Inclusion of Research by BSN Students in the SCSU Social Justice Week:
An Innovative Approach to Nursing Education and Its Application to Humanity

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Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) Conference
Friday, April 8, 2016
Special Recognition

Special thanks are in order for:

- Dr. Lisa Rebeschi (Chairperson, SCSU Department of Nursing)
- Dr. Andrea Adimando (Assistant Professor, SCSU Department of Nursing)
- Dr. Christine “Chris” Denhup (Assistant Professor and BSN Coordinator, SCSU Department of Nursing)
- Dr. Susan Westrick (Professor, SCSU Department of Nursing)
Definition of a Few Terms

- NUR 433W
- Social Justice Week
- (Basic) Human Rights
What is NUR 433W?

- *Theoretical Foundations of Nursing Practice with Families across the Lifespan*

- **Course Description:**
  - This course is a theory course and a writing course combined and focuses on the responses of individuals and their families (as defined by the individual/patient) to the presence of health as well as illness. The role of nursing in health promotion across the lifespan (from very young ages to much older ages) is emphasized in this course. Likewise, the role of the professional nurse/RN with regard to the ability of the individual and her/his family to adapt (to health and/or illness) is identified as the foundation of nursing practice.

  Involves many forms of writing
  - Formal and informal
  - Essays and journaling
  - Research paper*
Some of My Students in NUR 433W
What is Social Justice Week?

**Goals:**

- To raise awareness
- To increase knowledge
- To inspire action
What are (basic) human rights?

Human Rights and Professional Nursing

- Perhaps without realizing this, nurses embody human rights. For example:
  - We try not to judge anyone to whom we provide compassionate, effective and safe care.
  - We accept people as they are and want to see improvement in their (health) status.
  - We make referrals to other members of the healthcare team (e.g., social workers) who can help clients/patients in ways that we cannot.

- This is especially accurate through our roles as advocates for clients/patients.
  - We are highly trusted healthcare professionals.
  - Clients/patients and their loved ones depend on and look to us for guidance during times of all sorts of pain and suffering.
None of us would argue against time spent in the clinical setting. Clinical time is imperative to becoming a competent, independent and safe nurse!

Why not include relevant experiences for students re: advocacy for clients/patients and their basic human rights?

NUR 433W is a theory class, but its content and organization lend themselves to developing the abilities of BSN students to apply research and theory to situations requiring advocacy.

That is exactly what we did during the SCSU SJW!

Homeless - Pregnant - Hungry

About 572,000 homeless in 2014
- 1 in 5 homeless women and children have experienced physical violence
- Homeless young women are 5x more likely to become pregnant than housed women
- Homeless women are:
  1. 4.2x more likely to have a preterm delivery
  2. 6.1x more likely to have a baby < 2000g
  3. 3.3x more likely to have a small for gestational age newborn
Student Research Presentations for the SCSU SJW

- Submitted our class’ topics for consideration as a group presentation (in place of regular class time)

  - It was if the campus had a chance to join us for class... but in a larger room and with more people.

  - Students had 5 – 10 minutes to present a synopsis of their topic and how the topic pertains to advocacy, awareness and human rights.

  - Students from other disciplines attended.
    - Potential nursing students attended.
    - Colleagues attended.
    - One colleague even brought her entire class to the event!

  - My students were nervous at first, but this changed as students had the opportunity to share.
Examples of Students’ Research Topics

- Bereavement process for families with children who have debilitating health conditions
- Diabetes in the Hispanic community
- Effects of dementia on the caregivers
- Long-term effects of childhood cancer on children and their families
- Postpartum depression and its lasting effects on all members of the family
- PTSD in children who were abused
- Teen pregnancy and teens who choose adoption for their babies
  - Advocating for a woman’s decision to work with a midwife instead of an MD/obstetrician
  - Advocating for a woman’s decision not to have a C-section or epidural
- Transitions from addiction to sobriety
- Transgender transitioning
- Understanding pregnancy in the homeless population
- Understanding survivors of sexual assault/violence
Students listed this event as one of the most memorable (if not the most memorable) that occurred over the course of the semester...

...as well as in the students’ experiences thus far in the nursing program.

Perhaps part of this is due to the student’s ability not only to select a topic but also to be the expert.
Empowering BSN Students

- Presenting during SJW afforded my students with the opportunity to:
  - advocate for the rights of client/patient populations in a manner that connects the theoretical with the pragmatic and real-world.
  - build confidence in preparation for becoming a certified RN in the not-too-distant future.
  - showcase a topic about which each student is passionate as well as her/his (growing) expertise on the particular topic.
Comments? Questions? Thoughts?