



TRAINING NURSE FACULTY FOR THE FUTURE: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES AND LESSONS LEARNED

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BACKGROUND: There is currently a shortage of nursing faculty throughout the United States. In 2018, over 75,000 qualified applicants were turned away from nursing baccalaureate and graduate programs, most commonly due to faculty shortages. As a response, the Nurse Faculty for the Future (NFF) program was created and implemented to recruit and prepare the next generation of nurse faculty by providing intensive training on teaching, learning, and leadership development to pre-doctoral students.

PURPOSE: The year-long NFF Fellowship involves two 40 hour intensive teaching seminars, two teaching practicums (one in-person and one online), and a leadership practicum. The purpose of this investigation was to discuss preliminary results of students' perspectives of the program, particularly in relation to teaching immersion via structured teaching practicum.

METHODS: Qualitative evaluations on teaching practicums completed by the first cohort of NFF fellows (n=5) and informal summaries from the second and ongoing cohort of NFF fellows (n=4) were analyzed using thematic analysis.

RESULTS: Positive and negative themes were identified. Positive themes included: fellows valued the opportunity to grade course assignments and exams and to learn how to engage with students; fellows gained experience developing and delivering a course lecture—both online and in the classroom setting; fellows learned about institutional resources that are available to faculty, such as instructional designers, and how to use course technologies, such as Blackboard. Negative themes that were identified included: fellows wished they had more opportunities to design course assignments, create exam questions, and develop a course from scratch; fellows identified a need to improve boundary setting and conflict resolution in a classroom; fellows wished they had received feedback regarding their performance as a teaching assistant (from students and faculty alike); and fellows voiced concerns about teaching courses and content they were not familiar with or that didn't match their expertise.

CONCLUSION: The teaching practicums as part of the NFF program provided invaluable experiences for predoctoral students to learn how to become effective nurse educators. Future efforts should consider more active involvement of NFF fellows with course design (e.g., creating course assignments and exams, developing course objectives and learning outcomes) and more structured feedback from both faculty mentors and students, while offering opportunities to model faculty interactions with students to increase the fellows' level of confidence in working directly with students. Other programs being designed to train nurse faculty should also consider creating a contract between nurse faculty learners and mentors, where learners can set objectives and outcomes they hope to achieve and where mentors can communicate their expectations.