

Nursing Education Research Conference 2020

Increasing Experiential Learning in Healthcare Policy Within a BSN Prelicensure Curriculum

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Purpose: As nursing grows and expands its power in advocacy and healthcare, a foundational understanding of how nurses' impact can change healthcare policy is critical. Discussion regarding advocacy and healthcare policy development needs to begin at the baccalaureate level of nursing education and continue throughout the masters and doctoral levels to see a change in the influencing power nursing brings to the healthcare arena. **Objective:** To implement evidence-based educational initiatives developed for baccalaureate nursing students to increase their political knowledge, skills, and astuteness. Experiential learning interventions were used to help students place healthcare policy content within the context of active learning experiences.

Design/Sample: The project was conducted at a university Nursing Center with four BSN clinical groups enrolled in the Community Health Nursing course.

Methods: A pre/post-test administration of the Political Astuteness Inventory (PAI) was conducted to assess students' political astuteness before and after experiential learning interventions. **Intervention:** The interventions included didactic preparation, a legislative assignment, local legislative visits and a healthcare policy component of the final Community Assessment project for the course.

Results: Results of the changes in scores on the Political Astuteness Inventory were statistically significant ($p < 0.0005$) indicating that political astuteness increased following the interventions.

Conclusion: This project demonstrated that evidence-based educational initiatives, utilizing experiential learning for pre-licensure BSN students in healthcare policy and implemented at the local level, can be effective at increasing political knowledge, skills, and astuteness. Learning strategies developed by Byrd, et al. (2004, 2012) provided the foundation for this project aimed at enhancing the political astuteness of baccalaureate nursing students through experiential learning activities. As a result of experiential learning activities, students moved from being politically unaware to some level of political astuteness. This project also demonstrated that advocacy and healthcare policy initiatives must play a larger role in nursing education. Graduates of BSN programs lacking an understanding of healthcare policy are unlikely to engage in the policy process and thereby influence policy. Expansion of content on healthcare policy requires a curriculum shift that includes both theory and practical application. Embracing a culture of advocacy and healthcare policy in an innovative curriculum will allow for unique and creative exchange of ideas and will advance the goals suggested in the IOM (2011) report: nurses have key roles to play as leaders in reforming the healthcare system.

Title:

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Keywords:

BSN Pre-Licensure Students, Curriculum Design and Healthcare Policy

Abstract Summary:

This project implemented an evidence-based educational initiative developed for baccalaureate nursing students to increase their political knowledge, skills, and astuteness. Experiential learning interventions were used to help students place healthcare policy content within the context of active learning experiences.

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Author Summary: Dr. LaCivita has a passion for nursing and policy initiatives which has spanned more than 25 years. Throughout her time in nursing education, she has encouraged students to see healthcare through a policy lens and provide a different level of advocacy to our patient populations.