INTRODUCTION

Interprofessional collaboration begins with interprofessional education. When nursing students learn how to work effectively as a team, they are primed to collaborate this way in the workplace. Using kindness and collaboration as a methodology of instruction, helps students succeed and fosters interprofessional collaboration through interprofessional education. A team orientation, partnerships with community and college organizations, and interpersonal professional relationship modeling are ways this is accomplished.

Kindness is the framework used to enhance student engagement and success, develop interprofessional collaboration and bridge the gap between educational and professional implementation. This project is ongoing, and the methods are described more fully in this outline. To define, kindness is behavior marked by ethical characteristics, a pleasant disposition, and concern for others. It implies that other people matter, is both energetic and interactive, and is implicit in interpersonal relationships.

Austin Community College is committed to promoting faculty expertise by providing a successful teaching and learning environment that encourages active, lifelong learning. Students benefit in this climate that includes a collaborative partnership between academic, community and student services. This supportive climate enhances engagement and improves connections for new students and is part of the college’s mission statement and strategic plan.

In order to begin to teach interprofessional collaborations (elements which include accountability, coordination, communication, cooperation, and mutual trust and respect), which is in part a relationship between two or more members, we need to teach appropriate relationship development.

BACKGROUND

In recent years, the National Council of State Boards of Nurses (NCSBN) and state boards of nursing (BONs) have looked at issues in the training and retention of new graduate nurses. When new nurse have difficulty transitioning, serious consequences can occur. At Austin Community College, program issues with persistence, and outcome successes prompted a review of the nursing program. The personal teaching and professional philosophies of the authors prompted a different approach to the on-boarding of students and the partnering with college and community resources.

It was determined that three distinct changes could be made that would enhance student engagement, aid in the development of relationships, and promote collaboration. Utilizing current research on student engagement and especially the works of Clark (Creating and Sustaining Civility in Nursing Education, 2017), we determined that orienting students to the culture of nursing, providing access to community and college partners, and modeling kindness and civility in all arenas would have a positive impact and ease the transition to professional practice.

METHODS

Three Pillars of Kindness

First, a program wide orientation that introduces students to student colleagues, faculty, and college and community partners. A social setting, food, and conversation establishes a baseline for developing important peer to peer and faculty relationships.

Second, setting the tone for the classroom was established. Behaviors that promoted professionalism, defined incivility, and expectations for classroom culture was discussed. Each day before lecture, the team greets the students, socialization occurs, and relationships developed.

Lastly, a kindness basket was created to allow faculty peers to show appreciation for one another. Small tokens, treats, and kind words are shared, creating an environment of collaboration and allowing for modeling of this to the students.

CONCLUSION

This is the first semester of implementation and the project will be ongoing for the next 4 cohorts of students. Preliminary results from student feedback indicate that they feel valued and respected and strong peer groups have formed as a result.

The authors will look at persistence in relation to attendance at the orientation and disseminate data from a student survey regarding how these activities impact feelings of engagement and support.

The professional nursing department surveys its stakeholders as to how well our graduates transition. This data will be used to assess success with transition to practice.

So grateful to the faculty and students for the motivation, encouragement, and inspiration!

REFERENCES

Austin Community College Professional Nursing

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REPURPOSING KINDNESS: USING COLLABORATION AND KINDNESS AS A CATALYST TO AID SUCCESS, PREPARE FOR PRACTICE

Austin Community College Professional Nursing