First-Generation Undergraduate Nursing Students' Perceptions of Faculty
Advising

A Dissertation submitted

By

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Brady. You have kept things running at home without complaint. I could not have done this without your unwavering support. Thank you for believing in me when I did not believe in myself. You have always been my biggest cheerleader. Thank you for understanding and valuing education. You truly are my best friend.

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"It always seems impossible until it's done." ~Nelson Mandela

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students regarding their experiences with BSN faculty advisors at two Midwestern colleges. Peplau's Interpersonal Relations Theory was used as the foundation for this study. A phenomenological research methodology was utilized for this study. This included interviews with six self-identified first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students. These participants shared their individual perceptions of their experiences with faculty advising. Participants perceived relationships, knowledge, and supportive behaviors to be most important in a successful faculty advisor-advisee dyad. Overall, participants reported that their experience with faculty advising was valuable and important to them. Based upon the findings of this study, formal advisor education and ongoing professional development programs are necessary to maintain strong faculty advising programs that enhance the experience of students.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter will introduce the problem and purpose of this qualitative research study. Research questions will be introduced. It will conclude with operational definitions, along with discussion specific to assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

Background

Children of parents who did not attend post-secondary education are at a disadvantage for not only access, but also persistence in higher education compared to their non-first-generation counterparts (Demetriou & Mann, 2011). This disadvantage is due to multiple factors. These factors include but are not limited to lack of parental exposure and understanding of higher education, social and financial knowledge deficits, and a lack of knowledge specific to the role of being a college student (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Demetriou, & Mann, 2011). Collier and Morgan (2008) note that this population of students is further limited by not understanding academic requirements and rigor of required coursework. Opportunities for students to become involved, become familiar with the campus culture, and know overall pathways for navigating through the path of higher education are all foreign concepts to first-generation college students. According to Vuong, Brown-Welty, and Tracz, (2010), first-generation college students are identified as being high risk for attrition based on qualities such as lack of academic preparation, minimal involvement of parents/guardians, socioeconomic status, and demographics specific to race and ethnicity. These risk factors prohibit first-generation college students from having the ability to even recognize what questions need to be asked. These students have largely populated from K-12 educational environments that were highly prescriptive. This prescriptive environment, coupled with the lack of sufficient inquiry skills to further investigate and navigate

the cultures and norms of higher education, and a family knowledge deficit of higher education creates barriers for these students to achieve success. An additional barrier leading to risk is lacking or inconsistent financial resources needed to sustain students through their higher education journey. Jeffreys (2012) describes first-generation college student expectations regarding post-secondary education as not being aligned with each other. This mismatch in turn leads to difficulties with persistence, motivation, self-efficacy, and ultimately students' decisions to persist or abandon higher education (Jeffreys, 2012).

First-generation college students are faced with the unfortunate situation of not only being less prepared, but also faced with the reality of increased time requirements and financial demands placed upon them (Mehta, Newbold, & O'Rourke, 2011). One-fifth of all college students are considered first-generation (Harackiewicz et al, 2014). Because of this variance, institutions of higher education are faced with the challenge of creating systems that recognize and retain first-generation students in their quest to seek a degree. Engle and Tinto (2008), in a nationwide study through The Pell Institute, found that:

> Low income, first-generation students are nearly four times more likely to leave higher education after the first year than students who have neither of these risk factors. Across all institution types, low income, first-generation students were nearly four times more likely; 26 to 7 percent to leave higher education after the first year than students who had neither of these risk factors (p. 2).

Various interventions for promoting persistence of all students, regardless of the presence or absence of risk factors, is discussed widely in the literature. Specific interventions for populations deemed at risk, including first-generation students, have also been identified. A

common intervention identified in promoting retention is that of advising (Barker &

Mamiseishvili, 2014; Drake, 2011; Museus & Ravello, 2010; Vianden & Barlow, 2015;

Williams, 2010). The role of the faculty advisor in developing and maintaining a professional

relationship of guidance and support is well documented throughout research.

Relationships

The quality of relationships, both personal and professional, has a profound and

significant influence on overall well-being. Paul, Smith, and Dochney (2012) contended that

despite the multiple roles that advisors portray, their leadership role that is specific to student

growth and development is frequently overlooked. Faculty advisors are difference makers in the

student experience; not just from a purely academic perspective, but rather, holistically,

encompassing all aspects of their experience (Barker & Mamiseishvili, 2014). The establishment

and retention of functional, trusting relationship dyads between advisor and advisee is critical.

This is especially true given the fact that many times the advisor is the only consistent and

structured contact that students have throughout their entire educational process (Hughey, 2011).

This consistent relationship will encourage a sense of connectedness to the institution. Drake

(2011), in a reflection of the role of academic advising specific to retention, state "it's all about

building relationships with our students, locating places where they get disconnected, and

helping them get reconnected" (p. 8). As part of Barker and Mamiseishvili's (2014) research

interviewing 17 undergraduate students, they addressed specifically the relationship and

experiences with their faculty advisor and how that had influenced their overall experience.

Results indicated that students had a strong preference for personalization of the advising

relationship; participants preferred faculty advisors who could recall personal details and/or were

familiar with their personal goals and academic abilities and demonstrated a genuine interest in

the individual needs and characteristics of the advisee (Barker & Mamiseishvili, 2014). Results such as this introduce the need to assign advisees to faculty advisors with characteristics that will complement each other and encourage a functional, collegial relationship that will allow for optimal experiences on the part of all involved.

Mooring (2014) examined the relationship between assiduous advising practices and the persistence of nursing students. The results identified specific challenges of retaining nursing students and strategies to improve persistence. A commonly identified theme was the urgency to develop and maintain meaningful relationships between advisor and advisees (Mooring, 2016). This positive, meaningful, and professional relationship was highly influential on having a positive impact on overall persistence and success (Mooring, 2016).

Bitz (2010) studied advisor relationship perceptions specific to first-year students. She hypothesized that a positive advisor-advisee relationship would have a greater sense of established trust. The results of this study confirmed that "these relationships are important for student satisfaction, development, and retention" (Bitz, 2010, p. 58). Hughey (2011) studied the positive relationship between interpersonal skills and effective advising. This study confirmed the importance of advisors who are comfortable with their own interpersonal skills in order to be an effective advisor and who can promote a healthy relationship with the advisee (Hughey, 2011). These findings confirm the need for advisor education and development to ensure that advisors have the resources to develop their interpersonal skills to ensure comfort and in turn, provide more effective advising and interaction.

Smith and Allen (2014) studied 22,305 undergraduate students to determine the influence of advisor contact upon the judgments and attitudes that influenced student retention. Smith and

Allen (2014) studied both cognitive and affective outcomes based upon quality advising. Results showed that contacting an advisor, and doing so often, was associated with greater self-reported knowledge and indicated a significant and positive relationship with faculty and staff on campus (Smith & Allen, 2014). The results align with previously stated studies finding that the advisor-advisee relationship is so influential to student success. Advisor/advisee relationships span the duration of the college experience and impact overall student success.

Chan (2016) studied academic advisor and freshman student perspectives specific to advising in nursing. Chan (2016) further supported the advisor-advisee relationship providing a positive example so the student can better understand compassionate nursing and develop effective communication and mutual trust skills. The advisee can further transition these skills into the nurse-patient relationship. The advisors in this study emphasized the importance of relationship building to create a sense of belonging and adaptation (Chan, 2016). The freshman students valued the relationship building that took place and felt that communication with their advisor "helped to prepare for the future and learn more about nursing" (Chan, 2016, p. 27). The advisor acts as a surrogate for potential future patients. The advisor, in this surrogacy role, is able to role model communication scenarios in which the student will be involved with in the future.

An additional consideration with first-generation students and the importance of establishing and maintaining a strong relationship with their advisor is the relationship strain that often occurs with their family (Longwell-Grice, Adsitt, Mullins, & Serrata 2016). This strain can occur as a result of the first-generation student pursuing a degree in higher education. Longwell-Grice, Adsitt, Mullins, & Serrata (2016) interviewed 14 first-generation college students regarding their transition experiences at three different private institutions. Results showed a

clear disconnect that these students felt between being at home and being a college student.

Participants indicated that their families were unfamiliar with higher education and therefore

unable to offer guidance and direction that was specific to navigating through their educational

experiences (Longwell-Grice et al., 2016). In addition, the theme of family members lacking a

supportive attitude towards participants was identified (Longwell-Grice et al., 2016).

Participants attributed this to family support members feeling intimidated or ignorant when

comparing themselves to the first-generation student (Longwell-Grice, 2015). Furthermore,

Longwell-Grice et al. (2016) stated "the transition to college involves a change in social

standing" (p. 41). This further emphasizes the importance of advisors working with first-

generation students to offer support, guidance, and empathy. Advisors must fully understand the

degree of difficulties first-generation students experience in their transition to and throughout

their entire higher education experience.

Davis (2010) noted that advising first-generation students requires not only strong

relationship building skills, but also a high level of patience and a detailed understanding of the

culture provided by higher education. Students, regardless of generation status, feel more

motivated when they feel supported and are a part of a trusting relationship (Longwell-Grice et

al, 2016).

Problem

Advising promotes the establishment of a trusting, collegial relationship between the

advisor and the advisee. Initially, the establishment of this relationship becomes the

responsibility of the advisor. This is especially true when working with first-generation students

who are unfamiliar with the role of their advisor. Students are unfamiliar with the role of the

advisor being a guide to assist students as they navigate through all aspects of higher education. There is limited research that specifically addresses the role of faculty advisors among first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students. Further research specific to first-generation Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students and the impact of faculty advising is warranted.

Purpose of the Study

Advising allows advisors to spend more individual time with students, which in turn allows then to identify potential sources of concern or opportunities for intervention before becoming problematic for the student (Mooring, 2014). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students regarding their experience with BSN faculty advisors at two Midwestern colleges. The hope was to identify strategies that could be relevant and useful in enhancing retention and overall satisfaction of first-generation students, but especially for those students who are enrolled in BSN undergraduate programs.

