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Phenomenological findings of nursing student experiences in service-learning

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The lack of critical thinking among beginning practitioners has resulted in the need to ensure students have learning opportunities that promote the transformation of learning. The areas of cultural competency and self-efficacy among learners are two components essential for students to develop in the nursing profession. Nurse Educators need to recognize strategies that will foster the development of critical thinking and allow students to demonstrate an understanding of safe cultural practice. Service-learning is one method of instructional pedagogy used to promote student success through the construction of knowledge and application of theory in practice education. Providing students with learning opportunities that enhance knowledge and practical application is important in nursing education. An early understanding of cultural diversity assists learners to demonstrate growth in confidence and become culturally competent in their nursing career. A heuristic phenomenological methodology was used to explore first year student perceptions and experiences of service-learning in nursing education. The phenomenological approach included student perceptions and experiences. The heuristic component added a personal influence for the researcher to recognize the importance of curriculum alignment, agency selection, and tasks to enhance knowledge. The evolution of four themes contributing to the improvement of academia and community enhancement became evident through a heuristic approach of data analysis. Data saturation from 13 participants revealed the thematic development of experiential naivety, systems misalignment, personal exhilaration, and transformation of learning. The identification of effective instructional strategies to support learning became crucial for students and beneficial for community stakeholders. Strategies leading to the development of critical thinking and cultural competence was identified as a necessity in the early stages of classroom instruction. Problem-based learning, round table discussions, and reflective writing were identified as examples of how students learn to construct knowledge in the classroom and share wisdom in the community. Conclusions that transpired from the study include: the importance of pre-entry assessment of prior education and knowledge, providing learning environments that foster the transformation of learning, continuous evaluation of student learning and agency opportunities, and the importance of student support to gain an understanding of the benefits of service-learning in the community.

Biography:

I am currently employed with the Faculty of Nursing at University of Regina. I recently completed a Doctor of Education program specializing in curriculum and instruction through the University of Phoenix in collaboration with University of Regina. I focused on nursing student perceptions and experiences of service-learning in nursing education using heuristic phenomenology. The four-year journey of doctoral studies led to the completion of a doctoral degree in May 2015. My scholarship activities include: chapter book contributions, presentations at national conferences, peer review work including journal articles and textbooks, and manuscript writing for publication. Current research projects include the use of *Smart Infusion pumps in the Clinical Setting* and *Bullying Among Nursing Students During Clinical Practicums*. During the Spring 2016, I was the recipient of the University of Regina President's Award for Teaching Excellence.