

Cultivating Nurse Practitioner Students Political Competence: An Experiential Learning Strategy



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Introduction

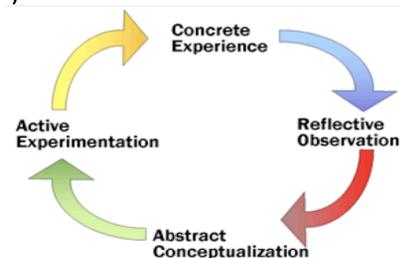
- The healthcare system is in a constant state of evolution; future generations of advanced practice nurse leaders will be required to demonstrate political astuteness and savvy (Montalvo & Byrne, 2016).
- Nursing programs must integrate experiential learning experiences into the curriculum to prepare future nurse leaders with the high-level political skills to navigate complex environments and organizations.

Purpose

- Nurse practitioners are positioned to impact and affect change in the policy arena.
- Offering minority graduate nurse practitioner students the opportunity to apply health policy concepts acquired in the classroom is essential to cultivating their political competence.
- The intended outcome of this educational strategy was to enhance NP students' political competence through involvement in policymaking at a health policy conference.

Organizational Framework

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) provided the framework for engaging the NP students in the policymaking process (Kolb, 1984).



Methods/Implementation

Nurse Practitioner (NP) students completed a health policy course activity designed to reinforce the basics of the policymaking process.

Students then chose a health policy issue and conducted a literature search to identify current facts, statistics, and research related to issue.

Example topics: Medicaid expansion, NP Prescriptive Authority Privileges, Nurse-Staffing Ratios

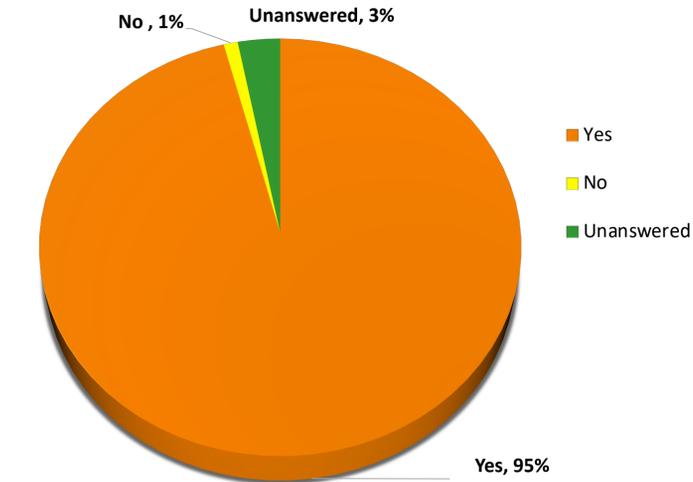
In preparation for a health policy conference, the student developed evidence-based talking points to support their policy issue. Students were encouraged to use their talking points to guide the discussion with policymakers.

Students then attended a 2-day health policy conference that coincided with the state legislative session. Each student participated in a 10-minute meeting with a policymaker who had a vested interest in their health policy issue during the conference.

Students were encouraged to establish a positive rapport, deliver expert knowledge, and use the talking points to garner support for their health policy issue.

Results/Student Feedback

Do you feel the experiential learning strategy equipped you with KSA's needed to show political competence in the NP role ?



"I learned NP's have the potential to significantly influence policy at all levels of policymaking process."

"A key takeaway for me was to witness a coalition of NP's and NP students use their knowledge, training, and experiences to advocate for policy change."

"I learned diversity of membership on legislative committees gives voice to policy issues important to diverse groups."



Conclusions/Recommendations

- Integrating experiential learning experiences into the graduate nursing curriculum is essential for political skill development and competence.
- Strong political skills are essential to enhance one's credibility and interprofessional influence in the policy arena.
- Cultivating NP students' political knowledge and skills through meaningful, real-world experiences can help bridge the theory-to-practice connections necessary to influence policy and improve health outcomes (Minta, 2019).
- Organizational leaders would benefit from having experientially-qualified nurses serve as political soldiers in the current political arena.

Your Vote Is Your Voice



Key References/Contact Information