Research Questions

Central Question

The central question of this research study is: What are the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students in two Midwestern Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs specific to the role of their faculty advisor?

Sub Questions

The sub questions of this research study are as follows:

RQ 1: How do first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students describe the role of their faculty advisor?

RQ 2: How do first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students describe their relationship with their faculty advisor?

RQ 3: What are the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students regarding their level of connectedness with their faculty advisor?

RQ 4: What experiences with faculty advisors influenced first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students to persist or leave their nursing program?

Operational Definitions

The operational definitions of this study are as follows:

Advisee. A first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing student who receives advising from a faculty advisor.

Leave a Nursing Program. A student departure from a nursing program without successful completion of the program; or can be defined to include a student who is delayed in progress toward program completion (Newton & Moore, 2009).

Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program. This is a four-year program that develops and prepares students to become licensed as a registered nurse. Students in a BSN program must successfully complete all curriculum requirements for graduation. Participants in this study were all students who were enrolled in a BSN program at one of two Midwestern undergraduate nursing programs.

Connectedness. Connectedness is a relationship between things; a sense of belonging (Jeffreys, 2012). In the case of this research, connectedness is the relationship between the faculty advisor and advisee.

Faculty Advising. Faculty advising is defined as a nursing faculty member providing guidance and direction to undergraduate baccalaureate nursing student advisees regarding academic, social and/or personal situations. These interactions can be initiated by the student or faculty advisor (Kuhn, 2008).

Faculty Advisor. A faculty advisor is a faculty member, teaching in a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program who provides guidance and direction to students in that BSN program.

First-generation Undergraduate Baccalaureate Nursing Students. First-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students are students who are enrolled in a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program and whose parents or guardians have no personal college experience.

Persistence. Persistence was defined as the first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing student continuing to pursue an undergraduate BSN degree. Persistence is also sometimes used interchangeably with retention (Swecker, 2011).

Relationship. Relationship is defined as the way in which the faculty advisor and advisee perceive each other and/or behave towards each other.

Role. Role is the duties that are assumed by the faculty advisor to provide guidance and direction to students during their undergraduate baccalaureate nursing education.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

      Assumptions

This study assumed that all participants had faculty advising at some point during their BSN education. In accordance with this, it was assumed that advising took place at least one time per academic semester with each participant. Finally, it was assumed that the participants were open and honest in their answers.

      Limitations

The focus of this study was specific to first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students. Because of this specific population studied, there was a potential limitation to the programs and individuals that met criteria for participation. The study was limited to two small Midwestern Colleges, and as a result generalizability of results was limited. Another limitation could have been that of participants exaggerating their perceptions and experiences of faculty advising, along with a potential inability to recall accurate information pertaining to the research questions. Some first-generation baccalaureate nursing students may have been hesitant to participate. Finally, a limitation could have been researcher bias, recognizing that the researcher is a faculty advisor in an undergraduate nursing program, as well as a first-generation student. In order to decrease the potential that participants can sense researcher bias because of this, the researcher maintained a neutral and impartial stance throughout the entire research process. The researcher did not express or convey personal feelings, observations, experiences, or opinions. Bias was avoided by having the Doctoral Committee Chair review methods, questions, results and conclusions to identify potential signs of bias.

Delimitations

The focus of this study was to explore the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students specific to their experience with their faculty advisor. While it would be helpful to compare student and faculty perceptions of advising to better understand the relationship, it was not effective in this case, due to the study being focused on the students. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) suggests that nursing programs utilize faculty as faculty advisors (NCSBN, 2011). This may not be a consistent process, with some programs opting to utilize non-faculty advisors and thus is not pertinent to this study.

This study did not consider additional at-risk factors, including, but not limited to gender, race, financial status, primary language, or identification of traditional versus non-traditional students. The population sample was specific to first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students, recognizing that other identifiers of risk may have existed, but were not the focus of this study.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter Two will introduce the theoretical framework of the study. A literature review will provide a synthesis of current research specific to advising and first-generation students. Chapter Three will introduce the reader to the study design and methodology utilized to explore first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students' perceptions of their experience with faculty advising. Chapter Four will provide a detailed data analysis and identification of themes discovered through the qualitative study. Finally, Chapter Five will provide a detailed summary of the results, along with implications and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to examine research that is relevant and applicable to academic advising, types of advising, first-generation college students, and the significance of the relationship of the faculty advisor role to the experience of the first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students. The literature review will provide statistics specific to first-generation students to further identify this population. The review begins with an overview of the theoretical framework, advising and its evolution from prescriptive to descriptive and intrusive methodologies, and, finally, will examine advising as a teaching and learning approach. The literature provided a clear confirmation that effective advising is centered on developing relationships between the faculty advisor and advisee. Because of this, Hildegard Peplau's Interpersonal Relations Model (PIRM) was the theoretical framework utilized for this research (Peplau, 1969, 1992). The focus of this research was to investigate the relationship between the faculty advisor and the first-generation nursing advisee and how this relationship can potentially influence the advisee's decision to persist or leave the BSN program.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used for this research was that of Hildegard E. Peplau (1969, 1992). Parker and Smith (2010) described Peplau as the first nursing theorist to "identify the nurse-patient relationship as being central to all nursing care" (p. 69). Both nursing and advising share the importance of establishing and maintaining healthy relationships, whether it be nurse and patient or faculty advisor and advisee. In either group, individuals establish and work through a relational process (Higgins, 2015). According to Parker and Smith (2010), nursing cannot take place if there is not an established relationship or some sort of connectedness

between the nurse and patient. Based upon the definition of advising, that too, cannot exist without a similarly established relationship and connection between the faculty advisor and advisee.

The PIRM was developed because of Peplau's concern for patients, particularly psychiatric patients housed in asylums in the 1940s and 1950s (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). The purpose of the theory was to improve the relationship between the nurse and patient (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). This same purpose could be applied to faculty advisor-advisee relationships. Much like the faculty advisor must be knowledgeable and prepared to address potential barriers and obstacles the advisee may face, Peplau referenced that same level of knowledge in the PIRM regarding the nurse-patient relationship (Parker & Smith, 2010). Furthermore, as part of being fully engaged in this nurse-patient relationship, nurses must "possess intellectual, interpersonal, and social skills" (Parker & Smith, 2010, p. 70). Successful faculty advisors should possess these same skills. One must consider that in the realm of advising, especially at risk populations such as first-generation students, advisors also could be lacking these same skills (Parker & Smith, 2010). It is important for nurses and faculty advisors alike to not only possess, but utilize to their fullest capacity, their intellectual, interpersonal and social skills. By doing this, as Peplau intended, the relationship between the two will strengthen and be more effective in its purpose.

The basis of the PIRM is focused on the nurse-patient interpersonal relationship. Six primary roles of the nurse were identified within the theory: stranger, teacher, resource person, counselor, surrogate, and leader (D 'Antonio, Beeber, Sills, & Naegle, 2014; Peterson & Bredow, 2013; Tomey & Alligood, 2002; Parker & Smith, 2010; Peplau, 1969, 1992; George, 1990). These individual roles will be further discussed later in the chapter. Combined with these

roles are four phases of the nurse-patient relationship: orientation phase, identification phase,

exploitation phase, and resolution phase (D 'Antonio, Beeber, Sills, & Naegle, 2014; Peterson &

Bredow, 2013; Tomey & Alligood, 2002; Parker & Smith, 2010; George, 1990). Of note,

Forchuk, a Canadian researcher who studied the works of Peplau condensed the four phases into

three in 1991 (as cited in Parker & Smith, 2010). For the purposes of this research, the four

phases, original to Peplau will be discussed.

Phases of Interpersonal Relationships

At the heart of Peplau's work is the relationship that exists between the nurse and patient.

This relationship, according to Peplau, was time-centered, with a beginning, progressing through

additional phases and finished with an identifiable end (Parker & Smith, 2010). These phases

were described in detail as part of the PIRM. These phases are not independent of each other,

but rather, have characteristics that are intertwined, connecting them to one another, yet also

having unique characteristics.

Orientation phase. The orientation phase is the initial phase. Within this phase, the

relationship begins (Peplau, 1969, 1992). This phase is when the nurse and patient are

introduced, but do not know each other. Typically, some form of interview takes place allowing

the two to get to know one another. This is the phase in which individual characteristics can

influence the relationship. Characteristics such as values, culture, experience, and expectations

of the relationship can all come into play (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). Through this process,

nurses can use their assessment skills to determine the needs of the patient. As this assessment

process evolves, trust also develops between the two involved parties (Parker & Smith, 2010).

Based upon the assessment and relationship development, goals for the patient are created (Parker & Smith, 2010).

Chan (2016) studied freshmen and academic faculty advisors' perspectives on the academic faculty advisor scheme of a nursing school. Much like a nurse-patient relationship in the orientation phase, results of this study showed that both parties respected the role of advising but were not fully comfortable participating in the beginning (Chan, 2016). To successfully progress to the next phase, all participants, whether it be the nurse and patient or faculty advisor and advisee, must address the awkwardness that exists from this phase and transition this into a positive experience. Although Peplau's intent was for this theory to be specific to the nurse-patient relationship, the terms could be used interchangeably and synonymously with advisor-advisee. Advisors must use their assessment skills to determine what the needs of the advisee are and assist them in recognizing these needs, while confirming that the focus of the relationship is on that of the advisee.

Identification phase. During the identification phase, the patient has a better understanding of what the relationship is and therefore can better understand what the system as a whole has to offer (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). During this phase, the patient is influenced by past experiences. If past experiences with others were negative, patients may isolate themselves and try to function independent of the nurse, making identifying and establishing a relationship with the nurse difficult (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). Conversely, if previous relationships have allowed the patients to be completely dependent upon others for their needs to be met, they may quickly become overly dependent upon the nurse again, potentially limiting the growth of the relationship (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). The identification phase encourages patients to begin to acquire the skills to notice and interpret information in various situations and learn to respond

without dependence on the nurse (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). This phase is much like the advising process, primarily using models that encourage growth and less guidance from the faculty advisor. The faculty advisor is highly involved with the advisee, encouraging independence, establishing and working toward achievement of goals.

