Student Perceptions Regarding Collaborative Intraprofessional Nursing Education

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The purpose of this project is to determine student perceptions regarding collaborative learning activities between undergraduate and graduate nursing students. Teamwork is an important factor in the provision of high-quality health care. Peer-assisted learning (PAL) is an intraprofessional, active-learning approach in which higher-level students act as teachers to lower-level students (Williams & Reddy, 2016). Near-peer teaching is a subset of PAL, in which the peer teachers are at least one year more advanced than the learners (Aba Alkhail, 2015). An important aspect of this project is the lack of existing published research focusing on collaboration between undergraduate and graduate nursing students.

There are positive benefits to near-peer teaching for both levels of students. According to McKenna and Williams (2017), students identified with the near-peer teachers, gained increased understanding of the course requirements, had decreased anxiety about clinical expectations, and learned how to manage difficult situations. Students also gained role models through their involvement with the near-peer teachers (Nelson et al., 2013). The near-peer teachers reported improvements in their teaching skills, knowledge, and clinical skills through this experience, while the lower-level students received helpful feedback on clinical skills in a supportive learning environment. (Khaw & Raw, 2016; deMenezes & Premnath, 2016).

There is a lack of research on collaboration between undergraduate and graduate nursing students, although some studies have been published on near-peer teaching in nursing education. In one study, second-year nursing students were utilized for the health assessment head-to-toe physical examinations by first-semester students, with positive feedback received for both groups of students (Bryant, 2017). In the simulation laboratory, senior level students have been used successfully as facilitators for junior level students (Dumas, Hollerbach, Stuart, & Duffy, 2015). Students also provided positive feedback about a simulation experience using higher-level nursing students as patients for first semester nursing students (Owen & Ward-Smith, 2014).

In our program, the online MSN graduate students in the Patient Education and Advocacy course currently create low-literacy pamphlets for community agencies. Typically, topics focus on chronic disease diagnosis and management, including lifestyle changes and other areas of importance for patient education. Leadership on the choice of topics in this project will be bottom-up drawn from the needs of the targeted populations. Our first-year residential undergraduate BSN students in the Population-Focused Nursing and Healthcare Policy course complete community assessments as part of their required learning activities. In a planned collaboration, the community assessments of the residential undergraduate BSN students will be utilized by the online graduate MSN students to create low-literacy pamphlets. These will meet the needs of the specific populations served by six community health care agencies, including free clinics, community health centers, and a public school district. Students working on this project will be geographically dispersed over five rural southeastern counties in underserved medical areas. These pamphlets will also be utilized during teaching sessions, staffed mainly by undergraduate nursing students, at the community agencies. Both before and after the project, demographic information and survey data will be obtained from both the undergraduate and graduate nursing students to assess their perceptions about intraprofessional collaborative educational activities.

The planned survey instrument was adapted from Robben et al. (2012).
This project will help achieve the student learning outcome goals for two different nursing program levels. In addition, the use of the created pamphlets will help meet the educational needs of the community and support health equity in these underserved populations. A unique aspect of this research project is the intraprofessional collaborative nature of the learning activities across both program levels and educational settings.

Title:
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Keywords:
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References:
Aba Alkhail, B. (2015). Near-peer-assisted learning (NPAL) in undergraduate medical students and their perception of having medical interns as their near peer teacher. Medical Teacher, 37(sup1), S33-S39.


Abstract Summary:
Collaboration is an important aspect of providing high-quality health care. Residential undergraduate and online graduate nursing students will collaborate on a health literacy project for community agencies. Students will complete pre- and post-surveys to assess student perceptions about intraprofessional collaborative educational activities across program levels and educational settings.
Content Outline:

1. Discuss the benefits of collaborative learning between undergraduate and graduate nursing students.
   1. Collaborative learning activities help prepare nursing students for future team-based nursing practice.
   2. Near-peer teaching has the added benefit of providing role modeling for lower-level students.
   3. Collaboration between students in different program levels encourages lower-level students to consider future advanced nursing practice options.

2. Analyze residential undergraduate and online graduate nursing students’ perceptions regarding intraprofessional collaborative learning activities across program levels and educational settings.
   1. Pre- and post-surveys will be obtained using a planned survey instrument that gathers information on student views regarding knowledge benefit in community health, health literacy, and self-management support.
   2. These same surveys will also include data on student perceptions regarding the value of this collaborative activity as it influences readiness for team-based nursing practice.
   3. Qualitative survey questions on the post-survey will also explore student perceptions on the value of intraprofessional collaborative nursing education.

3. Discuss implications for nursing education based on research results and literature findings.
   1. Analysis of our results may provide guidance for curriculum development.
   2. In view of the paucity of published data on this topic, our project results will add to the body of knowledge regarding intraprofessional collaboration in nursing education.

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Professional Experience: Dr. Tracy George has been a family nurse practitioner since 1999. She currently sees patients in the public health and free clinic settings. She has been an assistant professor of nursing at Francis Marion University since 2012. She teaches both undergraduate and graduate nursing courses. She has published and presented on the scholarship of teaching and learning, shared decision-making, and clinical nursing topics. She has published nine peer-reviewed articles, several book chapters, and has presented at a number of regional and national conferences.

Author Summary: Dr. Tracy George is an Assistant Professor of Nursing at Francis Marion University. She has worked as a family nurse practitioner since 1999 in a variety of settings, and she continues to care for patients in the public health and free clinic settings. Since 2012, she has taught undergraduate and graduate nursing courses. She has published and presented on the scholarship of teaching and learning, shared decision-making and clinical nursing topics.

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**Professional Experience:** Dr. DeCristofaro is a family physician (37 years) and sees patients in the free clinic setting. She has been university faculty in BSN/MSN/DNP, PA, and Psychology programs (21 years). Her publications, conference presentations, book chapters, and CE courses cover diverse clinical topics and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

**Author Summary:** Dr. Claire DeCristofaro is a family physician whose practice has focused on underserved communities, and she continues to see patients in the free clinic setting. She has taught in higher education for BSN/MSN/DNP, Physician Assistant, and Psychology programs, and served as faculty chair for graduate research projects. Her academic contributions include journal publications, book chapters, continuing education courses and conference presentations with a focus on clinical practice guidelines and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

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**Professional Experience:** Dr. Murphy has nine years teaching statistics and research methods to undergraduate and graduate students majoring in education, business, and psychology. She has eleven years doing statistical analysis with the Geriatric Research Group, Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Salem, Virginia.

**Author Summary:** Dr. Pamela Ford Murphy is an Assistant Professor at Ashford University. She has 22 years of experience in teaching at all levels from high school to doctoral students. For the past ten years, she has taught research methods and statistics courses at the university level. As a researcher of topics including education, psychology, and geriatrics, she has been a co-author on several publications in scholarly journals.

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**Professional Experience:** Marty Hucks has practiced as a family nurse practitioner for 23 years at Internal Medicine Specialists. She has been a part-time faculty for 17 years at Francis Marion University and Medical University of South Carolina. She has taught a variety of courses, including Population-Focused Nursing and Healthcare Policy, Transcultural Nursing, & Clinical and Ethical Decision-Making.

**Author Summary:** Marty Hucks primarily teaches population-focused nursing and has developed a foreign study course. She has presented at state, national, and international conferences on topics related to nursing education. She is on the Boards of The Boys and Girls Club of the Pee Dee and Southeastern Medical International. She is an Amy V Cockcroft Nursing Fellow (2004), Oxford University Round Table delegate (2007), and a 2008 recipient of The Palmetto Gold Award.