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The Scholarship of Service Learning

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THE SCHOLARSHIP OF SERVICE LEARNING

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Objectives

1) Identify methods to utilize when implementing service learning into a nursing curriculum
2) Recognize the benefits of integrating service learning in a nursing curriculum to both students and the community
3) Discover how to integrate research with service learning
What is Service-Learning?

- According to the National Service Learning Clearinghouse, service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.
What is Service-Learning?

- An activity where students offer service in the community
- The service offered is related to course objectives
- It has the potential to motivate students to be more engaged in the future
- Reciprocity is the key
What is *NOT* Service-Learning?

- It is *not* an internship
- It is *not* a co-op
- It is *not* just community service
- The academic credit is received for learning, not for service
Benefits of Service-Learning

- **Benefits for Faculty**
  - Tool for understanding and retention of material
  - Tool for application of knowledge by integrating theory, practice, and research
  - Promotes in-depth class discussions

- **Benefits for University**
  - Helps fulfill mission
Benefits of Service-Learning, cont.

- Benefits for Students:
  - Enriches and enhances learning
  - Enjoyment of learning
  - Gaining experience and confidence in abilities and skills
  - Opportunity for personal growth
  - Opportunity to work with diverse groups
  - Professional development benefits
  - Confucius: “I read and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.”
Benefits of Service-Learning, cont.

- Benefits for Community
  - The obvious and tangible benefits of the service delivered
  - Students and faculty are educated about the specific mission of the organization served
  - Opportunity for long-term relationships with organization established
  - Collaboration with area schools
  - IT is a WIN-WIN situation!
Other Potential Goals of Service Learning

- Educating students for lives of moral and civic responsibility
- Reach students on an emotional level as well an intellectual level
- Incite passion in students
- Foster commitment in students
Service Learning and Nursing

- SL is an important part of college students’ experiences, but oddly enough, the service professions often do not include SL.
- Nursing is a service oriented profession, but there is so much intense academic and scientific content that SL may be assumed but not specifically taught or measured.
Service-Learning in Nursing Schools

- Just because nursing is a service profession, it does not mean that the entire curriculum is part of service-learning
- It still must be an intentional activity
- Many opportunities for service-learning in the curriculum, but we have to take advantage of them
Some criteria...

- Students must have a high level of knowledge about the skills they are to use
- The learning context must be structured to allow effective application of skills
- There will be opportunity to reflect on communication and other skills used
- The service will be worthwhile and meaningful to the community
What is needed...

- It must serve a purpose in the curriculum and help meet objectives
- Administrative support
- Sense of partnership
- Dual goals
- Assessment of impact and outcomes
Examples of Service-Learning in Nursing Schools

- Community Health Nursing: a BSN Program/Community Agency Partnership
  - Health promotion services offered to clients at a Vocational Rehabilitation Center and Easter Seals Center
  - These are the only health services offered to these clients
- Blood Pressures screening offered to campus employees by students
Faculty in a BSN program worked with regional staff of Special Olympics to coordinate and perform the required physical examinations for the Special Olympics athletes. Nursing students performed the exams on the athletes, which included children in a wide range of ages, physical, social, and intellectual levels.
Many years prior, the School of Nursing had performed this service, but not with current faculty on board.

School of Nursing was contacted by regional director of Special Olympics because of a chronic problem with athletes getting required physicals.

No one wanted children to miss the opportunity to participate because they could not get a physical.
“Special Olympics is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition. Special Olympics offers children and adults with intellectual disabilities year-round training and competition in 30 Olympic-type summer and winter sports.”

Special Olympics website
Who are our Special Olympic Athletes?

- Children and adults with intellectual disabilities, physical challenges, or both
- This group of students came from schools all across Aiken County and Edgefield counties.
- Adults from the Tri-Development Center also participated.
Requirements

- A history and physical exam are required for participation.
- Special Olympics requires that all athletes who want to participate must be examined by a physician or trained medical professional who completes the physical examination section of the Application for Participation Form. The parents of the child complete the history section.
Who Participated from University?

- The faculty: nurse practitioners, masters and doctorally prepared nurse faculty
- The students: senior level, currently taking Community Health Nursing and Child Health Nursing. They have already completed a Health Assessment course.
Logistics

- The athletes are transported by school buses and vans to the School of Nursing and the examinations are done in a practice lab with exam tables and equipment. Some are transported by private vehicles by parents or care-givers.
- About 150 examinations can be completed in a 2 day period.
- There is a “holding area” where the students wait until it was their turn. They come to the exam room in groups of 6-8.
Procedures Used

- Athletes come into exam room in groups of 6-8
- Comfort in numbers and being with friends
- A teacher’s aid is usually present in room
Station 1

1. Height & weight
2. Blood pressure
3. Hearing
Station 2

1. Vision
2. Pupils and extraocular muscle function
3. Assess oral cavity
Station 3

1. inspect and palpate neck and extremities
2. general skin assessment
3. auscultate heart, lungs, abdomen
4. palpate thorax and abdomen
Station 4

1. Observe student’s gait (coordination)
2. Have student sit down and check patellar reflex
3. Assess ability to talk, assess sensation
Student nurses donate time to boost Special Olympics
Benefits to Athletes

- Physical examination done free of charge
- Physical examination done during school hours, which was convenient for parents
- More athletes were able to participate in the Special Olympic events because more had their physicals completed
Benefits to Nursing Students

- Allows students to learn first hand about the needs of children with intellectual and physical disabilities
- Gives students an opportunity to utilize the physical assessment skills they have learned in a very “hands on” manner
- Gives students an opportunity to give back to their community
- Students absolutely love this experience!
Additions to courses since this activity...

- Nursing students now have the opportunity to observe special needs students in a medically fragile daycare setting.
- Nursing students are given an opportunity to work “hands on” with special needs students.
We knew this activity was impacting the students, but we wanted more than qualitative data. The purpose of this ongoing research project is to determine the impact of this particular service learning opportunity on nursing students’ cognitive and affective development. An instrument developed by Wang, Jackson, Rodgers, & Jones (2005) has been utilized for data collection.
Instrument

- Student Service-Learning Course Survey (SSLCS)
- Developed to measure service-learning course outcomes in 4 domains: personal competence, charitable responsibility, social justice responsibility, and interpersonal responsibility
- 7-point Likert type scale with 30 items.
Preliminary Results

- Pre-tests administered at the beginning of the semester and post-tests at the end.
- Preliminary data (we have another year of data to add) indicate that our nursing students already have a fairly high level of affective and cognitive development, but post-tests indicate a slight increase after this SL activity.
References

- Specialolympics.org
Questions?