Title:
Undergraduate Nursing Students and Faculty Perceptions to a Research Internship Model

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Session Title:
Undergraduate Research Mentoring
Slot:
J 16: Tuesday, 31 October 2017: 8:00 AM-8:45 AM
Scheduled Time:
8:00 AM

Keywords:
Perceptions, Research Internship and Undergraduate Nursing Students

References:


Abstract Summary:
This presentation will provide participants with information regarding a research internship model as part of an existing course for exposing undergraduate nursing students to the role of the nurse scientist. Participants will also be provided with the findings for using this model based on students and faculty perceptions.

Learning Activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. The learners will describe at least two components to include when developing a transformational learning research internship program for undergraduate nursing students as part of an existing course at the end of the presentation.</td>
<td>1. A description will be provided to the learners for the components used to develop a transformational learning research internship program for undergraduate nursing students as part of an existing course.</td>
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<td>2. The learners will discuss at least one finding based on the study results for using the transformational learning research internship model at the end the presentation.</td>
<td>2. A description of the findings based on the study results for using the transformational learning research internship model will be provided to the learners.</td>
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Abstract Text:

Background: Undergraduate nursing students often report that research is invisible in the university environment, and research faculty report that they rarely have the opportunity to interact with undergraduate students who might be potential PhD students. It is, therefore, essential for the nursing profession that efforts are undertaken to generate interest and encourage students who are early in their nursing career to consider PhD preparation and the role of a nurse scientist. The purposes of this study were to: a) describe a model for exposing undergraduate nursing students to the role of the nurse scientist as part of an existing evidence-based practice course, b) assess student perceptions of the research internship program learning experience and potential research career, and c) assess faculty perceptions of the research internship program as a learning experience for students and the potential for a research career for the students enrolled in the program.

Sample: During the spring of 2016, 48 students were enrolled in the accelerated pre-licensure baccalaureate 10-week evidence-based practice course.

Method: The research internship model was embedded into an existing undergraduate research evidence-based practice course. The research internship program was designed to allow students to select the research internship program as an alternative to the existing assignment of a group poster project. The internship requirements included: (a) completion of an additional CITI training module, (b) establishment of a learning contract with their mentor, (c) twenty hours of side-by-side work in the research field with their mentor, and (d) participation in two, 1-hour group seminar discussions with course faculty regarding their experience. A cross-sectional descriptive study design was employed that used content analysis to analyze a 9-item open-ended student questionnaire and a 7-item open-ended faculty questionnaire to assess student and faculty perceptions of a research internship option embedded in a required evidence-based practice course.

Results: Out of these 48 students, 13 students (n= 1 male, n=12 female) volunteered to participate in the internship option and 5 faculty members (n = 5) agreed participate in the internship program. A 100% survey response rate (13 students out of 13) was obtained for the student as well as the faculty survey (5 faculty members out of 5). Four categories emerged from student (n = 15) questionnaires: the internship was viewed as a positive research experience, it provided a “hands-on” learning experience, challenges were related to research equipment failure, and this was an “eye-opening experience about the role of a nurse-scientist.” Three categories emerged from faculty (n = 5) responses: positive aspects of being a mentor were discovered, student contributions assisted in the progress of the program of research, and there were challenges of getting the students added to the research protocol. Several students (n = 10, 77%) indicated they would consider a PhD program, and all five faculty members indicated they actively spoke with their interns about applying to a PhD program.

Discussion: The findings from this study demonstrate potential significance for nursing education to use a transformative learning strategy to expose undergraduate nursing students to the role of a nurse scientist early in their career. Both students and faculty believed the research internship model was a positive experience that helped the students to learn about the role of a nurse scientist. The positive experiences cited by students predominately reflected insights regarding the conduct of research gained through their active participation in an ongoing study. Faculty anticipate that by providing an ongoing research internship embedded in a required course, that the pairing of undergraduate students with research faculty, has the potential to increase the number of students enrolling in PhD nursing programs. Future research is needed to explore how many students actually enroll in a PhD program after participating in an undergraduate nursing research internship program.