  Exploitation phase. During the third phase, the exploitation phase, the patient recognizes the full benefit of the services being offered and is fully engaged in taking advantage of these services (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). An example of this in the advising relationship would be that the advisee is able to utilize the knowledge and experience of their faculty advisor to look beyond the educational experience alone and begin to plan for post-graduation opportunities. This is the phase where the interpersonal relationship is focused on trust (Higgins, 2013). This phase has overlap into the identification stage and extends into the fourth, and final stage, resolution (Higgins, 2015). This phase allows the patient to become engaged in understanding not only what resources are available to them, but also determining how those resources will be best utilized for maximum benefit.

  Resolution Phase. Resolution is the phase where the patient progresses from dependence to independence (Parker & Smith, 2010). During this phase, the nurse-patient relationship terminates as the patient can identify that prior needs and or goals were met and formulates new goals (Parker & Smith, 2010). In an advising relationship, resolution would mean that the student was functioning independently and centered on establishing new goals (Higgins, 2015). The relationship culminates during this phase because of the goal directed work of the other phases (Peplau, 1969, 1992). The level of success in the resolution phase is dependent upon the level of success within the prior phases. Not all relationships, despite the best of intentions will be healthy or successful. Recognizing this early in the relationship with

possible interventions, rather than noting this as a reflective action as part of the resolution phase, is critical to the success of the relationship.

The resolution phase also allows for recognition of success in achieving goals previously established as part of the interpersonal relationship. Finally, the patient is able to not only set new goals, but also becomes independent, with little to no dependence upon the nurse. Figure 1 represents the Four Phases of Peplau's Interpersonal Relations Theory.

Orientation	Identification	Exploitation	Resolution
Get to know each other	Patient recognizes they need help	Relationship is centered in trust	Separation from 'care'
Patient assess level of trust, integrity, authenticity	Transition from dependence to independence starts	Patient fully utilizes services	Dependent on success of previous phases
Nurse (faculty advisor) is starting to be viewed as a resource	Roles become more clear	Struggle between dependence and independence	Power shift from nurse to patient takes place
Roles begin to evolve	Develop and frequently revisit goals	Relationship begins to separate	Patient becomes independent
			Developing new goals and achievement of previously established goals
			Culmination of learning process

Figure 1 *The Influence of Faculty Advisor-Advisee Relational Fit on the College Academic Advising Experience: A Collective Case Study* (Doctoral Dissertation) by E.M. Higgins (2015) p. 14. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3703544). Reprinted with permission.

Roles of Relationship

As part of the PIRM, Peplau identified six nursing roles that emerged during the phases of the nurse-patient relationship (Tomey & Alligood, 2002). Just as the phases of interpersonal relationship overlap and evolve, so do the six roles that take place during these phases (George,

1990). Peplau described principles that she attributed to successful completion of these roles

(Peterson & Bredow, 2013). To better understand the relationship between the PIRM, academic

advising, and first-generation students, the roles as introduced by Peplau will be further

investigated. Peplau described the role of the nurse and patient. The role of the nurse mirrors

that of the faculty advisor, as the patient and advisee could be considered synonymous when

reviewing these roles.

Role of stranger. According to the PIRM, the role of the stranger coincides with the

identification phase (Tomey & Alligood, 2002). During this time, neither party knows each

other, yet must treat one another without prejudice, while possessing a sense of positive interest

and respect (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). The nurse, while being a stranger, approaches the

patient with positivity and a genuine interest. This allows the patient to begin to see the benefit

of the relationship, establish trust, and progress to other roles that are more participatory in the

overall process. Much like the nurse, the faculty advisor can also approach the advisee with the

same positivity and genuineness.

Role of resource person. In this role, the nurse answers questions to the level of

understanding of the patient and dependent upon the level of the larger problem of which the

question originated (Tomey & Alligood, 2002; George, 1990). The nurse also assesses what

type of response is appropriate for learning to take place. The resource person (nurse) then

further determines the level to which a response is needed. One must consider if this is

something that requires a brief, straightforward reply, or requires a more detailed, counseling

approach, possibly necessitating additional referrals (Tomey & Alligood, 2002; George, 1990).

The resource person, whether it be a nurse or faculty advisor, may encourage the individual to

connect with additional resources. In the case of advising, the faculty advisor may refer an

advisee to the financial aid office, the health office, or perhaps, if needs are significant enough, to a professional counselor.

Teaching role. The role of the teacher is a multifaceted role. It combines all of the various roles. The teacher takes into consideration what the individual, whether that be a patient or an advisee, already knows and to what level of interest they have (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). The teacher must be able to assess the situation and needs of the student to support useful learning (Peplau, 1969, 1992). Based upon these assessments, the 'teacher' can then create a 'lesson plan' that is individualized to the needs of the student. Approaching the advising role from the lens of an educator is potentially less intimidating or overwhelming due to the established familiarity with teaching. This approach may also be more familiar, and ultimately comfortable to the advisee as well, considering that they have experience with and exposure to the teaching and learning environment.

Leadership role. The leadership role is responsible for engaging and encouraging advisees (patients) to participate in their own care planning (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). The leadership role prefers a democratic system, with each party functioning through a role of cooperation and active participation (Higgins, 2015; Peterson & Bredow, 2013; Tomey & Alligood, 2002). The job of the faculty advisor is to best determine what the specific needs of the advisee are. Perhaps a more authoritarian, prescriptive approach is necessary in certain situations. According to the PIRM model and the leadership role, the nurse will be able to assess and intervene based upon the most appropriate leadership style.

Surrogate role. Simply stated, the surrogate is someone who takes the place of another (George, 1990). In terms of the PIRM, the patient, or in this study, advisee, develops attitudes

and feelings toward the nurse or advisor respectively, based upon previous experiences (Peterson & Bredow, 2013; Tomey & Alligood, 2002). The nurse can recognize this and use this to assist the individual in seeing differences between the role of the person in their past and the role of the nurse. The surrogate role is important for defining areas of "dependence, independence, and interdependence" (Tomey & Alligood, 2002, p. 383). Gibbons and Woodside (2014) studied the influence of family on first-generation college students. Their findings noted that fathers had an influential role. Some were a positive influence and some were a negative influence that then encouraged students to persist to counter the negative beliefs of the father. These negative influences could be an example of advisees projecting feelings they may have had toward their father upon their faculty advisor. The faculty advisor, or surrogate, would then be responsible for assisting the advisee in working through these feelings to generate a plan to deal with this in a manner that was appropriate.

Counseling role. The role of the counselor, according to George (1990) is "one, who the use of certain skills and attitudes, aids another in recognizing, facing, accepting, and resolving problems that are interfering with the other person's ability to live happily and effectively" (p. 45). Nurses use observation and listening skills to assist patients in developing a better understanding of themselves, their feelings, and their actions (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). Through these counseling interactions, individuals will experience a transformational learning process regarding themselves (Higgins, 2015). The role of the counselor encourages self-reflection of one's thoughts and understanding about themselves and processing through these feelings in a manner that is healthy and beneficial to the patient/advisee.

Summary of Peplau's Interpersonal Relationship Model

Peplau's theory was originally written as a framework for mental health nursing (Peplau, 1969, 1992). With its focus on interpersonal relationship building and communication, it has evolved into a meaningful and useful theory that extends its application beyond the realm of only nursing. One could easily interchange the words faculty advisor and advisee for nurse and patient, respectively, in the PIRM. The faculty advisor and advisee relationship is one of the areas that is able to integrate the principles of the PIRM theory to further understand the importance of establishing and maintaining strong interpersonal relationships throughout the duration of the educational journey of the student. Through the PIRM, one is able to examine the relationship of the faculty advisor and advisee from beginning to end of the relationship, recognizing roles and phases and the significance of each.

Advising

According to Harrison (2009) advising has roots dated back to the 1840s when the administration of Kenyon College mandated each student to select a faculty advisor. Initially, advising had a very academic and prescriptive focus. An advisor's primary role was to direct a student's path through selected programs and/or curriculums (Higgins, 2015). The evolution of advising has provided insight and observations that allow for the strengthening of the effectiveness of advising (Gillispie, 2003). According to the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) "academic advising is an integral part of the educational process and affects students in numerous ways" (National Academic Advising Association [NACADA], 2005), "The statement of core values of academic advising; Exposition", para. 1). Higgins (2015) further describes that during the 1970s there was a renewed focus on advising. With this

enhanced focus, advising was broken down into one of three methods: prescriptive, developmental, or teaching and learning. In the 1970s, Robert Glennen introduced the intrusive advising model (Varney, 2012). Intrusive advising has been recently labeled proactive advising in the literature (Fowler & Boylan, 2010).

Advising has evolved into various forms and modalities (Marvin, 2013). Regardless of the form or modality, two main roles persist, that of mentor and academic counselor (Propp & Rodes, 2006). The advisor is then charged with the task of bridging these two roles into one while helping advisees establish and meet their own goals, both personally and institutionally (Marvin, 2013). Hale, Graham, and Johnson (2009) studied students' level of satisfaction with advising. Results showed that students had a strong preference for advisors that were strong mentors and knowledgeable of the overall program and curriculum requirements. The authors further elaborated that based upon the strong participant perceptions that there was a direct link that connected student satisfaction with advising to retention (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009).

The influence of advising upon student success is further supported in research completed by Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, and Hawthorne (2013). Rather than a focus on student satisfaction, these researchers evaluated advising specific to student needs, expectations, and success (Young-Jones et al., 2013). Results of this study identified six factors that had a direct relationship on advising and student success. Those factors included advisor accountability, advisor empowerment, student responsibility, student self-efficacy, student study skills, and perceived support (Young-Jones et al., 2013). By understanding effective advising, institutions of higher education will be better able to identify opportunities for improvements to the overall advising process (Young-Jones et al., 2013).

