

Title:

The Impact of Service Learning Experiences on RN-to-BSN Students' Professional Practice

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Session Title:

Teaching Strategies in BSN Global Service Learning

Slot:

C 14: Sunday, 29 October 2017: 10:45 AM-11:30 AM

Scheduled Time:

10:45 AM

Keywords:

RN to BSN, Service Learning and Theory-practice gap

References:

American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) (2008). *The essentials for baccalaureate education for professional nursing practice*; American Association of College of Nursing. Retrieved from <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Education/pdf/BaccEssentials08.pdf>

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Cox, T., Murray, L. I., & Plante, J. D. (2014). Undergraduate Student Diversity Paradigm Expansion: The Role of International Service Learning. *International Forum Of Teaching & Studies*, 10(1), 3-13.

Eyler, J. (2009). The power of experiential education. *Liberal Education*, 95(4), 24-31.

Flinders, B. A. (2013). Service-learning pedagogy: Benefits of a learning community approach. *Journal Of College Teaching & Learning*, 10(3), 159-165.

Groh, C. J., Stallwood, L. G., & Daniels, J. . (2011). Service-learning in nursing education: Its impact on leadership and social justice. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 32(6), 400-405.

Ross, M. (2012). Linking classroom learning to the community through service learning. *Journal Of Community Health Nursing*, 29(1), 53-60. doi:10.1080/07370016.2012.645746.

Stallwood, L. G., & Groh, C. J. (2011). Service-learning in the nursing curriculum: Are we at the level of evidence-based practice? *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 32(5), 297-301. doi:10.5480/1536-5026-32.5.297

Abstract Summary:

A research study examined the impact of service learning on RN to BSN graduates. It was found that participants' professional practice was positively impacted by their service learning experiences. Professional skills identified as requisite for undergraduate nurses translated to the participant's professional nursing practice because of their service learning experiences.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
By the end of the presentation, the learner will understand the advantages of service learning as a teaching learning strategy in nursing education.	The research based expected outcomes of service learning in nursing education will be discussed.
By the end of the presentation, the learner will appreciate the impact of service learning on the professional practice of RN to BSN graduates.	The research results of the impact of service learning on participant's professional practice and the potential to bridge of the theory-practice gap will be discussed.

Abstract Text:

The purpose of undergraduate nursing education is to prepare students for professional nursing practice. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) defines professional nursing practice as a baccalaureate (BSN) prepared registered nurse (RN) interfacing on behalf of a client (whether individual, families, or communities) with a health system to ensure the best outcomes for a client through direct or indirect care (AACN, 2008, p. 7). Preparing nursing students for professional practice includes developing essential nursing skills as identified by nursing education accrediting organizations such as the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and professional organizations such as Sigma Theta Tau. It is important that these essential skills developed at the undergraduate level translate to professional nursing practice, bridging what is considered a gap between the theory of the classroom and the realities of practice. Considering the responsibilities of nursing educators to prepare nursing students for professional practice, it is incumbent upon educators to identify teaching-learning strategies that develop needed skills and bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Service learning is a teaching-learning strategy increasingly utilized in undergraduate nursing education (Ross, 2012; Stallwood & Groh, 2011). Service learning as a teaching learning strategy provides the opportunity for students to meet academic objectives while engaging in service opportunities in the community (Ross, 2012). This experiential, multifaceted teaching-learning strategy is discussed as having the potential to bridge nursing education's known theory-practice gap, providing enduring benefits to RNs in professional practice (Eyler, 2009). A number of valuable skills necessary for professional practice are described as outcomes of service learning in undergraduate nursing education. Identified outcomes of undergraduate service learning include cultural competency, critical thinking, civic engagement, social justice, leadership, and collaboration which are qualities essential to nursing students' future practice as professionals (Amerson, 2012; Cox, Murray, & Plante, 2014; Flinders, 2013; Groh, Stallwood, & Daniels, 2011). Identifying how these outcomes translate to professional nursing practice provide nursing educators with a deeper understanding of service learning as a teaching-learning strategy. A qualitative research study was undertaken to increase the understanding of the impact of undergraduate service learning experiences on the professional practice of RN to BSN program graduates.

The study participants, eight RN to BSN program graduates, completed semi-structured interviews either in person or by phone. Data analysis was completed using a constant comparative method to identify themes from initial codes. Five themes emerged as findings of the study as participants described how their service learning experiences as students impacted their professional practice; a Practice Innovator, a Leader, a Nonjudgmental Practitioner, a Mindful Practitioner, and being Civically Engaged. The findings of this study add to the understanding of service learning as a teaching-learning methodology assisting nursing educators as they continually seek the most effective teaching-learning methods for preparing future nursing professionals.