Building equity in an online graduate nursing course using student feedback

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Keywords

Students, Nursing; Education, Nursing; Communication; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion; Education, Distance; Equitable course design; Online education; DEI application to practice; equity rubric

Abstract

Background:
Diversity within the nursing profession is a key driver to improve health equity (NASEM, 2021). Online learners are more successful when they feel a sense of social belonging and perceive course content to be relevant to them. Strategies to ensure diverse perspectives and identities are therefore considered essential to all aspects of course development (Roddy et al, 2017). To that end, we surveyed students in a Masters of Nursing Education (MNE) program about their perceptions of equitable course design and learning materials in an online course.
Goal: To better understand student perception and experience of equitable and inclusive educational practices in an online nursing education course.

Research questions

(1) to what extent do course learning activities and communications demonstrate to students that their diverse identities, backgrounds, and cultures are valued.

(2) how do students draw connections between course content and their own (or others) identities, lived experience, culture, or future practice interests.

Methods

We piloted a survey using criteria from the Peralta Equity Rubric (PER) to assess perception and experience with equitable education practices in course design and learning materials. The PER is a research-based course (re)design evaluation tool to help educators make online course experiences more equitable for all students (Peralta Community College District, 2020). Faculty summarized data and collaborated with students to develop recommendations for improving equity in educational experiences. Key equity criteria: (1) **diversity and inclusion** – demonstrating that diverse identities, backgrounds, and cultures are valued, and (2) **content meaning** – supporting students' connection of course topics and materials to a variety of backgrounds, cultures, and identities.

Participants: 14 graduate students enrolled in an online nursing education course;
Survey questions: Two quantitative questions (4-point Likert scale). Three follow up questions asked participants to expound on their response ratings with examples and recommendations. Surveys conducted through course learning platform and therefore not anonymous.

Findings/Effectiveness/Impact (n=13/14: 96% response rate)
- Positive endorsement that learning activities & communication among faculty and students demonstrated that student's diverse identities, backgrounds & cultures were valued (3.58/4)

- Positive endorsement that communication and learning activities helped draw connections between course content and learners own identity, lived experience, culture, or future practice/interests. (3.30/4)

Themes from qualitative examples of activities or communication that supported their ratings.

- Inclusive learning environment is made evident early in term
- Supportive peer and faculty communication /feedback
- Wide range of topics and learning content that reflects their values
- Sharing experiences with others and learning from other perspectives

Implications

Students and faculty may co-create equity focused revisions based on student experience (to make content more inclusive and meaningful to students' lives).

Future nurse educators learn how to collect and apply findings toward development of their own future online courses.

Application to practice: Implement tangible equity and inclusion changes to course design through expanded use of the PER to gain student perspective and experience.

Learning objectives
- Discuss student perceptions about how course learning activities and communications among faculty and students demonstrate that diverse identities, backgrounds and cultures are valued.
- Discuss how students draw connections between course content and their own (or other people's) identity, lived experience, culture, or future practice/interests.

References

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