

45th Biennial Convention (16-20 November 2019)

Repurposing Kindness: Using Collaboration and Kindness as a Catalyst to Aid Success, Prepare for Practice

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Background: In previous years, the National Council of State Boards of Nurses, (NCSBN) and boards of nursing (BONs) have looked at the issues in the training and retention of new graduate nurses. When new nurse have difficulty transitioning, serious consequences can occur. Program issues with persistence, and outcome successes prompted a review of the nursing program at Austin Community College and 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), we determined that orienting students to the culture of nursing, providing access to community and college partners, and modeling kindness or civility in all arenas would have a positive impact and ease the transition to professional practice.

Methods: It was determined that a program wide orientation would be utilized for incoming students and families. This would allow them to meet faculty, other students in their cohort, other nursing students in the program, and the college and community partners. The social setting, availability of food, conversation, and settings would establish 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. The faculty team was identified and students were assigned on campus faculty that would aid with coursework, questions, or concerns. Each day before lecture, the team greets the students, socialization occurs, and relationships developed.

Lastly, a kindness basket was developed that allows faculty peers to show appreciation for one another. Small tokens, treats, kind words are shared and this creates an environment of collaboration and allows for modeling of this to the students. The authors first distributed the basket, but the faculty have now taken this over.

Findings: 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 already formed. The authors will look at persistence in relation to attendance at the orientation and disseminate data from a student survey in regards to how these activities impact feelings of engagement and support. The professional nursing department surveys its

stakeholders as to how well our graduate's transition and this data will be used to assess success with transition to practice.

Title:

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Keywords:

Catalyst for student success, Relationships enhance success and Repurposing kindness

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Abstract Summary:

This presentation will describe a novel approach to student on-boarding while cultivating collaboration and kindness. Facing challenges of student retention and success in a diverse and multi-campus nursing program, the faculty leveraged college and community partnerships to foster intraprofessional collaboration and impact student success.

Content Outline:

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Introduction: For students to be able to transition to professional practice and participate effectively as part of an Inter-professional healthcare team, they must learn how to develop peer relationships and be engaged in the learning process in pre-licensure nursing education. This requires expert faculty that encourages active, lifelong learning, the creation of collaborative partnerships between academic, community and student services, and initiatives that foster student success while promoting equity in a diverse population. Fostering peer relationships contribute to student success and students who have interpersonal involvement will work harder and have the energy to better manage complex, repetitious, and ambiguous challenges and enhance the drive toward program completion.

Kindness is the framework used in this project to enhance student engagement and success, develop inter-professional 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 a behavior marked by ethical characteristics, a pleasant disposition, and concern for others. It implies that other people matter, it is both energetic and interactive, and is implicit in interpersonal relationships.

In order to begin to teach inter-professional 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.

This project utilizes kindness in three areas to enhance student engagement, teach and model collaboration, and prepare students for the role of future nurse leaders.

Main point 1: The development of community.

1. Modeling and teaching collaboration begins with a program wide orientation, Team Teal 101; for all entering nursing students and families. This is a time for students to learn about the variety of services and support available, meet with current students, meet their cohort peers and the faculty that will guide their learning.
2. This event is a way to begin building relationships with students in the cohort and with students in the upper levels. Our accelerator program serves to promote peer to peer support and establish collaborative study groups. The community and college partners are involved in this orientation as well. These partners and the services provided model collaboration and are in alignment with the college mission and strategic plan and allows the use of and need for services to be normalized
3. The goal of this event is to build community, establish relationships, and get students engaged with one another and the faculty. In essence, it demonstrates to the students that they matter.

Main point 2: The use of kindness in the classroom setting.

1. Collaboration in the workplace has been shown to empower members of a team and develop a more communicative environment. Collaboration allows for shared intelligence and improves outcomes.
2. Expectations of conduct are made clear the first day of class. Examples of respectful communication and conduct are provided and it is made clear that incivility is not

tolerated by the students to one another or faculty but also by faculty to one another and students. Each day students are greeted by faculty as they enter class. Casual conversations are sparked and relationships are formed. Students feel respected and cared about.

3. Faculty model collaboration by collegial relationships and providing respectful feedback to students. Active learning opportunities and group work facilitate team building and enhance engagement. Student engagement is a useful model for understanding persistence and success. Engaged students do more than attend or perform, they put forth effort, self-regulate behavior, and position themselves for desired academic, social, and emotional learning; all of which is preparation for collaboration.

Main point 3: The use of kindness and appreciation among faculty members.

1. In as much as collaboration is deemed important in the healthcare setting, it begins with students learning respectful, professional behaviors in school. In an effort to recognize and appreciate faculty members, a “scatter kindness” basket was developed. Faculty members choose to recognize one another with small treats and kind words and once a recipient, they then get to pass the kindness forward to other faculty members. Students are positively influenced by faculty that support and promote one another, thereby learning ways to develop important Inter-professional relationships.

Conclusion: These measures have been used this past semester with varying degrees of success. Faculty responses to being appreciated are positive and the ‘scatter kindness’ basket is now in the hands of faculty and not the authors. This cohort of students have remarked positively on the orientation, and strong peer groups seem to have developed earlier in the semester while upper level students remark that they would have liked to have had the same opportunity. This project is ongoing and persistence rates and end outcomes will be observed for tangible results but we are confident that the kindness and collaboration modeled by faculty and community partners will allow for the development of important scholastic relationships, enhance engagement thus allowing for a more fluid transition of these skills to professional practice.

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