Methods of Advising

The literature provides a plethora of information about the various types of advising. Studies that compare two types of advising, studies that research the effectiveness of particular forms of advising, and studies that confirm the importance of some type of advising are available. However, one could argue that advising types are as unique as the students served, with no one specific type being applicable to every scenario, every time. Qualities and characteristics of each are unique and must be considered on an individual basis of advisee need. As students evolve in their development as learners, so too will their advising needs and the method of advising provided by the faculty advisor. The specific methods of advising to be described include prescriptive, developmental, intrusive, and teaching as advising models.

Prescriptive Advising

Burns Crookston is well-known for his development of the prescriptive model of academic advising (McFarlane, 2013). The prescriptive model of advising is focused on the faculty advisor dictating exactly what the advisee does and the advisee then following that direction explicitly (Barbuto, Story, Fritz, & Schinstock, 2011; Bitz, 2010; Crookston, 2009; Fowler & Boylan, 2010; He & Hutson, 2016; Lowenstein, 2005; Vander Schee, 2007). Prescriptive advising is hierarchical with the advisor serving in a powerful role and the advisee serving in a passive and/or submissive role. Also, this form of advising is largely centered on college policy and procedure with little to no consideration to other influences such as student status, financial concerns, family support, or additional environmental influences (Barbuto et. al, 2011). Lowenstein (2005) further described prescriptive advising as being one-directional with information coming from the advisor to the advisee with no opportunity for discussion or

negotiation. Crookston (2009) described prescriptive advising as being "highly convenient and desirable" (p. 79), especially for advisors with a large volume of advisees to serve. He and Hutson (2016) described prescriptive advising as being most useful and effective in situations in which the faculty advisors' primary responsibilities are to assist with tasks such as class scheduling, registration, and graduation preparation. Lowenstein (2005) stated that the bulk of prescriptive advising does not need to be done by an advisor, but rather could be easily carried out by a clerical staff member, or even a computer. However, with all of the perceived negative connotations given to prescriptive advising, there is still a time and a place for prescriptive advising to occur. Lowenstein (2005) further explains how some interactions between advisors and advisees are very prescriptive in nature. The advisee has a question that requires a brief, concise answer by the advisor in order to reach resolution. This is not something that requires a great detail of interaction, but rather is easily solved with a more prescriptive approach.

Prescriptive advising is a model that to some has a negative connotation due to its authoritarian approach. However, this approach is warranted and necessary in some instances. In order for some students to be retained and have a successful progression, they may initially benefit from this approach. They will not have to try to navigate through the sometimes-confusing path of higher education, but instead will be able to follow the direction of an experienced navigator. Students that benefit most from prescriptive advising could best be described using the adage 'they don't know what they don't know'.

Developmental Advising

The literature is saturated with definitions of developmental academic advising. He and Hutson (2016) summarize it best when writing "developmental advising is the major advising

approach that focuses on students' holistic development in both cognitive and non-cognitive

aspects" (p. 216). Unlike prescriptive advising, developmental advising is a negotiated

relationship that identifies and establishes goals, both long and short-term. It addresses skills and

attitudes that promote intellectual and personal development, and is a collaboration, not only

between the faculty advisor and advisee, but also between the faculty advisor, advisee, and the

institution (He & Hutson, 2016). Lowenstein (2005) points out that while prescriptive advising

does not engage students in an active learning process, developmental advising allows for a

dialogue in which both parties contribute in an active manner. Because of this active

participation, students have a positive experience with further enhancement of their own personal

development (Lowenstein, 2005). As part of the collaborative relationship between advisor and

advisee, the belief is that the dyad will engage in developmental tasks that will ultimately result

in varying degrees of learning by both advisor and advisee (Crookston, 2009). The collaboration

that occurs as a part of the developmental advising process is mutually beneficial to all

participants.

Terry O'Banion is widely credited with the development of an academic advising model

that extended well beyond the educational experience. O'Banion (1994) in creating this model

established the goal of "dedicating to helping students achieve their maximum potential" (p. 10).

Initially, this model was created for use at the community college level. This five-step process

extended into life and career goals, enhancing the overall positive academic advising experience

for students. Grites (2013) states that "the developmental approach acknowledges that learning

occurs in a variety of settings, contexts, and environments, all of which students must negotiate

and manage to achieve their goals" (p. 10). This example validates the influence that

developmental advising has on the overall educational experience, extending far beyond just the academic component. Developmental advising addresses the holistic needs of the learner.

Teasley and Buchanan (2013) created a study to determine how students perceived their past and more recent advising experiences to create a tool to be used for future evaluation of advising programs. While designations specific to prescriptive or developmental approaches did not emerge, there was an obvious theme that advisors must connect and engage students in all components of university life and not just academic components of advising (Teasley & Buchanan, 2013). This demonstrated the importance of a holistic, collaborative relationship to advising, as compared to a more authoritarian approach.

Barker and Mamiseishvili (2014), interviewed students who had switched from an advising center approach to a faculty advisor. They were specifically studying the relationships with each type of advising, overall advising experience, and feelings related to the different types of advising. Findings overwhelmingly showed a strong preference for personalization of the advising relationship. Participants preferred faculty advisors who could recall personal details and were familiar with the personal goals and academic abilities of the advisee and demonstrated a genuine interest in individual needs of the entire educational experience (Barker & Mamiseishvili, 2014). These are all characteristics that easily align with the developmental approach.

Hale, Graham, and Johnson, (2009) surveyed 429 students in the College of Agricultural, Food, and Life Science department at a mid-south doctoral university regarding whether they preferred prescriptive or developmental advising styles. An overwhelming 95.5% of respondents indicated that they wanted more of a personal relationship with their faculty advisors and sought

more from the advising relationship that extended well beyond just sharing information on course selection (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009). Swecker, Fifolt, and Searby (2013) studied the relationship between the number of meetings with a faculty advisor and the retention of first-generation students. Using multiple logistic regressions, the authors showed that for every meeting with an academic faculty advisor, the odds that a student was retained increased by 13% (Swecker, Fifolt, & Searby, 2013). These results further confirmed the thought that faculty advisor and advisee interaction, engagement, and involvement proved instrumental in keeping students enrolled. While the results did not differentiate the specific type of advising model utilized, the actions utilized by the researchers coupled with the behaviors preferred by the advisees are synonymous with developmental advising.

Again, the literature makes it clear that there is a place for multiple advising approaches, including both developmental and prescriptive advising as a complement to one another (Weir, Dickman, & Fuqua, 2005; Teasley & Buchanan, 2013). As demonstrated by Weir, Dickman, and Fuqua's (2005) study of 187 undergraduate students, there was not a mutually exclusive preference for one approach over the other. Weir, Dickman, and Fuqua (2005) suggested early evaluation and implementation of advisee preferred approaches to advising based upon their individual needs.

Developmental advising is a holistic approach that encompasses the entire student and not just the student from a solely academic focus. Developmental advising is a mutually respective relationship that is centered on establishing and attaining short and long-term goals.

Intrusive (Proactive) Advising

Intrusive advising, sometimes referred to as proactive advising, has been defined as "deliberate structured student intervention at the first indication of academic difficulty in order to motivate a student to seek help" (Varney, 2012, p. 28). Some further identify intrusive advising as a combination of prescriptive and developmental advising. Earl (1988) noted that intrusive advising utilized the systematic skills of prescriptive advising while helping to solve the major problem of developmental advising, being a student's reluctance to self-refer prior to problems or difficulties that arose. Earl (1988) noted that intrusive advising was successful with freshman students to assist them in self-identification of potential areas of weakness in order to attempt to encourage the student to maximize their motivation to accept assistance. Fowler and Boylan, (2010) in their research that studied non-academic and personal factors related to student success pointed out that an additional benefit of intrusive advising was that feedback was given quickly and the model was not dependent upon the advisee seeking out assistance. The faculty advisor followed structured protocols for intervention, which helped reduce the potential for barriers to student success.

Museus and Ravello (2010) studied the role that academic advisors play in generating racial and ethnic minority student success. The 45 participants were made up of 14 academic advisors and 31 racial and ethnic minority students across three different institutions. White and Native American students were excluded (Native Americans because of the small percentage available). Interview participants underscored the importance of proactive advising. Advisors who were intentional in their efforts to connect with students, especially intrusive advising principles, were associated with heightened student persistence and completion rates (Museus & Ravello 2010). Vander Schee (2007) identified 47 students who were on academic probation at a

comprehensive, private university. He hypothesized that students on academic probation who attended three to eight meetings of intrusive advising would significantly improve their semester grade point average (GPA). Students who attended zero to two meetings would achieve less significant improvements. Participants self-selected into one of three groups: those with zero advising appointments, students who attended one or two advising appointments and those who had three to eight advising appointments (Vander Schee, 2007). The results of this study showed a statistically significant difference in GPA change between the control group who had zero to two meetings with their advisor, compared to the group that had three to eight meetings with their advisor, therefore, supporting the hypothesis of the researcher.

Intrusive advising requires advisors to be knowledgeable and comfortable with the facility, understand faculty and staff resources available to students, have time to dedicate to students, be able to schedule timely meetings, monitor student progress, and have the ability to maintain a professional relationship with students. Like developmental advising, intrusive advising is focused on establishing healthy and professional relationships between the advisor and advisee. This will allow advisors to be intrusive without advisees perceiving them to be intrusive.

