

Nursing Education Research Conference 2018 (NERC18)

Implementing Clinical Accommodations for Students With Physical Disabilities in Nursing Education

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Faculty effectiveness is central to the advancement of nursing education and the preparation of nursing program graduates who are prepared for today's fast pace clinical environment (Barksdale et al., 2011; Kring, Ramseur, & Parnell, 2013). The promotion of quality teaching and learning practices from faculty require the use of evidence-based research outcomes that address learner preparation (National League for Nursing, 2016). Regulatory changes in higher education have increased access to nursing education for students with disabilities. However, a long standing tendency of excluding students with disabilities from nursing education has left many nursing faculty without the knowledge and expertise needed to appropriately accommodate students with disabilities (Dupler et al., 2012; May, 2014; Newsham, 2008; Smith, 2012). Therefore, research was conducted to determine how nursing faculty can facilitate the success of students with disabilities once they are admitted into a nursing education program. The study examined best practices for faculty working with students with physical disabilities in a clinical nursing course. Currently, a knowledge deficit exists amongst nursing faculty on how to effectively implement accommodations for students with disabilities (Marks & Ailey, 2012; May, 2014; Newsham, 2008). Furthermore, no evidence-based guidelines for accommodation implementation can be found in the nursing literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to uncover the process by which faculty made reasonable academic accommodations for nursing students with physical disabilities within the clinical setting of a pre-licensure nursing education course.

The results of this study are significant to nursing education because the number of students with disabilities perusing degrees in higher education is steadily increasing and more students with disabilities are likely to enter nursing education programs in the near future. However, many nursing faculty report a lack of knowledge on how to appropriately and effectively accommodate students with disabilities, especially in the clinical setting (Aberg, 2012; May, 2014; Meloy & Gambescia, 2014). While a small number of students with disabilities have matriculated through nursing programs, a gap in the literature exists explaining how faculty use reasonable academic accommodations with these students. This knowledge gap prevents the widespread adoption of successful accommodation practices across nursing education programs, thereby limiting the acceptance and matriculation of students with disabilities. The anticipated increase of students with disabilities in nursing education necessitates that nursing faculty identify a consistent and feasible process for inclusion. Understanding the process by which reasonable academic accommodations are made is the first step to creating inclusive learning environments in nursing education.

Constructivist grounded theory method, as explained by Charmaz (2014), was used to answer the research question: What is the process by which faculty make reasonable academic accommodations for pre-licensure nursing students with physical disabilities, specifically orthopedic impairments, in the clinical setting of a nursing education program? Nursing faculty were interviewed about their experiences providing accommodations for students with physical disabilities in a clinical nursing course. Faculty were recruited from schools of nursing across the Midwestern United States and self-selected into the study. Individual interviews were conducted with initial participant using a virtual platform. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Research transcripts were coded using constant comparative methods and categories and subcategories of results were revealed. Theoretical sampling with additional participants was used to further develop, enhance, and ensure the accuracy of developed categories (Charmaz, 2014). Research results will be discussed using participant narratives as supporting detail as well as future research needs based upon study results.

Title:

Implementing Clinical Accommodations for Students With Physical Disabilities in Nursing Education

Keywords:

Accommodation, Clinical Education and Students with Disabilities

References:

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Abstract Summary:

Many nursing faculty lack the knowledge and expertise needed to appropriately accommodate students with disabilities, especially in clinical settings. Research was conducted to determine what processes are needed to guide faculty in providing accommodations to students with physical disabilities in a clinical nursing course. Research results will be shared.

Content Outline:

Introduction

1. Disability regulations in Higher Education

2. Current Status of Students with Disabilities in Nursing Education

Body

1. Significance of Affective Accommodation Practices in Clinical Nursing Education
 1. US Department of Education Regulations
 2. Need for Accommodations
 3. Diversifying the Nursing Workforce
2. Research Study Design
 1. Constructivist Grounded Theory Study
 2. Nursing Faculty Participants
 3. Mid-Western United States
3. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in Clinical Nursing Courses
 1. Discuss barriers and facilitators for faculty when planning accommodations
 2. Discuss factors that affect a faculty member's ability to implement accommodations
 3. Discuss the role of clinical partners in accommodation implementation

Conclusion

1. Future Research
 1. Further studies needed
 2. How to improve accommodation implementation

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Author Summary: Erin Horkey is a Doctor of Education in Nursing Education Candidate at the University of West Georgia and a faculty member in the College of Nursing and Health at Madonna University. During the course of her doctoral education, Erin researched students with disabilities in nursing education and recently completed her dissertation word studying clinical accommodations for students with disabilities in nursing education.