Modern nurse educators need to embody and role model leadership behaviors to impact change in the current health care environment, as well as develop nursing leaders who use their voices to advocate for quality patient care and the nursing profession. A strong nursing presence that recognizes the vulnerability of populations, as well as socioeconomical and political factors, is critical for the promotion of healthy communities throughout the world. Nursing leaders in nursing education and practice are essential for fostering advocacy for access to quality care, inclusive of vulnerable populations, and health prevention and promotion. Today's health care climate necessitates a strong nursing presence that comes from the empowerment afforded by solid educational foundations and perspectives. Effective nurse educators masterfully apply leadership styles and have the necessary skills to drive policy and practice changes, while educating and supporting students and/or staff to ultimately achieve quality patient outcomes. Nurse educators, in order to be successful leaders and change agents, have the responsibility to strengthen and retain their leadership competencies in a rapidly changing health care arena. In addition to the impact of nurse educators' own leadership platforms, including programmatic improvement, scholarship, or political activism, nurse educators have a unique opportunity to teach and develop leadership abilities among their students. Nurse educators are charged to develop nurses who can function effectively and competently in today's health care systems, and act as leaders in nursing and health care. It is essential that nurse educators possess the competency necessary to not only develop leadership skills in their graduates, but also to inspire graduate voices in order to affect positive change in nursing and health care. Through nursing research and innovative pedagogy and practice, leaders in nursing influence education, policy, and professional practice and health care, which advances nursing practice, education and science. The purpose of this presentation is to outline identified themes in the most recent, evidence-based literature related to leadership in nursing and nursing education. The themes in the evidence-based literature spanning the last decade related to leadership in nursing education include: 1) advancing personal leadership potential; 2) organizational success and change; 3) collaboration for best practices; and 4) advocacy for change. In order to successfully foster future nurse leaders, it is incumbent upon nurse educators to advance their personal leadership skills, as well as those of undergraduate and graduate students, through formal and informal education. Ideally, the leadership competencies and examples exemplified by nurse educators will model leadership skills for learners, and also empower nursing graduates to act as future change agents. Through their education, and by engaging with nursing leaders, graduates can glean characteristics which can embolden them to lead by using their voices to impact change in nursing and health care. Nurse leaders work to bridge gaps in communication and establish relationships between nursing education, institutions of higher learning and health care systems to positively affect graduate preparation, and ultimately patient outcomes and cost containment. Today's complex health care delivery system necessitates strong nursing presence which comes from the empowerment of current and future nurses. Nurses' influential voices cultivate collaboration between nursing education and practice, as well as interprofessional collaboration, which can lead to safe, effective and quality patient care. Leaders in nursing are often visionary thinkers, engaging in opportunities in practice and education, and championing positive changes related to nursing and health care. The voices of leaders in nursing are instrumental in the development of health policy, changing the delivery of health care to consumers through board and committee membership, and taking on leadership positions in policy-making organizations. These themes will be explored in the context of nursing education, nursing practice, and health care delivery and policy. Insight into the current state of the evidence base, including suggestions as to how to impact change in the current health care environment will be proposed. Recommendations to stimulate future research, gleaned from the search of the literature and current evidence-base, are offered to enhance understanding of the nurse educator competency of functioning as a change agent and leader.
Title:
Advancing the Voice of Nursing Through Leadership: The Current State of the Evidence Base

Keywords:
empowering change, leadership and nursing education

References:


**Abstract Summary:**
Key themes related to leadership in nursing and nursing education in the current, evidence-based literature will be explored in the context of nursing education, nursing practice, and health care delivery and policy. Recommendations for future research and for empowering change in the current health care environment will be offered.

**Content Outline:**
Introduction:

1) Strong nursing presence and voices are essential for the promotion of healthy communities throughout the world.

2) Nursing leaders in nursing education and practice are essential for fostering advocacy for access to quality care, inclusive of vulnerable populations, and health prevention and promotion.

3) Comprehensive review of the evidence-based literature spanning the last decade related to leadership in nursing education revealed four major related themes.

**Main Points:**
Themes related to leadership in nursing in the evidence base are explored in the context of nursing education, nursing practice, and health care delivery and policy.

1) Advancing personal leadership potential
   1. a) development/role modeling of personal leadership
   2. b) student/staff development and empowerment

2) Organizational success and change
   1. a) influence of nursing
   2. b) advocating for safe, effective, quality care

3) Collaboration for best practices
   1. a) interprofessional collaboration
   2. b) collaboration between educational and health care institutions

4) Advocacy for change
   1. a) leadership positions on boards and committees
   2. b) focus on health policy change
   3. c) effective and inclusive health care delivery

Conclusion:

1) Nursing leaders are called to impact change in the current global health care environment to advocate for accessible, and inclusive, quality care.

2) Leaders in nursing education have the unique opportunity to develop and utilize their own leadership competencies, as well as foster leadership characteristics in their students.

3) Future research recommendations focus on empowering nurse educators to function as change agents and leaders.

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Professional Experience: Dr. Jennifer A. Specht earned a PhD from Villanova University with her coursework focusing on Nursing Education. Her MSN, also focused on Nursing Education, is from DeSales University; she earned her BSN from Villanova University. Dr. Specht served as the Director of Aria Health’s School of Nursing (formally Frankford Hospital School of Nursing). She held faculty appointments at DeSales University and Moravian College prior to her position at Widener University.
Author Summary: Dr. Specht has more than 10 years of academic nursing education experience, as well as nursing leadership and administrative experience. Her areas of interest are focused on mentoring relationships, leadership development, and the LGBTQ community. She has presented her research both nationally and internationally. This presentation is gleaned from a thorough review of the evidence-based literature done in preparation to author a chapter on leadership in the recent NLN Core Competencies for Nurse Educators publication.

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