Educating Next Generation Nursing Leaders and Enhancing Education-Practice Partnerships: The Role of Quality Improvement Projects

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**Define**

Education Innovation Drivers:
- Health care crisis in US requires significant reductions in cost and improvements in quality.
- Nurses have the potential to make a grassroots impact in transforming health care.
- Nursing skills are expanding to include quality improvement (QI), interprofessional teamwork, and systems thinking.

**Measure**

- **A service-learning framework**
- Execute a quality improvement project using innovation between students and practice partners to facilitate experiential learning in nursing.
- Examine the impact of an educational innovation in an educational setting.

- N=84 usable surveys (pre- and post-)
- Quantitative analysis
- Qualitative analysis

**Improve**

- Immediate:
  - Didactic content was disseminated early in the semester (vs. distributed throughout the semester) to provide better overall perspective of the project.
  - Pre-assessment of lean competency was administered to guide faculty preparation of course materials.
  - Peer mentoring of and delegation to underclassmen to facilitate practicing skills learned in the leadership course and expedite project completion.

- Short Term – Future:
  - High aptitude students will be provided the opportunity to participate in a rapid-improvement event with a local practice partner.

- Long Term – Future:
  - Multi-semester projects will allow for implementation experience.

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**Control**

- What: semester projects will allow for meaningful experience.
- Why: linkage to local practice partners
- How: student leadership and expert faculty guidance

**Analyze**

Quantitative data:
- Spring 2015: Mean=4.64, SD=0.51, Range: 3-5
- Fall 2015: Mean=4.62, SD=0.50, Range: 3-5

F-statistic: 5.93 (p-value: 0.02)

Qualitative Themes:
- Increased confidence in system knowledge, problem identification, and QI improvement skills.
- Enhanced leadership empowerment.
- Greater understanding of the effectiveness of teamwork in solving systematic problems.
- Increased knowledge in the complexity of health care systems and the role of professional nursing in leading and transforming positive change.

**Design**

- Research questions:
  - What are the benefits of an educational innovation bringing pre-licensure nursing students and practice partners together to execute a quality improvement project using a service-learning framework?
  - How does this approach affect the acquisition of team and quality improvement skills?

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**Explain**

- Systems thinking, interprofessional teamwork, and nurse skills are expanded to include quality improvement projects.