Advising as Teaching

Lowenstein (2005) introduced the thought that teaching and learning was a model for advising. Lowenstein (2005) further writes, "I suggest that an excellent advisor does the same for the student's entire curriculum that the excellent teacher does for one course" (p. 69). He and Hutson (2016) in their analysis of various forms of advising, describe advising as teaching by establishing strong objectives and standards that guide practice while at the same time providing

feedback that allows the relationship to progress to closure. This is like the progression that a student follows through an established curriculum. The same criteria that students hold for excellent educators could also be used for excellent faculty advisors (He & Hutson, 2016). The advising as teaching model is beneficial to faculty advisors who are comfortable in their role as an educator, but perhaps not as comfortable in their role as a faculty advisor. They can model their approach to advising similarly to how they view their role as an educator in terms of organization and delivery. McFarlane (2013) compares advising and teaching by pointing out "the domain of the professor is the individual course while the domain of the academic faculty advisor is the overall curriculum" (p. 46). Lowenstein (2005) states "…learning transpires when a student makes sense of his or her overall curriculum just as it does when a person understands an individual course, and the former is every bit as important as the latter" (p. 69). Vianden and Barlow (2015) assert that advisors are partners with advisees and together they integrate and share responsibility for learning.

Crookston (2009), who is often described as the founder of developmental advising, compared prescriptive and developmental advising and how they both were contributors to a teaching and learning approach. "Advising is viewed as a teaching function based on a negotiated agreement between the student and the teacher in which varying degrees of learning by both parties to the transaction are the product" (Crookston, 2009, p. 82). Erlich and Russ-Eft (2013) researched if self-efficacy and self-regulated learning were applicable to advising for measuring student learning outcomes. The results indicated that academic advising when coupled with effective teaching methods could result in enhanced self-regulated learning on the part of the student (Erlich & Russ-Eft, 2013).

Approaching advising from the vantage point of a teacher is propitious not only to faculty that advise, but also to students. Faculty who can organize their advising strategies in a similar fashion to how they organized their teaching could feel more comfortable and prepared to advise. Similarly, students who are advised by faculty who are skilled and talented educators should reap the same benefits from their faculty advisor.

Summary of Advising Methods

This portion of the review has focused on the various models of academic advising. The first model was prescriptive advising. This model is authoritarian in design and allows for little collaboration between the faculty advisor and advisee. The second model discussed was developmental advising. As described by Crookston (2009) this model is based upon student development theory with some influence of cognitive development theory. Developmental advising has been commonly used because of the holistic approach that takes both cognitive and non-cognitive attributes into consideration. One could observe the scaffolding approach of the different methods of advising. As prescriptive advising led into a more developmental approach, further research combined components of each and intrusive advising evolved. Intrusive advising was the third method introduced. As previously stated, it combines both prescriptive and developmental qualities to promote student success, especially with populations deemed at risk. Finally, advising as teaching was introduced. This model was developed based on the idea that advising would be more effective when components of teaching and intentional learning outcomes were infused (McFarlane, 2013). The benefits of this approach would be twofold; benefitting both the faculty advisor and the advisee.

Regardless of the method of advising used, faculty advisors must be knowledgeable. This includes, but is not limited to the method of advising, the advisee and their specific goals and needs as well as the mission, values, policies and procedures of the individual institution. The success of advising is rooted deeply in the effectiveness and knowledge of the faculty advisor.

Advising Nursing Students

According to the American Association of College of Nursing (AACN) (2014), the United States is projected to experience a significant shortage of Registered Nurses (RN). This will only become more intense as the Baby Boomer generation ages and the need for healthcare grows (AACN, 2014). This shortage, when coupled with continued high attrition rates, creates a need for intervention that not only recruits, but also retains qualified candidates to achieve the degree of BSN. One intervention to assist with this is innovative advising processes (Mooring, 2016).

Much research exists on advising and nursing students as separate components. Searches of academic databases yields limited research specific to advising nursing students. This demonstrates a noticeable gap in available research. Although the concept of advising nursing students could be generalized to advising any student in higher education; differences do exist (Harrison, 2009). Nursing programs possess curricula that are very precise and prescriptive, leaving little room for variance. Because of this lack of flexibility, nursing students are often placed into stressful situations where they have little or no choice.

Ostrogorsky and Raber (2014) studied first year nursing students and their experience during a nursing curriculum redesign. Results of this study indicated that students perceived

themselves to struggle most with advising (Ostrogorsky & Raber, 2014). Students continued by explaining that advisors were not educated regarding the curriculum or overall campus culture (Ostrogorsky & Raber, 2014).

Harrison (2009) specifically studied pre-nursing and nursing student perceptions of the qualities of effective advisors. Students were given a questionnaire that identified three characteristics of an effective advisor and identified six functions of an effective advisor (Harrison, 2009). Both groups studied overwhelmingly identified being knowledgeable as the most important characteristic of an advisor. Both groups further identified the qualities of availability, organization, and strong communication as being important (Harrison, 2009). While this is only one study, it does demonstrate the importance of research specific to advising nursing students. It is an opportunity for nursing faculty to see value in the roles of advisor in order to promote retention of nursing students. This discipline specific research could validate the importance of advising to nursing faculty.

First-Generation Students

Engle and Tinto (2008) define first-generation students as those where neither parent nor did guardian achieve a bachelor's degree. This definition is further supported widely throughout the literature. Using data from the U.S. Department of Education datasets, Engle and Tinto (2008) described the ways in which this population of first-generation participates in higher education. These included persistence and degree attainment rates, and compared their participation to other students, including those who were neither low-income nor first-generation. While Engle and Tinto's (2008) research combined first-generation students with low-income students, the results were significant in the importance of approaching first-

generation students as a unique cohort of students in higher education. Young-Jones et al.

(2013) also confirm that first-generation students face challenges that are unique to their self-

efficacy beliefs. Allaire (2018) notes that an estimated less than 50% of students reach degree

completion within 6 years, with as many as one in three students dropping out completely, never

finishing their degree. Allaire (2018) points out that the increasing tuition costs coupled with

declining completion rates as problematic for all students in higher education.

Several factors contribute to first-generation students being at greater risk for becoming

drop-outs. Jeffreys (2012) identifies three areas that predispose first-generation college students

to increased risk of attrition. First, college planning and selection is difficult for this population.

They have limited to no exposure to this process, making their plans and expectations unrealistic.

Second, the first-generation student can experience feelings of confusion and isolation due to not

only first-generation status, but also cultural, social, and academic considerations. The third and

final consideration identified by Jeffreys (2012) is that academic and social integration into the

college can be confusing and difficult and lead to unsuccessful completion of their higher

education process. Engle and Tinto (2008) noted that regardless of institution type, first-

generation, low-income students were nearly four times more likely to leave higher education

after the first year when compared to students without those risk factors.

Harackiewicz et al. (2014) studied 798 students enrolled in an introductory biology

course. One hundred fifty-four of those students were first-generation. The purpose of the study

was to determine if a values affirmation intervention would increase retention of the first-

generation students (Harackiewicz et al., 2014). The results demonstrated that not only did the

intervention improve retention, but it also significantly improved the final course grade and

overall GPA (Harackiewicz et al., 2014). Additionally, the gap between first-generation and

continuing generation students was narrowed by 50% and increased retention between these

groups by 50% (Harackiewicz et al., 2014). The results demonstrate that interventions, such as

the values affirmation used in this study, are valuable in influencing a positive change in the

thought processes of first-generation students, or other at-risk populations to promote retention.

Advising First-Generation Students

In a study completed by Young-Jones et al. (2013), 611 undergraduate students from a

Midwestern university were studied to evaluate academic advising in terms of student needs,

expectations, and success rather than from the usual student satisfaction perspective. The

primary purpose being to determine if advising had a positive influence on student academic

performance (Young-Jones et al., 2013). By having a positive influence on academic

performance, the authors further hypothesized that in turn, study skills and self-efficacy would

result in a higher GPA. Factor analysis revealed that advisor accountability (professionalism,

preparation and availability) accounted for 10.8% of the item variance (Young-Jones et al.,

2013). Additionally, multiple regression revealed that meeting with an advisor at least one time

each semester was a significant influence on student success, including self-efficacy (Young-

Jones et al., 2013). While this study was not focused specifically on first-generation students,

differences were identified between first- and second-generation college students; specifically,

significant differences were found in levels of student self-efficacy. These results again

demonstrate the importance and influence that advising has upon all students, especially, first-

generation students and their self-efficacy.

Jeffreys (2007) retrospectively studied the records of 112 students. The purpose of this

study was to gain further insight into students' perceptions concerning factors that restricted or

supported retention. While the intent was not to study first-generation students specifically, 29%
of the sample was identified as such. The participants included undergraduate baccalaureate
nursing students enrolled in a clinical nursing course in a Northeastern public university system;
five associates and two baccalaureate programs and all were commuter campuses. The results of
this study were significant and insightful. Based on the multiple statistical analyses completed,
Jeffreys (2007) concluded that "students often underestimate the rigorous demands of a nursing
program and often overestimate their supports, are at risk for misperceptions, attrition, and/or
poor academic outcomes" (p. 416). This further supports research identifying the importance of
assessment and intervention, such as early faculty advising, with populations deemed 'at-risk',
with one such group being first-generation students.

First-generation college students do appear to have more struggles completing
baccalaureate degrees. According to Engle and Tinto (2008), only 34% of low income, first-
generation students earned a bachelor's degree in 6 years. This was in contrast to 66% of their
non-first-generation peers who did obtain a bachelor's degree in the same time frame.
Unfortunately, only 14% of low-income, first-generation students attending public two-year and
for-profit institutions transferred to four-year institutions within six years compared to 50 percent
of their more advantaged peers (Engle & Tinto, 2008). These struggles could potentially be
lessened with faculty advising from the beginning of their program.

Soria and Stebleton (2012) studied 1,864 undergraduate, first-generation students at a
large, public university located in the Midwest classified as being very high in research activity.
The purpose was to determine differences in academic engagement and retention between first-
generation and non-first-generation students (Soria & Stebleton, 2012). The results of their

survey indicated that first-generation students had significantly lower academic engagement and lower retention as compared to non-first-generation peers.

