Nursing Faculty and Student Perspectives of Teaching Effectiveness in the Online Environment

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Introduction

- Online course delivery continues to expand.*
- Design and delivery approaches vary.
- Nursing is rated as one of the top two most popular online majors, second only to business, for undergraduate and graduate degrees.*
- Concerns related to teaching effectiveness (TE), faculty role and the quality of online education persist.
  - Student evaluations, though unreliable, are commonly used in evaluating TE.
  - Faculty perception is essential to online TE evaluation and establishing best practice.

* Source-The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the U.S.
Issues Identified

- Literature gaps remain:
  - Current definition of TE pertains to the traditional classroom environment.
  - No precise definition of Online TE.
  - Domains of effective teaching remain unclear.
  - No available instruments for faculty evaluation of online TE.
- The need for a valid and reliable instrument for faculty evaluation of online TE is paramount.
The purpose of this study was to deepen our understanding of online TE and gather empirical evidence from perspectives of nursing faculty and students in order to support the development of an instrument to measure online TE.
Research Question

How do nursing faculty and students in online course perceive teaching effectiveness?

Theoretical Framework

Seven Principles of Effective Teaching* was used as a framework to guide the study interviews.

Study Design

• Qualitative descriptive design using focus group interviews.
• Phase I of a mixed-methods study.
• 32 participants were recruited from a College of Nursing in a U.S. public university:
  • Faculty (N=15): two groups of employed full-time faculty
  • Student (N=17): three groups of undergraduate (junior or senior-level), or graduate level (masters & doctoral).
Procedures

• Study recruitment (modified Dillman approach):
  • Email invitation
  • Qualtrics demographic survey
• Semi-structured interviews:
  • Face-to-face and WebEx live video conferencing
  • 90-120 minutes
  • Five focus groups to reach data saturation
• Data were transcribed, categorized, and compared using thematic content analysis procedures.
• Trustworthiness of the study qualitative data was established.
Faculty Sample

- Faculty participants were:
  - middle-aged ($Mdn = 51; IQ R = 46-54$)
  - female Caucasians (100%)
  - 53.3% senior lecturers/lecturers
  - academic teaching experience ($Mdn = 12; IQ R = 9-15$ years)
  - online teaching experience ($Mdn = 6; IQ R = 3-10$ years)
- Faculty attrition rate: 32% (study attrition rate: 53%)
Student Sample

- Junior/senior undergraduates (52.9%), masters (35.3%) & doctoral students (11.8%)
- The majority of student participants
  - Caucasian (88.2%)
  - single females, less than 30 years old (82.4%; $Mdn = 24$ & $IQ R = 20.5-28.5$)
- have taken asynchronous online courses within the past two years (64.7%)
- Student attrition rate: 63%
  (study attrition rate: 53%)
Results – Common Themes

• Focus group interviews yielded seven themes from faculty and six themes from students.

• Themes from both faculty and students’ perspectives
  1) Many factors influence TE: teaching philosophy, teaching presence, student engagement, and relationships;
  2) Faculty characteristics and teaching strategies impact TE;
  3) Significant differences between face-to-face and online learning;
  4) Student characteristics effect both student motivation/success, and faculty TE;
  5) Establishing clear expectations is an essential component of TE.
### Faculty Characteristics Associated with Online TE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Be:</th>
<th>Demonstrate:</th>
<th>Incorporate:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>organized</td>
<td>attention to detail</td>
<td>sharing professional experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disciplined</td>
<td>approachability</td>
<td>admitting to mistakes when they occur</td>
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<tr>
<td>passionate</td>
<td>flexibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>engaged</td>
<td>authenticity</td>
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- Factors influencing TE that were not clearly identified in the literature included **teaching philosophy, teaching role, faculty needs** and **faculty frustrations**.
Results – Unique Themes

- Faculty participants
  - offered advice for online TE
  - identified needs specific to online teaching and learning
    - technology
    - consistency in assignments
    - resources
    - administrative support
- Student participants identified strategies to ensure TE, raised concerns and made suggestions about using these strategies.
Results – Additional Elements

• Study results identify elements to be included in an expanded *conceptual definition of online TE*.
  • personal aspects (e.g. teaching philosophy, self-efficacy, satisfaction)
  • methods in teaching and learning (course content, learning activities, teaching practice)
  • social relationships between faculty-to-student and faculty-to-faculty
Conclusions

• Study results have extended our understanding of the concept and meaning of online TE as perceived by faculty and students.
• Study identified additional essential components key to evaluating online TE as teaching philosophy, teaching role, supportive resource, and perceived barriers.
• Phase I study results provide evidence for developing a comprehensive, evidence-based instrument to measure online TE (phase II and III).
• Study limitation: results are limited to one public university.
Questions?

Thank you!!