Development of caring in nursing students through participation in a service learning course

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Caring and nursing profession

❖ The importance of caring to the nursing profession has been discussed and its value to the profession has historical content.

❖ Professional caring is the essence of nursing practice and caring is knowing the individual as a person and understanding that person (Schofield et al., 2013).

❖ Service learning can introduce nursing students to caring and compassion (Brown, 2013).

❖ Through service learning nursing students can learn that caring for others is challenging and can be more challenging than caring for themselves (Schofield et al., 2013).
Service learning and volunteering

- Service learning involves learning experiences that combine and connect the service experience to academic coursework and reflection opportunities (Yancey, 2016).
- Service learning included an experience that is related to academic coursework, or the nursing curriculum and involves reflection.
- Volunteer opportunities are not related to the course work and may not involve reflection and this delineates volunteer opportunities from service learning.
Hoebeke et al. (2009) further defines service learning as containing four elements:

1. Experiential in nature.
2. Allow students to engage in activities that address human and community needs via structured opportunities for learning.
3. Incorporate reflection.
4. Embrace the concept of reciprocity between the learner and the person and entity being served.
Why/how is service learning beneficial?

- Service learning helps health care students to develop an appreciation of the vulnerabilities that marginalized segments of the population may face (Adegbola, 2013).
- Service learning can teach students how to develop leadership skills, critical thinking, social skills as well as cultural competencies (Hoebeke et al., 2009).
- Service learning can allow students to reflect on the benefit of caring for people from diverse backgrounds.
How/why is service learning beneficial?

❖ Contributes to the development of the student nurse not only as a professional but also as a student (McKinnon & Fealy, 2011).

❖ Service learning can introduce nursing students to caring and compassion (Brown, 2013).

❖ Through service learning nursing students can learn that caring for others is challenging and can be more challenging than caring for themselves (Schofield et al., 2013).
The purpose of our study was to examine nursing students’ perspectives of service learning and to determine if these experiences helped to develop caring.
Method

❖ **Participants:** convenience sample N=71 of the junior nursing students enrolled in the accelerated BSN program.

❖ **Setting:** the study was conducted in the New England private four year university.

❖ **Data collection and analysis:** students completed the questionnaire after volunteering for 10 days in the different community settings.
The survey that was utilized was the same interview guide used by Schofield et al. (2013) in their research.

Demographic information was collected as part of the survey including the age of the student, ethnicity, the number of years that they have worked in health care, and if they are currently working.
Demographic information

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<td>53/71 = 75% DO NOT WORK IN HEALTHCARE</td>
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<tr>
<td>YEARS WORKED IN HEALTHCARE</td>
<td>RANGE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-20 years</td>
<td>4.6 years</td>
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Survey Questions

1. Where did you have your Service Learning rotation?
2. Describe the people you worked with at the Service Learning site?
3. What did you expect to get out of the Service Learning experience?
4. What did you learn about others and yourself?
5. What did you do that was effective and why was it effective?
5. What values, opinions, decision, have been made or changed?
6. Describe what caring means to you?
7. How has this Service Learning experience helped you to care for others?
8. Is it important for you to stay involved in the community?
9. How would your efforts contribute to social change?
Question 3: “What did you expect to get out of the service learning experience?”

❖ The most frequent response was “to help others” with 17 of the total 71 responses yielding at 24% response rate.

❖ The least frequent responses, each with 3% of the total responses were:
  ❖ “Stepping outside my comfort zone”
  ❖ “Come together as a team”
  ❖ “Got more out of (the experience) than I thought”
Question 4: “What did you learn about yourself and others?”

❖ The most frequent response was “how much I like to help” with 21/71 responses yielding an 30% response rate.

❖ The least frequent responses, each with 3% of the total responses were:
  ❖ “We have more in common than we think”
  ❖ “I was able to learn about my community”
  ❖ ”I am actually good at teaching others:
An interesting revelation from the responses from question #4 was that many of our students identified that “others have it worse than I do”.

This response was given 14/71 responses for a 20% response rate.

This response was surprising to the researchers and this perspective was not identified in our literature review.

This is significant as this shows that our students were able to empathize and see the perspectives of others.
Question #8 results

Is it important for you to stay involved with the community?

NUMBER OF RESPONSES

Category 1

Category 2

STUDENT RESPONSE- YES OR NO

YES
NO
Limitations of the study

❖ Because a “sample of convenience” was utilized, the results cannot be generalized to apply to nursing students.
❖ The study utilized a relatively small sample size of 71 nursing students, limiting the generalizability of this study further.
❖ The survey has not been tested for validity and reliability. Use of this survey would require rigorous testing prior to generalized use.
Conclusion

❖ The responses indicated that service learning was a positive experience for our nursing students and that by students viewing the activity as valuable, our hope is that they will continue to participate in service learning.

❖ Several student responses indicated that many students developed empathy and an ability to look beyond their own world to gain an understanding of others is very important and may be useful to consider for future research.
References