Conclusion

These studies substantiate the positive influence that advising has on both first-generation students and nursing students and their desire to persist although research specific to nursing students and advising is limited. When considering factors that increase the risk of attrition with the positive connection that advising has on retention, it is clear that further research is needed to identify specific components of the advising relationship that are perceived to be of most influence and benefit to students. These components can then be replicated with the intention of enhancing advising, and retention of these students.

Literature Review Summary

The literature specific to advising in higher education is diverse and expansive. It addresses methods of advising, benefits of advising, and the importance of relationships to support the effectiveness of the advising relationship and achievement of overall program specific outcomes. Faculty advisors are critical in their role assisting with integration, assimilation, and retention of students. It is imperative that faculty advisors have the necessary education and resources to be successful in this role. The literature supports the importance of education specific to faculty advising. Further research that more clearly defines specific gaps in faculty advisor knowledge would be of benefit to faculty advisors, institutions, and students. It is clear from the literature that a number of factors influence the experience of first-generation college students. Research has been presented that studies this group, most often in conjunction with other 'at-risk' populations. Further studies that are specific to first-generation

undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students as a group would be insightful and helpful in

efforts to better support these students throughout their education.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Chapter Three presents the methodology, data collection, analysis, and quality assurance procedures. It also provides information specific to the participant selection process, participant demographic variables, and ethical considerations. A brief summary of the chapter will be included.

Methodology and Design

This qualitative research study utilized a phenomenological design. Qualitative designed studies are utilized to further explore and understand the complexity of a situation (Creswell, 2014). Utilizing a qualitative approach allowed the researcher to further explore the phenomena of first-generation baccalaureate nursing students' perceptions of faculty advising. This research approach empowered these students to share their experiences (Creswell, 2013). Using a phenomenological approach allowed for discovery of commonalities among individuals who have all shared the same lived experience (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research allows for deep reflections of the complex and multi-dimensional experiences that participants, such as first-generation baccalaureate nursing students, encounter (Grace-Longwell, Adsitt, Mullins, & Serrata, 2016).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to study the perceptions of first-generation baccalaureate nursing students regarding their experiences with faculty advisors at two Midwestern colleges. The intention of face-to-face interviews was to generate views and opinions of the participants' specific to the phenomena (Creswell, 2014). Interviews are beneficial because they allow participants to reflect and provide historical information (Creswell, 2014). The researcher was then able to further identify and describe the essence of the

experience(s) for participants based upon this methodology (Creswell, 2013). This study took place at two small Midwestern colleges and participants were first-generation undergraduate students who were currently enrolled in a BSN program.

Setting and Participants

The chosen research sites are small, private institutions in the Midwestern region of the United States. The first research site, designated as "A" is a Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher learning offering degrees with more than 50 majors. During the fall 2016 semester, total enrollment was 891, with 101 undergraduate baccalaureate nursing enrolled (S. Jenks, personal communication, February 18, 2018). The second site, designated as "B" is also located in an urban area, although in a different city than site A, and is a small, private, Catholic college whose undergraduate programs offer educational access to women in a variety of degrees. During the fall 2016 semester, total enrollment for this facility was 1043, with 230 undergraduate baccalaureate nursing enrolled (D. Nugen, personal communication, October 18, 2016).

Currently, site A utilizes both central and decentralized advising processes. All students are assigned a faculty advisor upon acceptance into the college. The pre-nursing students (students who intend to be in the BSN program, but have not been accepted into the BSN program) work with a specific pre-nursing faculty advisor. Upon acceptance into the BSN program, they are assigned a nursing faculty advisor. The process of assigning a nursing faculty advisor is random with a focus on faculty advisor load. This faculty advisor works with students for the duration of their progression through graduation. There are currently no formal requirements for faculty advisors in terms of meeting with students. Faculty advisors meet with the registrar's office and as a nursing department, both on an as needed basis. The faculty

advisors also receive updates from the pre-nursing faculty advisor for information that is

applicable to the nursing students, but may fall out of the realm of nursing, such as general

education requirement changes. New faculty advisors at Site A are paired with an experienced

advisor for an introduction to the role, but no formal orientation program exists (L. Fandrich,

personal communication, February 19, 2018).

Site B utilizes a decentralized advising approach with undergraduate baccalaureate

nursing students. The students are assigned a faculty advisor specific to their chosen major from

the beginning of their enrollment. If they are undecided on a major, they are assigned to a

faculty advisor in the arts and sciences department until they declare a major. Faculty advisors

are required to meet face-to-face twice per semester but are also encouraged by administration to

meet more often. Students take an advising survey to assess satisfaction with their faculty

advisor every other year. Students who select a minor are also assigned a faculty advisor

specific to that minor, in addition to their nursing faculty advisor. Site B has an informal

education process for faculty advisors and direct observation with a peer mentor is utilized (J.

Jessen, personal communication, October 15, 2016).

According to Creswell (2014), a convenience sample is a sample where respondents are

chosen based on availability or convenience. Students received the definition of "undergraduate,

first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing student". The sample for this study

included undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students who self-identified as first-generation,

based upon the definition of being students who are enrolled in a Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Program and whose parents or guardians have no personal college experience.

Participants were not restricted in terms of academic year but were required to be current undergraduate BSN students. Permitting variance in academic year placement allowed for variance in exposure to the phenomenon of faculty advising. Participants in this study were required to be at least 19 years of age in order to participate. It was necessary for participants to have had at least one semester of faculty advising at either institution, for an in-depth reflection of their individual experiences of the phenomena studied.

Creswell (2013) defines a heterogeneous group for a phenomenological study to be from 3-15 individuals. The goal sample for this study was 6-15 participants total, inclusive of both sites, with an even distribution between the two sites. This sample size range allowed for an in-depth review of the phenomena of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing student's perceptions of faculty advising. Interviews were continued until saturation was achieved or when data gathering no longer elicited new information or ideas (Creswell, 2014).

Participant Recruitment and Demographics

Students who are first-generation, undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students were recruited for the study. The researcher requested permission from appropriate Program Directors and/or Deans to solicit students for participation (Appendix A). After gaining permission, the researcher sent an email with Recruitment Directions (Appendix B) to these same individuals to share an electronic copy of the Recruitment Invitation Letter (Appendix C). This letter provided the purpose of the study, participant selection criteria, as well as an estimated time commitment (Creswell, 2014). The researchers' contact information was included as a part of this letter to allow participants a direct line of communication to further inquire and potentially participate in the study. Electronic and/or telephone communications were the primary methods for interacting

with potential and actual participants to answer questions and arrange for interview meeting times.

Participant demographics were collected via a written survey (Appendix D) after the purpose of the study was explained and following acquisition of informed consent. Creswell (2014) recommended demographic information that includes, but not limited to, age, gender, race, position, geographical location, and any additional information that is specific to the population being studied. This study obtained demographic information specific to age, grade level, gender, race, and ethnicity. These demographic variables provided data that were specific to how various demographics could potentially influence the phenomena studied.

Data Gathering Tools

For this phenomenological study, face-to-face interviews were utilized to address the central question and sub-questions. Interviews were conducted at the affiliated college campuses of the study. Inconvenience was avoided by allowing participants to suggest a date and time for the interview to take place that was mutually acceptable to both the participants and researcher. Classroom, or similar private space was secured prior to the interviews. Appropriate signage was placed on the doors, requesting no interruptions during the interview process to ensure privacy was maintained. The *Rights of Research Participants* (Appendix E) and written consent (Appendix F) was presented to the participants prior to the start of the interviews. The participants were informed of the estimated 45-60 minute audiotaped interview sessions. Participants were informed that note taking would occur by the researcher during the interview. The purpose of the study was reviewed with each participant prior to the start of the interview. Participants were given a definition of first-generation student in the request soliciting

participants, and prior to the start of the interviews. Participants were allowed to ask questions to obtain clarification of additional definitions, however, the researcher did strive to provide answers that offered clarification but did not lead participants in any way.

Instrumentation

The researcher modeled the interview tool from an example provided by Creswell (2013). The tool provided the researcher a document to follow in a manner that promoted consistency in data collection. The tool allowed the researcher to write reflective notes throughout the interview. These notes then allowed the researcher to connect transcripts back to the interview tool and notes to further identify consistencies. The interview tool was developed following an open-ended interview model (Creswell, 2013). By allowing an open-ended process, participants were afforded the opportunity to elaborate on their opinions, perceptions, and observations, rather than being confined to a narrow, closed-ended model (Creswell, 2013). A copy of the interview questions were provided to each participant. The open-ended questions pertained to how each participant not only perceived the phenomena of faculty advising, but more specifically, relationships, advising types, roles, and their perceptions of how advising has contributed to their overall college experience (Creswell, 2013).

Interview questions (Appendix G) were open-ended, focused, general, and small in number to generate detailed views and opinions from participants (Creswell, 2013). Interview questions were adapted, with permission, (Appendix H) from Dr. Elizabeth Higgins (2015). Questions, before modified, addressed the dyad of both advisor and advisee. For this research, the questions were adapted to address the perspective of the advisee only. The interview

protocol consisted of 14 questions that focused on advisor-advisee relationship, advisor

characteristics, and overall experience of the undergraduate BSN student with faculty advising.

Probing questions were used, when necessary, that were specific to the central and sub-

questions, guiding the research, but not leading or suggestive of bias. Probing questions further

investigated and reflected upon statements made by participants in order to seek clarity and offer

elaboration on perceptions. Exact probing questions were not known prior to the interviews due

to the researcher not being able to predict what participants would say in response to questions.

The researcher remained neutral and did not demonstrate agreement or disagreement with

participants as well as maintained body language that was professional and not suggestive of

agreement or disagreement with statements made by the participants. The researcher did not

interject conversation or observations during the interview.

Interviews were recorded utilizing a voice recorder and transcribed verbatim.

Transcription was completed by a paid professional transcriptionist. An alternate voice recorder

was available during all interviews for potential device failure.

