Title:
Nursing Faculty Perceptions of Student Evaluations, Grading Practices, and Administrative Performance Reviews

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Session Title:
Nursing Education: What Evaluations Mean to Practice
Slot:
D 03: Saturday, April 9, 2016: 10:45 AM-12:00 PM
Scheduled Time:
11:25 AM

Keywords:
grade inflation, nursing faculty performance evaluation and student end of course surveys

References:

Abstract Summary:
A review of findings from a qualitative research study will be presented outlining nursing faculty experiences with student end of course evaluations, grading practices, promotions, and offering of teaching contracts. Associated implications related to student incivility, grade inflation, and administrative review of faculty performance will be explored.

Learning Activity:

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<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
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<td>The learner will be able to describe the findings of a qualitative research study outlining faculty experiences with student end</td>
<td>I Summary of Research A. Introduction B. Background of study C. Purpose D. Population</td>
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of course evaluations, grading practices, and administrative offerings of teaching contracts and promotion

The learner will be able to explain the associated implications of the research findings related to student incivility, grade inflation, and measurement of faculty performance in nursing programs

II. Implications of Research Findings for Nurse Educators

A. Overview of Research Findings Related to Literature Review

1. Student Incivility
2. Grade Inflation
3. Measurement of Faculty Performance

Abstract Text:

Faculty members are often evaluated primarily on the results of student end of course surveys for promotion, teaching contract renewals, and offers of teaching assignments (Docherty & Dieckmann, 2015; Larocque & Luhanga, 2013; King-Jones & Mitchell, 2012). Consequently, student end of course (SEOC) surveys have become a primary focus in faculty evaluations. Rigor in a course and the assignment of grades associated with assessments can be a source of ongoing conflict between students and faculty, which can impact their relationship and, ultimately, student learning (Donaldson, & Gray, 2012; Marcis & Burney, 2013; Sprunk, La Sala, Wilson, 2014). Often students use a variety of mechanisms to communicate their dissatisfaction with the rigor of a course and faculty grading practices by utilizing informal ways to complain to the faculty member, to other faculty, or program directors and deans who have line authority (Roberts, 2012; Whitney & Luparell, 2012). In addition, students may use formal mechanisms to intentionally tarnish faculty reputations, write cruel comments, and assign low scores to faculty on SEOCs (Student End of Course Surveys), especially if they do not provide the grades that are desired (Clark, 2013; Docherty & Dieckmann, 2015; Marcis & Burney, 2013).

As the faculty evaluation process continues to incorporate SEOC scores and student satisfaction as part of the measurement of faculty performance, many faculty are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their role (AACN, 2014, 2015; Clark, 2013; McDermid, Peters, Jackson, Daly, 2012). With mounting current and future faculty shortages this could be a problem for nursing programs in recruiting and retaining qualified nursing faculty (AACN, 2014, 2015; McDermid, Peters, Jackson, Daly, 2012; Sprunk, La Sala, Wilson, 2014).

The purpose of the research study was to describe nursing faculty experiences with student end of course surveys utilized in undergraduate nursing courses, grading practices, administrative review of performance, and offering of teaching contracts. While many of these topics may have been researched extensively in higher education, few studies have been conducted with a specific focus on nursing education courses, and many of these topics were investigated in isolation, but not collectively.

An IRB approved qualitative research design was used for this study. Data was collected by interviewing nursing faculty in a pre-licensure nursing program. Nursing faculty with a minimum of two years of teaching experience were interviewed from multiple sites in a large higher educational system offering a pre-licensure program in the Midwest. A combination of observations, face to face interviews, and field notes, were analyzed and themes and meanings were identified. Major themes revealed: (a) faculty are exposed to a wide variety of unacceptable student behaviors that can have long lasting devastating effects; (b) faculty concerns about student comments which were hurtful, disturbing, and unrelated to teaching effectiveness; (c) higher final grades in a course and/or points earned on assessments are being posted by faculty than were merited; (d) lack of faculty support from course coordinators or administration when assigning low grades to students; (e) Student End of Course (SEOC) evaluations of faculty were weighted heavily in faculty performance evaluations and administrative offerings of teaching contracts.

Although student comments on the student end of course surveys have been shown to be inappropriate, they continue to be used by administration as an integral component of faculty performance evaluations.
As a result some faculty inflate grades to improve student evaluations, in order to continue successful employment in an academic environment.