

Nursing Education Research Conference 2018 (NERC18)

Doctoral Nursing Graduates Lived Experience of a Virtual Mentoring Program and Building Upon the Mentoring

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Faculty mentoring of doctoral nursing students is at a critical juncture, as a lack of mentors and experienced researchers exist to assist the next generation of doctorally prepared nurse educators (Lach et al., 2013; Lasater et al., 2014; Maritz & Roets, 2013; Rand & Pajarillo, 2015; Welch, 2017). This lack of mentors and experienced researchers is due to the increased number of experienced nurse educators retiring and a decreased number of nurses pursuing graduate and doctoral degrees in nursing education (Lach et al., 2013; Lasater et al., 2014; Maritz & Roets, 2013; Rand & Pajarillo, 2015; Welch, 2017). This shortfall of researchers to prepare the next generation of nurse education, nationally as well as at “home institutions,” is happening simultaneously with the growth of doctoral programs in nursing, resulting in an increased demand on a limited number of nurse researchers and mentors (Lach et al., 2013; Maritz & Roets, 2013; Welch, 2017).

The future research of doctorally prepared nurse educators is one of the most important factors that will affect the production of nursing education knowledge (Maritz & Roets, 2013; Welch, 2017). Therefore, a renewed and robust focus on mentoring within doctoral nursing education is needed to support not only doctorally prepared nurse educators but also the quality of future research in nursing education. This renewed and robust approach to mentoring in doctoral nursing education may include virtual mentoring. Virtual mentoring is a structured relationship between an experienced and novice individual in which the mentoring takes place through the utilization of technology as a means to add value to the lives of those involved (Clement, 2014; Maritz & Roets, 2013; Welch, 2017).

Research regarding virtual mentoring has primarily been done in disciplines outside of nursing while a dearth of virtual mentoring research findings exists in nursing education (Maritz & Roets, 2013; Nowell, White, Mrklas, & Norris, 2015; Rand & Pajarillo, 2015; Welch, 2017). Especially, in relation to the virtual mentoring support offered to doctoral nursing students (Lasater, 2014; Maritz & Roets, 2013; Welch, 2017), and how graduates build upon the mentoring experience. Therefore, there is a need for future research on the lived experiences of doctoral nursing graduates who participated within a virtual mentoring program and how the graduates build upon the mentoring experience. The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of doctoral nursing graduates who participated within a virtual mentoring program.

The doctoral graduate’s lived experience of participating in a virtual mentoring program is one way to explore the virtual mentoring environment. Mentoring doctoral nursing students is an important aspect to assist in their development as future scholars (Lach et al., 2013; Maritz & Roets, 2013). With the lack of mentors and researchers at home institutions to assist the next generation of doctorally prepared nurse educators (Lach, et al. 2013; Maritz & Roets, 2013; Rand & Pajarillo, 2015), virtual mentoring may assist in the creation of a more robust mentoring environment. Therefore, to investigate the doctoral graduate experience may assist in providing insight regarding their experiences within a formal virtual mentoring program.

A descriptive phenomenological plan using Husserl’s (1970) approach will guide this research as this approach is an appropriate methodology to illustrate virtual mentoring as a lived experience in a subjective manner. The study will be conducted utilizing a doctoral nursing education program in nursing education at a university in the southeastern portion of the United States. Graduates who have participated within a virtual mentoring program will be invited to participate in this study. Methodological

rigor will be obtained by following established guidelines of Lincoln and Guba (1985) and data analysis for the study will follow Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological framework to establish the essential meaning of each participants' experiences.

The goal of this study is to gain insight from doctoral graduates of a nursing education program and their lived experiences within a virtual mentoring program as well as how mentoring has assisted their professional lives and the mentoring of others. Previous research has addressed only the lived experience as a current doctoral student of a virtual mentoring program. Furthermore, a regional Virtual Mentoring Consortium for Doctoral Nursing Education (VMC-DNE) could be established with a group of doctoral programs based upon the findings of this research to influence the development of further virtual mentoring programs in doctoral nursing education. The VMC-DNE could serve as a national model for other stakeholders with similar research and mentoring goals for their doctoral nursing students.

Title:

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Keywords:

Doctoral Students , Nursing Education and Virtual Mentoring

References:

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Abstract Summary:

A robust focus on mentoring within doctoral nursing education is needed to support doctorally prepared nurse educators and the quality of future research in nursing education. The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of doctoral nursing graduates who participated within a virtual mentoring program.

Content Outline:

Content Outline_Virtual Mentoring

I. Introduction

- A. Faculty mentoring of doctoral nursing students is at a critical juncture
- B. A renewed and robust focus on mentoring within doctoral nursing education is needed

II. Body

A. Main Point #1. Need for future research on the lived experiences of doctoral nursing graduates who participated within a virtual mentoring program and how the graduates build upon the mentoring experience.

- 1. Supporting point #1

a) Research regarding virtual mentoring has primarily been done in disciplines outside of nursing

2. Supporting point #2

a) A dearth of virtual mentoring research findings exists in nursing education

B. Main Point #2. The doctoral graduate's lived experience of participating in a virtual mentoring program is one way to explore the virtual mentoring environment.

1. Supporting point #1

a) To investigate the doctoral graduate experience may assist in providing insight regarding their experiences within a formal virtual mentoring program.

2. Supporting point #2

a) A descriptive phenomenological plan using Husserl's (1970) approach will guide this research as this approach is an appropriate methodology to illustrate virtual mentoring as a lived experience in a subjective manner.

C. Main Point #3. The goal of this study is to gain insight from doctoral graduates of a nursing education program and their lived experiences within a virtual mentoring program as well as how mentoring has assisted their professional lives and the mentoring of others.

1. Supporting point #1

a) Previous research has addressed only the lived experience as a current doctoral student of a virtual mentoring program.

III. Conclusion

A. Furthermore, a regional Virtual Mentoring Consortium for Doctoral Nursing Education (VMC-DNE) could be established with a group of doctoral programs based upon the findings of this research to influence the development of further virtual mentoring programs in doctoral nursing education. The VMC-DNE could serve as a national model for other stakeholders with similar research and mentoring goals for their doctoral nursing students.

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