Planned Data Analysis

Qualitative research data analysis requires deliberate and intentional review of data (Polit

& Beck, 2012). Coding processes were utilized to generate themes and begin to identify patterns

of data. Houser (2015) defined themes as "overall patterns that are recognized in the data through

categorization and analysis of individual units of meaning" (p. 430). Theme identification

requires a detailed and repeated scrutiny of data (Houser, 2015). Both manual and computerized

methods of organizing qualitative data were used for this research. First, the interviews were

transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriptionist to ensure accuracy and protection of

participants. The researcher read the transcripts in detail, prior to subsequent readings to then

identify themes. Creswell (2013) defines themes as "broad units of information that consist of

several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (p. 186). Transcribed data scripts were then

reviewed deliberately and intentionally to identify themes. Transcribed scripts were further color

coded by themes. Frequency, or strength of themes, was identified by the frequency of the

colors emerging. To ensure consistency with coding, the researcher established clearly defined

categories with identified criteria for each category (Polit & Beck, 2012). After data was

thoroughly coded, with major themes and subthemes identified, the data was further collapsed

into recurring concepts in the interviews. Creswell (2013) suggests developing a list of 25-30

tentative codes, reviewing and working to narrow to five or six themes used for writing results.

Final themes were organized in accordance with the study's research questions. Throughout data

analysis, data were reviewed often and meticulously until data were both concise and organized.

Concepts were further reduced into themes and subthemes that were specific in addressing the

research questions.

Data Quality Measures

Results must be valid and reliable and utilize proven processes that are specific to

qualitative research. Creswell (2014) presented eight primary strategies for addressing accuracy

of findings and suggests at least two be used in a study to ensure validity.

Member checking is an effective strategy to determine accuracy of qualitative findings

(Creswell, 2013). Member checking is a process in which the researcher provides themes and

findings, both current and emerging to participants allowing them to confirm or debunk this

information (Polit & Beck, 2012). Creswell (2014) suggested sharing major findings or themes

with participants but avoiding sharing the entire raw transcript to ensure accuracy. After completion of the thematic analysis, the researcher emailed the transcribed interview themes to the participants. Participants were asked to review these themes for accuracy and clarity. This was discussed with participants prior to the start of the interview. In the case of this research, member checking was used, with consideration given that some participants may not want to take part in this process.

The second measure of data quality assurance was peer debriefing. Peer debriefing allows for enhanced accuracy of the content (Creswell, 2014). The peer debriefer should be not only familiar with the qualitative process but also familiar with the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2014). This process not only enhances the validity but also encourages accuracy of theme identification and assesses for researcher bias in identifying these themes (Creswell, 2014). The chair of the researcher's doctoral committee was the designated peer debriefing specialist for this study. The committee chair reviewed and asked pertinent questions to further validate the questions and themes. The study extended beyond the researcher due to the utilization of a peer reviewer (Creswell, 2014).

Findings were conveyed utilizing thick, rich descriptions. By utilizing thick, rich descriptions readers are better able to visualize the setting and perhaps more easily relate to findings (Creswell, 2014). Using direct quotations from interview participants further enhanced results, making them more realistic and authentic, and ultimately enhanced overall validity. By utilizing thick, rich descriptions, the researcher not only provided detailed descriptions, but also enhanced the transferability of themes to alternative settings (Creswell, 2013).

Ethical Considerations

For each of the colleges represented in this study, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained. Documentation of approval is on file with both institutions; documents are not included in the appendices to protect the identity of the participating institutions. Prior to each participant interview, and in accordance with each IRB, participants were provided with their own personal copy of the Informed Consent Form. The *Rights of Research Participants* (Appendix E) document was shared with the participants. The consent form was explained individually to each participant prior to the start of the interview. Participants were provided with a written definition of first-generation, undergraduate baccalaureate nursing student prior to the beginning of the interview. Data was stored in a locked cabinet that was only accessible to the researcher. Data was also stored on password protected computers and written transcripts securely stored by the researcher and will be maintained for seven years. Interview transcriptions and audio were not available to individuals other than researcher, participants, professional transcriptionist, and Doctoral Committee Chair. Audio recordings were destroyed at the completion of the study and permanent destruction of audio tapes was verified by the researcher. The researcher was very attentive to conversations that occurred "off the record", before or after the interviews. Conversation was guided away from the research topic, to ensure that no perceived, potentially harmful information was shared. Finally, interviewees were identified according to an assigned number at the time of the interview, with no names or identifying information shared to ensure anonymity.

Chapter Summary

This qualitative study is a phenomenological design. The research questions were designed to further explore first-generation, undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students' perceptions of faculty advising. A convenience sample was used to select participants. Face-to-face interviews were utilized in order to obtain subjective perceptions from participants addressing the role of their BSN faculty advisor. Data analysis to code and identify themes, utilizing different approaches, was carried out in order to obtain a thorough perception of participant's experiences with faculty advising. Throughout all aspects of the study, ethical considerations were taken under attention by the researcher to ensure participant anonymity.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students regarding their experience with BSN faculty advisors at two Midwestern colleges. In the phenomenological tradition of research, lived experiences generate importance as they are recalled and reflected upon. As a phenomenon is analyzed, themes and essential information specific to the experience are identified by the researcher (Creswell, 2014). Understanding how first-generation, undergraduate BSN students perceived their experience with faculty advising is beneficial on many levels. These lived experiences contribute to a clearer understanding of strategies that are both relevant and influential in enhancing retention and overall satisfaction of students. This chapter focuses on themes that were identified with the goal of understanding the meaning of the lived experience of being a first-generation undergraduate BSN nursing student and the role of their BSN faculty advisor. Themes are a "broad explanation for behavior and attitudes" (Creswell, 2014, p. 64). In identifying these themes, the researcher is able to begin to form the basis around which the phenomenological description will unfold.

The participants were comprised of six females (N=6). Four participants identified in the 18-24 age group and two in the 25-35 age group. Of the six participants, two identified as sophomore, two as juniors, and two as seniors. There were three participants who self-identified as Hispanic, two as Caucasian/White, and one as other. Participants were assigned an alias to protect their identity. Of note, there were three additional prospective participants that inquired about participating in the study but did not finalize arrangements to meet. Table 1 provides detail regarding the demographic data of each participant.

Table 1

Demographic Data of Participants

Participant	Age Group	Year in College	Ethnicity
Amy	18-24	Junior	Hispanic
Beth	25-35	Sophomore	Other
Cathy	18-24	Senior	Hispanic
Deb	18-24	Sophomore	Hispanic
Erin	25-35	Junior	Caucasian/White
Felicia	18-24	Senior	Caucasian/White

Data Analysis Process

Data analysis is a complex process. The researcher must organize and synthesize meaning out of data through compression, reduction, and interpretation of participant descriptions coupled with their own observational experiences and examination of transcripts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The data analysis process was based upon the steps identified by Creswell (2014) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016). First, interviews with the participants were professionally transcribed and verification of themes was confirmed utilizing a member check process. Each participant was presented the opportunity to confirm that the identified themes

were indeed truthful and accurate based upon their interview experience. Interview transcripts

were scrutinized by the researcher to identify relevant words and phrases that were pertinent to

the lived experience of first-generation undergraduate BSN students with faculty advising. Data

of each individual transcript were then further coded utilizing an analytic coding process.

Analytic coding provides the researcher the opportunity to identify themes by reflecting upon the

phenomenon being studied and interpreting the coded data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Themes

were written on different colors of paper and highlighted on transcripts with the same color.

This process was followed for each individual transcript. After each transcript was individually

analyzed, the researcher compiled a master list of all emergent themes with the same color

identification process utilized. Further analysis of the master list of themes allowed the

researcher to edit the themes and establish three themes and eight sub-themes. A final review of

all transcripts, without any color coding was completed by the researcher to identify any

additional, previously unidentified data which could strengthen already identified themes and

sub-themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The final step in the data analysis process allowed the

researcher to identify how the established themes and sub-themes were related to the literature

and theoretical framework (Creswell, 2014). The researcher was then able to interpret and apply

the identified themes to the established research questions.

Data Analysis Assurance

Data obtained in qualitative research must be accurately analyzed and reported. In order

to ensure that the themes identified accurately reflect the data collected, the researcher utilized

multiple approaches to support the trustworthiness (validity) and rigor (reliability) of the

findings. The following section will discuss the best practice approaches used in this research to

support the data analysis and reporting of study results.

Adequate data collection. Adequate data collection occurs when a qualitative researcher identifies repetition and redundancy with themes and categories; no new information is gleaned with additional data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Polit & Beck, 2012). The researcher identified data saturation when responses of participants became repetitive and lacked new information. After examining interview transcripts of the fifth participant, it became evident that additional themes were not being identified. Saturation was confirmed upon review of interview transcripts for the sixth participant. Data saturation was used within this study as an additional measure of trustworthiness (validity) of findings.

Member checking. Member checking is an additional measure used to support the trustworthiness (validity) of the themes which were identified during the data analysis process (Creswell, 2014). All six of the participants in this study were sent transcribed interview themes and asked to review them for accuracy and clarity. Participants indicated that the interview themes were indeed an accurate reflection of their experience with faculty advising.

Peer debriefing. Peer debriefing was utilized as a measure to support the rigor and data trustworthiness of the qualitative research. The peer debriefer utilized for this research was a scholar with expertise in both qualitative research and faculty advising. The scholar agreed with the researcher's analysis and identification of themes and sub-themes. A final measure of peer debriefing was the use of three expert scholars who were members of the researcher's doctoral committee. These three experts provided a final peer review and confirmation of the overall strengths and challenges of this research study.

Thick, rich descriptions. Thick, rich descriptions support trustworthiness of this phenomenological study. Thick, rich descriptions allowed the researcher to have a vivid

visualization of the participants' experiences with faculty advising, and more easily identify themes specific to the research. This portrayal of faculty advising was expressed through participant direct quotations, enhancing authenticity and ultimately, overall trustworthiness.

