Title:
Exploring Faculty-Student Relationships and Their Implications for Persistence in African American Senior Nursing Students

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Session Title:
The Student/Faculty Relationship
Slot:
P 17: Sunday, 30 July 2017: 2:30 PM-3:15 PM
Scheduled Time:
2:50 PM

Keywords:
African American, Nursing Students and Persistence

References:

Bull, M. J., Fitzgerald, J. & Veal, J. L. (2012). A framework of academic persistence and success for ethnically diverse graduate students. *Nursing Education Perspectives. 33*(5). 322-327.

Creswell, J.W. (2013*). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fries-Britt, S. & Turner, B. (2002). Uneven stories: successful black collegians at a black and white campus. *The Review of Higher Education. 25*(3). 315-330.

Loftin, C., Newman, S.D., Dumas, B.P., Gilden, G., & Bond, M. L. (2012). Perceived barriers to success for minority nursing students: an integrative review. International Scholarly Research Network. ISRN Nursing. Vol 2012. 1-9.

Simmons, L. D. (2010). Student retention and persistence in higher education: an overview of college student retention and persistence.

Van Manen, M. (1990). Researching lived experience: human sciences for an action sensitive pedagogy. London, Ontario: Althouse. Retrieved from http://www. researchproposalsforhealthprofessionals.com/phenomenology.htm

Abstract Summary:
Factors contribute to low academic achievement and frustration among African American students, which, in turn, negatively affect their persistence (Simmons, 2010). A phenomenological approach was utilized to explore African American female nursing students' perceptions of faculty-student relationships and their implications for persistence.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE

The learner will be able to identify how nursing faculty can promote persistence of African American nursing students.	Discover how students perceive the role of faculty in engagement with African American nursing students.
The learner will be able to identify ways to increase diversity and increase retention as it relates to minorities in nursing.	Explore how nursing faculty can promote persistence of African American nursing students.
The learner will be able to define the role of a faculty-student relationship.	

Abstract Text:

Purpose: This research explores the lived experiences of African American female nursing students and examines how faculty-student interactions may influence persistence of minority students. Little research exists which examines the interaction between faculty and their African American female nursing students. Combined with the current research and the lack of diversity within the profession of nursing, it is critical to unlock the mysteries as to why there is an inadequate representation of African American nurses within the profession of nursing. Utilizing the lens of the Black Feminist Thought perspective in conjunction with Tinto's Theoretical Model of Student Retention, the focus was to gain further insight into and to discover if a relationship exists between faculty involvement and the persistence of African American female nursing students. Improved awareness regarding persistence will empower educators to direct future efforts toward interventions that positively influence and facilitate successful program completion for minority nursing students (Loftin et. al, 2012).

Methods: This study used a phenomenological approach to analyze faculty-student interactions as well as student responses from journals, focus groups, and interviews. Applying a phenomenological approach seeks to describe the meaning attributed to several individuals regarding their lived experience(s) of a concept of phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). This particular approach attempts to understand people's perspectives and understanding of a particular situation (Van Manen, 1990). This study focused on the aspects which all participants have in common. The study consisted of three phases: Phase I entailed observing a heterogeneous group of baccalaureate nursing students and nursing faculty in order to document behaviors. Phase II contained interviews of African American senior nursing students to learn about their lived experiences. Lastly, Phase III consisted of a focus group discussion and follow-up interviews with a heterogeneous group of nursing students. A qualitative analysis of the transcribed focus group and interview data was utilized to identify themes discovered among the statements given by participants. Review of the interview transcript in its entirety was completed and the interview transcript was read a second time prior to coding.

The components were grouped into thematic categories. In addition, textual, verbatim examples from the interview and focus group's transcribed texts were included to highlight and clarify key concepts. All relevant data were coded throughout the document, which allowed the categories to emerge freely from the interview and focus group discussion data. The thematic categories were generated through the identification of similar types of responses. The final step involved a comprehensive review and interpretation of the data to provide the conclusions of the analysis. NVivo 10® qualitative analysis software was used to aid in the coding and the emergence of themes and patterns from the data by assisting in the classification, sorting and arranging of information, and tracking the frequency of occurrences across the interview and focus group data.

Results: The researcher used findings from the observations, interviews, and a focus group. The themes that were identified were the following: personal perseverance, supportive network, caring attitude, mentorship, and faculty-student interactions. The reactions regarding current faculty-student relationships were mixed. In describing their overall experiences with faculty, student participants used words ranging

from approving terms like "positive," "friendly," and "helpful," to more negative ones like "initially intimidating," "cold," and "discriminatory." Some described having a personal connection with a professor while others noted that the professors lacked any personal connection with their students. Some participants also witnessed faculty favoritism towards certain students. Interview and focus group participants noted how imperative it was to have a support team that included advisors, mentors, and role models. Participants also stressed the importance of developing a faculty-student relationship. Some interview participants elaborated on this faculty-student connection, saying that helped them to feel less isolated or intimidated and actually boosted their self-confidence. This validates Fries-Britt & Turner's (2002) notion that educators must create institutional support systems, so that African American students may have the opportunity to develop the personal confidence that will "propel them toward academic pursuits" (p. 326).

Conclusion: While shortages have occurred in health care throughout history, experts are discovering that the rising nursing shortage is uniquely serious (nd., 2011). Not only is there a shortage, but there is a major concern with the lack of diversity within the profession of nursing. The following recommendations are essential for consideration: (a) the incorporation of mandatory training with nursing faculty to incorporate and define a faculty-student relationship; (b) the inclusion of workshops to help faculty become mentors to various ethnic backgrounds; (c) annual evaluations of faculty regarding their professional relationships with students; (d) forming a yearly "get to know" workshop for students and faculty; (e) mandating that students have a weekly 1:1 meeting with an assigned nursing faculty member; and lastly, (f) providing workshops to African American nursing students that would feature African American leaders as guest speakers who can offer insight into leadership, advancement, and keys to success.

Moreover, this research can assist the nursing profession as well as higher education institutions in the development of faculty-student relationships to empower the success of African American nursing students. Additionally, this research can allow institutions to reflect, make needed changes regarding faculty-student interactions, and assist in promoting and retaining African American nursing students. Nursing faculty can be positive influences on students who seem to be discouraged or overwhelmed. Faculty can shape new, positive mental models by illustrating a welcoming approach towards students (Bull, Fitzgerald, & Veal, 2012). It is essential to create a safe learning environment in which students communicate in ways that respect diverse views and are appreciative of students as individuals (Bull, Fitzgerald, & Veal, 2012). Interactions between faculty and students have enduring effects on learning as well as professional development.