research regarding nursing students - there is a robust amount of literature examining student motivation to participate in online discussions. However, few studies have examined online nursing students and asynchronous discussion participation.

II. Body

A. Main Point #1- Participation is paramount in the achievement of learning outcomes in higher education.

1. Supporting point #1 – Motivation to participate

a.) Intrinsic - completing a task because it is of interest or satisfying

b.) Extrinsic - completing a task because of external rewards (e.g., grades)

B. Main Point #2 – Relationship between discussion topic choice and motivation to participate in an online nursing course.

1. Supporting point #1 – Choice of discussion topics

a.) Discussion topic choice and motivation - Does having a choice regarding discussion topic increase a students motivation to participate?

b.) Comparison of graduate and undergraduate students - Graduate ($n= 33$) vs undergraduate ($n=36$) groups compared using chi square. Results were significant at $p < .004$.

C. Main Point #3 – Additional external factors affecting nursing students' motivation to participate in online asynchronous discussions

1. Supporting point #1 – Family obligations

2. Supporting point #2 – Work responsibilities

3. Supporting point #3 – Instructor participation

III. Conclusion

A. Graduate students are more motivated to participate in asynchronous online discussions when given a number of discussion topics from which to choose.

B. External factors have a considerable impact on the motivation of online nursing students to participate in asynchronous discussions regardless of level of education (graduate, undergraduate).

First Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

Michelle L. Nelson, PhD

University of North Alabama

Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions

Associate Professor, Director, Post Licensure Nursing and Health Professions Programs

Florence AL

USA

Author Summary: Michelle Nelson, PhD, RN, has taught in higher education for 16 years. The last four years have been solely in the online environment. She is dedicated to student success and has a passion for the post-licensure student population. Dr. Nelson earned her baccalaureate degree from the University of North Alabama (1997), her master's degree from the University of Alabama (2001), and her PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (2014).

Second Secondary Presenting Author

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author

Kristy L. Oden, DNP

University of North Alabama

Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions
Associate Professor, Graduate Program Chair
Florence AL
USA

Author Summary: Dr. Oden began her nursing career as an ADN nurse in the area of Women's Health. She continued her education to obtain a BSN degree, MSN degree with a focus as a Family Nurse Practitioner, and a DNP. She has practiced as a nurse practitioner for 13 years. She has been a nurse educator since 2010, working in associate, baccalaureate, and master's degree programs. She has worked in both the traditional and online setting.

Third Secondary Presenting Author

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author

Laura L. Williams, PhD
University of North Alabama
Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions
Associate Professor
Florence AL
USA

Author Summary: Dr. Williams is an Associate Professor at Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions at the University of North Alabama in Florence, AL. She has been an educator for 13 years, a family nurse practitioner for 19 years, and a nurse for 24 years. She currently teaching in the post-licensure RN-BSN, and MSN online programs at UNA.