Purpose: The nursing faculty shortage will persist throughout the next decade and is attributed to several factors including the aging and impending retirement of a significant portion of the current faculty workforce, lack of qualified applicants, particularly those from under-represented groups, and non-competitive salaries (Fang & Kesten, 2017; National League for Nursing, 2018; Taylor & Gillespie, 2017). This comes at a time when the Institute of Medicine recommends that 80% of the RN workforce in the U.S. is educated at the baccalaureate level (IOM, 2010). Additionally the global need for health professionals is predicted to double by 2030, resulting in a worldwide shortage of approximately 15 million registered nurses, nurse midwives, and physicians (Liu, Goryakin, Maeda, Bruckner, & Scheffler, 2017). Thus, nursing education programs will be unable to educate additional students without adequate faculty (Nardi & Gyurko, 2013). Innovative approaches to tackle the faculty shortage from both a “here and now” and a future perspective are needed (Nardi, & Gyurko, 2013).

A needs assessment conducted in Maryland, USA, from 2016-2017, explored issues related to the statewide shortage of clinical nursing faculty. Findings pointed to the lack of a single information source to learn about the educator role, paths to advanced degrees, and available educator positions as well as concerns about the educator image.

To address these concerns, the Schools of Nursing at Salisbury University and University of Maryland collaborated in a multi-year project to develop a new web portal to provide a one-stop-shop for information about becoming a nurse educator, educational pathways, and types of educator positions. Most importantly, the website contains multiple interactive features to assist job seekers in finding educator positions across Maryland. Beyond being a single-source for reliable information, users are able to create a profile unique to their needs. Aspiring educators can search for job openings at academic and clinical institutions across the state, and nurses who wish to advance their education can be connected to Maryland nursing programs all in one website. Nursing programs and healthcare organizations have the opportunity to promote their institutions as well as post job openings.

The purpose of this research was to evaluate various aspects of this newly developed web resource aimed at connecting aspiring educators with information and open positions.
Methods: After development of the website, the team prepared a beta test launch with review by a panel of aspiring educators and administrators from the two partner schools of nursing. A 15 item multiple choice online survey was developed to gather feedback on the quality and clarity of information provided on the website and to evaluate the value and ease of navigation through its features. Following approval by the University Committee on Human Research, prospective reviewers were asked to visit the leadnursingforward.org website, explore its features, and follow a link to complete the survey.

Results: Data from a review panel of aspiring educators and nursing education program administrators (n = 22) were examined. Reviewers reported that the purpose of the site was clear and it was easy to navigate. They indicated that the information was useful and written in language that was easy to understand. They commented favorably on the visual appeal, use of photographs, maps, and icons, noting that the color scheme was especially inviting and encouraged them to explore further. Most importantly, they remarked that the site filled a gap and was needed to raise awareness about the nursing and nurse educator shortage and connect aspiring educators with available positions. Areas for improvement included the need to update several outdated links, to change the busy background on one page for enhanced readability, and to use a revised version of one partner’s logo.

Conclusion: This web resource is a highly effective mechanism to provide accurate information for individuals interested in becoming nurse educators. The site can serve as a model for others interested in expanding awareness of the need for nursing educators in academia and health care organizations to increase the number of new registered nurses and assure their successful transition to practice. The website template can easily be replicated elsewhere or expanded to include multiple states in a region. Having a single information source can facilitate access to reliable information about how to become a nursing faculty member or nurse educator, publicize available positions within nursing education programs and healthcare organizations and ultimately contribute to the development of the next generation of nursing educators and professionals.

Since it takes one full-time faculty to produce six graduates per year who in turn provide $704,000 in annual health care services (Kowalski & Kelly, 2013), creating a pipeline for nurse educators is a sensible investment. On a larger scale, a new model for providing information, enhancing the image of nurse educators, and connecting aspiring nurse educators to open positions can add to the number of available nursing faculty and enhance “nursing’s capacity to meet global healthcare needs” (Nardi & Gyurko, 2013, p. 324).

Title: LeadNursingForward.org: Development of a Web Resource to Address the Nursing Faculty Shortage

Keywords:
nurse educator shortage, nursing shortage and web resources nurse educators

References:


Abstract Summary:

To address concerns about the nursing and nursing faculty shortage, a web portal was developed to provide a one-stop-shop for information about becoming a nurse educator, educational pathways, and types of educator positions. Multiple interactive features allow job seekers to find educator positions in academic settings and healthcare organizations.

Content Outline:

I. Introduction-Overview of the nursing faculty/nursing educator shortage
   A. The national picture-characteristics and statistics
   B. Need for a web resource for information and communication
II. Website Features
   A. Educational pathways to become a nurse educator
   B. Career pathways-academic and healthcare organizations
   C. Resources
   D. Image building
   E. Personalized profiles
III. Project partners and roles
   A. Two Schools of Nursing
   B. Website developers
   C. Advertising/marketing group
IV. Data collection from review panel
   A. Online anonymous survey
   B. Free text responses
V. Outcomes
   A. Quality of information
   B. Ease of navigation
   C. Visual appeal
   D. Usefulness
VI. Successes and challenges
   A. Collaboration among partners has led to an extremely high quality product.
   B. Ongoing team communication through distance modalities works
   C. Regularly reporting and reiteration of responsibilities reduces duplication in efforts.
   D. Establishing a common vocabulary is essential.
   E. Developing brand recognition takes time.
VII. Conclusion – A well-constructed web resource is a cost-effective strategy to provide information, facilitate the education and development of the next generation of nurse educators.
   A. Developing relationships among partners takes time and patience
   B. Budgetary support is essential to underwrite work of partners
   C. Use of a variety of communication methods improves likelihood of success
   D. Staff support is vital in providing ongoing connections

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