MOVING TO A GRADUATE NURSING PROFESSION: EXAMINING NURSING STUDENTS’ ENGAGEMENT IN COLLEGE AFTER A DECADE OF ALL GRADUATE EDUCATION IN IRELAND

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PRESENTATION

• Context and background of study

• Methods

• Results
  • Implications and conclusion
National Study measuring:

- Nursing students’ engagement with activities that are associated with learning and development in higher education.
- Impact of term-time employment and caring responsibilities on student engagement.
BACKGROUND – STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- Focuses on students and their interactions with college (Kuh et al., 2006; Krause and Coates, 2008).

- The extent to which students engage in activities, both academic and social, that are associated with learning and development.

- Student engagement recognised as being critical to student success.
  - Timely to explore nursing students’ engagement with higher education:
    - 15 years post-transition to an all graduate profession.
UNDERGRADUATE NURSE EDUCATION IN IRELAND

Major Transformation
- Traditional Apprenticeship Model
- Full integration into higher education in 2002

Current Position
- Four pre-registration programmes:
  - Three programmes - four year duration:
    - General, psychiatric and intellectual disability nursing
  - One programme - four and a half years duration:
    - Integrated children’s and general nursing

Programme Structures
- Programmes comply with EU regulations
- Students spend:
  - Half of the programme in college
  - Remaining time in practice placements
OVERVIEW OF METHODS

Study Design
- Cross-sectional survey design
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) self-report questionnaire

Population
- 1st and final year undergraduate nursing students

Sample
- Sample Size (n=634)
- 2 Universities
- 2 Institutes of Technology (IoTs)
- Response Rate: 78%
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Engagement

Academic

Engagement Indicators

Social
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Academic and Social Engagement

• Total time on campus including class time
• Time studying
• Time in co-curricular activities

Engagement in educationally purposeful activities (Engagement Indicators)

• Reflective & Integrative Learning
• Collaborative Learning
• Learning Strategies
• Quantitative Reasoning
• Discussion with Diverse Others
• Student-Faculty Interaction
• Higher Order Learning
• Effective Teaching Strategies
• Quality of Interactions
• Supportive Environment

Measured average hours spent in activity in a typical 7 day week.

Scored on 0-60 scale
0= Never/very little
20= Sometimes/some
40= Often/quite a bit
60= Very often/very much
RESULTS - DEMOGRAPHICS

- N=634 students
- First Year: 51.3% (n=325); Final Year: 48.7% (n=309)

- All divisions of NMBI candidate register
- 85% (n=549) female; 11.5% (n=71) male

- Enrolment status: 60% (n=381) based on Final Examination Secondary School
- 20% (n=134) of students enrolled as mature aged entrants.
- Remainder through a variety of specialist schemes.
TERM-TIME EMPLOYMENT

- 68% (n= 423) of students engaged in term-time employment
- Students worked on average 15 hours per week
- A fifth of students (n = 89) worked more than 20 hours per week
ENGAGEMENT: WORKING AND NON-WORKING STUDENTS

Academic and Social Engagement

- No significant difference between amount of time spent on campus by working and non-working students
- Non-working students spent more time studying than working students
- Working students spent more time in co-curricular activities than non-working students

Engagement in educationally purposeful activities (Engagement Indicators)

- Majority of Engagement Indicators (9)
  - No significant difference between engagement indicator scores for working and non-working students
  - Engagement Indicator: Student-Faculty Interaction
    - Working students had higher levels of student-faculty interaction than non-working students
CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

• 40% (n=248) reported caring for dependents

• 12% (n=77) had children
  • Vast majority had primary school aged children

• Students who were parents spent on average 25.5 hours per week caring for children
CARING RESPONSIBILITIES AND SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Mean Hours Parents</th>
<th>Mean Hours Not Parents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time on Campus</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Studying</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in Co-curricular Activities</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Significance <.05
CARING RESPONSIBILITIES AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Mean Engagement Scores

- Quality of Interactions
  - Not Parents: 31.9
  - Parents: 35.4
- Effective Teaching Strategies
  - Not Parents: 37.3
  - Parents: 40.3
- Learning Strategies
  - Not Parents: 35.9
  - Parents: 42.9

* = Significance < .05
CONCLUSIONS

• First study of student nurses’ engagement with third level colleges and universities.

• Term-time employment did impact adversely on the amount of study undertaken by students.
  • Term-time employment had limited impact on student engagement

• Highest engagement scores across a number of engagement indices were reported for students who were parents.
  • Caring Responsibilities did not adversely impact on student engagement.