

Title:

Nursing Students' Perceptions of Trust in the Student-Faculty Relationship

Lynn M. Varagona, PhD, MSN, MBA

WellStar School of Nursing, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA, USA

Judith L. Hold, EdD, RN

Wellstar School of Nursing, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA, USA

Session Title:

Teaching and Learning in a Clinical Environment

Slot:

B 04: Friday, April 8, 2016: 1:15 PM-2:30 PM

Scheduled Time:

1:35 PM

Keywords:

Academic and Clinical Performance, Student-Faculty Relationship and Trust

References:

Scarborough, J. E. (2013). Student-faculty Trust and Student Success in Pre-licensure Baccalaureate Nurse Education, *Nurse Education Today*, 33, 919-924. Corrigan, M. W., Klein, T. J., & Isaacs, T. (2010). Trust Us: Documenting the Relationship of Students' Trust in Teachers to Cognition, Character, and Climate, *Journal of Research in Character Education*, 8(2), 61-73. Rudolph, J. W., Raemer D. B., & Simon, R. (2014). Establishing a Safe Container for Learning in Simulation. *Simulation in Healthcare*, 9(6), 339-349.

Abstract Summary:

Semi-structured focus groups were conducted with first semester BSN nursing students to explore their experiences with academic and clinical faculty who did and did not establish trust. A number of themes emerged that differentiated instructors who established trust from those who did not.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
The learner will be able to describe BSN students' experiences of nursing instructors in class or clinical who established trust.	Factors that influenced establishing trust in a faculty member included the faculty member (1) consistently using nonverbal communication that expressed interest in students, (2) taking time to address students' concerns, (3) creating opportunities for students to succeed, (4) conveying trust in the student, and (5) creating an environment for students to feel free to ask questions.
The learner will be able to describe BSN students' experiences of nursing instructors in class or clinical who did not establish trust.	Factors that influenced lack of establishment of trust in a faculty member included the faculty member: (1) conveying that students were not their priority, (2) revealing signs of being inconvenienced by students, (3) not being receptive to students' questions, (4)

	creating a power structured environment (5) demonstrating non-inviting nonverbal communication (6) putting forth minimal effort to help students succeed as revealed in teaching strategies (e.g., exams did not reflect the content taught), and (7) not preparing well for class activities followed by failing to take accountability.
The learner will be able to describe BSN students' experiences of environmental characteristics in class or clinical that did or did not foster establishment of faculty trust.	Regarding characteristics of the environment that fostered trust, skills lab settings were more conducive because of smaller classes and more open/fluid spaces. Auditorium-type classrooms with 100 students made students feel disconnected from the instructor and uncomfortable asking questions.

Abstract Text:

Background: While researchers have found that nursing student-faculty trust and related characteristics are associated with academic success¹, few studies were encountered that examined trust within the nursing student-faculty relationship. Among those that have, Scarbrough² found that increased student mood disturbances were associated with decreased interpersonal trust between nursing students and nursing faculty. They concluded that changes in students' level of trust could potentially impact cognition and critical thinking, although perhaps not in a direct and linear fashion. Corrigan³ and colleagues found a positive relationship between students' self-reported levels of trust and their educational attitudes. Examining healthcare simulation experiences, faculty declaring and enacting a commitment to respecting learners and showing concern for their psychological safety facilitated active engagement in learning⁷. Similarly, Edmondson⁵ found that psychological safety in work teams positively affects learning behavior, which in turn affects team performance. No research of an exploratory nature on trust and the nursing student-faculty relationship was encountered in the literature. Given the relative infancy of this area of research, coupled with its potential to positively impact nursing student performance, an exploratory design that seeks to uncover the elements behind establishment of trust among nursing students and nursing faculty is warranted.

Objective: The purpose of this study is to explore first-semester BSN nursing students' experiences of instructors in class or clinical who established trust and their experiences of nursing instructors in class or clinical who did not establish trust.

Methodology: Researchers created focus group interviews with 12 nursing students, recruited by purposeful sampling, who participated in the fundamentals of nursing course. Group discussions guided by pre-set questions explored elements related to the students' experience of trust (e.g., instructors' actions, students' feelings, attitudes and behaviors, and characteristics of the environment such as noise level and the presence of other students) as well as students' perceptions of the influence of establishing student-faculty trust on their academic and/or clinical performance. Students' experiences of instructors who did not establish trust were similarly explored. Thematic analysis was then used to identify common themes of instructors who established trust and characteristics associated with a lack of trust.

Findings: A number of characteristics differentiated students' experiences when trust in a faculty member was (vs. was not) established. Factors that influenced establishing trust in a faculty member included the faculty member (1) consistently using nonverbal communication that expressed interest in students, (2) taking time to address students' concerns, (3) creating opportunities for students to succeed, (4)

conveying trust in the student, and (5) creating an environment for students to feel free to ask questions. Factors that influenced lack of establishment of trust in a faculty member included the faculty member: (1) conveying that students were not their priority, (2) revealing signs of being inconvenienced by students, (3) not being receptive to students' questions, (4) creating a power structured environment (5) demonstrating non-inviting nonverbal communication (6) putting forth minimal effort to help students succeed as revealed in teaching strategies (e.g., exams did not reflect the content taught), and (7) not preparing well for class activities followed by failing to take accountability. Regarding characteristics of the environment that fostered trust, skills lab settings were more conducive because of smaller classes and more open/fluid spaces. Auditorium-type classrooms with 100 students made students feel disconnected from the instructor and uncomfortable asking questions.

Conclusion: Much can be learned about the experiences that foster or do not foster student trust in faculty. Students reported that their trust in a faculty member positively impacts their engagement in their learning, and their lack of trust in a faculty member negatively impacts their engagement in learning. These findings can guide faculty and administrators in identifying characteristics that can increase student engagement in learning, thereby potentially improving student academic success.