Research Questions

The theoretical framework of Hildegard Peplau's Interpersonal Relations Model guided the development of the central question and four sub-questions and was used in designing fourteen interview questions (Appendix G). The central question and sub-questions were the foundation of the study and focal points for the researcher during the exploration of transcripts and identification and development of themes and subthemes.

Central Question

What are the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students at two Midwestern undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs specific to their experiences with faculty advising? This central question for the study was developed as a means to gather rich descriptions from the first-generation undergraduate BSN students about interactions with their faculty advisors.

Sub Questions

1. How do first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students describe the role of their faculty advisor?

2. How do first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students describe their relationship with their faculty advisor?

3. What are the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students regarding their level of connectedness with their faculty advisor?

4. What experiences with faculty advisors influenced first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students to persist or leave their nursing program?

Themes and Sub-Themes

Three themes and eight sub-themes emerged from the data analysis process and together they addressed the central research question, which sought to identify the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students specific to their experiences with faculty advising. Additionally, the themes and sub-themes addressed the sub-questions, which spoke specifically to relationships, connectedness, and persistence. The identified themes included: relational connectedness with faculty advisor, overall knowledge possessed by the faculty, and supportive behaviors exhibited by the faculty advisor that encouraged participant persistence (see Table 2).

Table 2

Participants Perceptions of the Role of Their Faculty Advisor

Themes	Sub-themes	Sub-question Addressed
Relational connectedness with faculty advisor	Support Availability Trust	Relationship (SQ2) Connectedness (SQ3)
Overall knowledge of the faculty advisor	Curricular knowledge Personal knowledge of advisee	Overall role (SQ1)

Supportive behaviors exhibited by the faculty advisor that encouraged participant persistence	Mentoring Caring Confidentiality	Persistence (SQ4)

Relational Connection with Faculty Advisor

The relationship between a faculty advisor and a first-generation undergraduate BSN student evolves over time. In the beginning of the advisor-advisee relationship, neither has a familiarity of the other. The ability to connect with each other is dependent upon a mutual understanding, comfort, and respect. Each participant was asked questions specific to their comfort level when approaching their faculty advisor, level of confidence in their faculty advisor, if the relationship with their faculty advisor has influenced them, and how the relationship with their faculty advisor has grown or changed over time. The data collected produced the first major theme, the importance of a relational connection with their faculty advisor. Three sub-themes emerged specific to support, availability, and trust.

Participants unanimously identified a sense of uncertainty and unfamiliarity experienced prior to the first meetings with their faculty advisor. When asking participants to reflect on their first meeting with their faculty advisor and their first impressions of their faculty advisor, Deb noted:

My first impression of her, she was very intimidating. She sat up and was very well dressed. I was very intimidated by her. I did not want to speak because I did not want to sound dumb. I was a freshman that was 22 years old so it was like more insecurity, cause I was like 'oh my goodness, I am a 22 year old freshman that is coming in and all of these

people are 18-19 so I think it was more intimidating, like I don't have myself together

and that was why I was a little afraid of her too.

Erin echoed this sentiment by stating "It just took me connecting with myself to see where I

would need help most and if I would be comfortable coming to her". Felicia, who experienced

an unanticipated change in her advisor reflected on both experiences. "My first advisor, she was

very thorough and very, very organized. I just appreciated that and I knew I would enjoy her as

an advisor." After experiencing her first meeting with her second advisor, Felicia's first

impression was that of uncertainty. "I don't necessarily know that she knows what next steps I

need to take."

Participants experienced initial feelings of apprehension but were quickly reassured about

the relationship with their faculty advisor. Amy, upon reflection of her first meeting, explained:

When I got there, I could really tell that she cared about me . . . and after explaining to

her that I was actually a first-generation student, so then after, like, her reaction,

everything completely changed. Just kind of feeling that respect from that understanding

that you really truly understand what you are talking about and being an open mind

because maybe most of the students aren't first-generation nursing students so, being able

to come to them (advisor) and speaking freely about stuff it is, I think that is extremely

important to have.

Beth had a similar experience:

I become nervous when I see someone who has acquired a lot of degrees . . . so I try to

like. . . I was just so conscious of my grammar, my words and all of that. I was really

nervous meeting with her. So, I met with her and she was just smiling and talking and I

was like 'okay, I think I need to calm down, she is not that harsh'. My first impression

was a very good thing for me because it kind of calmed my nerves.

Participants were able to reflect on how these initial feelings of uncertainty or

unfamiliarity were quickly resolved. Cathy explained "my first meeting, well, my advisor was

quirky, and fun, and loud and made my first experience really fun. She is awesome, she is nice."

Deb had a similar reflection, noting:

Like now I have a pretty good foundation of why I am becoming more successful and

why my stress isn't as high. So now I am a lot more open with her, I was really nervous

at first and I just wanted, I wanted to be that tough person who could just make it through

and it was just really hard. She made it easy.

Erin noted that working with her advisor following the initial meeting has contributed to

feelings of confidence in their relationship. "I was comfortable coming to her, she could help

me, and could see where I needed help before I could." Beth simply stated "I think it is very

important when it comes to an advisor-advisee relationship; they need to understand each other

very well." Participants widely described their experience with their faculty advisor as

welcoming, supporting, and quickly evolving into a trusting relationship. Participants felt valued

as an individual with unique needs and qualities, rather than labeled as 'first-generation BSN

student'. Participants expressed a sense of feeling comfortable in approaching, seeking

assistance, and dialoguing with their faculty advisor. Some also commented on interactions

being both formal and informal. Sub-themes identified that contributed to overall relational

connection are support, availability, and trust.

Support. Consistently layered throughout the data was the notion of support. This resulted directly from the relational connections developed within the faculty advisor-advisee dyad. Advisor support was widely welcomed and valued by participants. Words such as respect, understanding, caring, individualized, and organized were used when asked to reflect upon important characteristics in the faculty advisor-advisee relationship. Beth, with passion in her voice, pointed out that "She just sees the human dignity in me. . .. She is very helpful to me, she respects me, and she is able to guide me whenever I am confused." Amy emphasized that:

> Something that is very crucial when it comes to education is feeling that you have the support from someone and feeling like someone is actually cheering you on or willing to be there whenever you need them. I feel that if I did not have the support I would probably be doing poorly in the program as opposed to all of the support that I have and actually feel good from all, especially my advisor. As a first-generation student, I feel that I need double the support.

Deb identified the importance of a supportive relationship when stating:

> This relationship has influenced me a lot because I feel like I have someone supporting me like when I am down I can go to her and be like this test came out so bad, and she would listen and be there for me. When everyone kind of talked to me about being pregnant and about how hard it would be and it was more people kind of telling me how hard it was instead of supporting me so it was kind of like they wanted more or less that I would fail out of it, and she said 'NO!, you can do it if you just push through and let me know when you need me, I'll be here for you'.

Felicia discussed the importance of advisor support as well:

So I think that a lot of the advisors here really want the girls to do their best and this year

has been a little bit crazy as far as grades and stuff goes it has been a little bit different so

I think that the advisors have really been having to give extra support to their students.

My advisor has been very supportive to me.

An additional example of support perceived by participants was the benefit of having a

faculty advisor who was also a nurse and was familiar with the rigor of obtaining a nursing

education. Erin eloquently stated "Because she is a nurse and uh I am also a nursing student,

which kind of helps me to interpret or try to communicate with her any issues that I am maybe

having." Amy found the fact that her faculty advisor was also a nurse a source of additional

support by noting "this is my first time going through any of this . . . So that was really

memorable for me just because she is a nurse and knows what I am going through". Amy again

reflected on her advisor being a nurse when she noted "it's different from having a regular

faculty advisor just because by being a nurse too, they are more knowledgeable about the

material and willing to help you out." Deb's experience with her advisor being a nurse was

positive because "she knows exactly what I am going through with nursing school".

Availability. When exploring the theme of relational connections, another commonly

identified sub-theme was that of availability. Participants consistently reflected on the comfort

of knowing that their faculty advisor was available and easily accessible to them for assistance in

navigating their educational journey. Beth pointed out "anytime I see her if I have any questions,

even when she isn't expecting me, she helps me. She told me 'anytime you need help,

anywhere, you just ask me'." Cathy explained that "I don't even have to make an appointment, I

will just go in there and talk to her." Deb also spoke to the importance of availability when she

pointed out:

Someone that when without me even sending an email, I can knock on their door, they

will know who I am is one big thing, they don't have to just sit at their computer not

really make eye contact with me, they wanted to make a personal relationship because

they want to see me grow, not only as a student but someone in a certain particular area I

have interest in it.

Erin was also appreciative of the flexibility of her faculty advisor's availability by noting that

"and even if it's not a nursing class, like over the summer, she still is there to help me push

through and talk me through things."

Availability of faculty advisors was clearly identified as a valuable attribute within the

theme of relational connectedness. Participants were comforted by the option of their faculty

advisor being available beyond scheduled appointment times. While unscheduled appointments

were not identified as a common occurrence, the opportunity to drop in unannounced was a

source of security for many participants. Availability, as described by participants was not

limited to face to face office meetings. Having faculty advisors that were available by email,

text, and social media contacts were also identified sources of availability expressed by

participants. Deb noted: "If you feel horrible that day, you can just go and talk to them, email

them, it doesn't have to be a visit, just being able to contact her helps."

Trust. The final sub-theme of relational connection with one's faculty advisor what that

of trust. The concept of trust relates to the already mentioned concepts of support and

availability. Trust in a relationship affects the progression of the relationship. The importance

of trust was illustrated through participants' reflections on their overall advising experience over

time. Amy specifically spoke to the amount of trust she has in her faculty advisor when she stated:

> I can trust her with just about anything at this point. We have been together for quite some time and she knows what I have gone through and she knows how like I feel as a first-generation. . . It is just one of those things that I can go and talk to her about and talk about anything and feel okay about and feel respected and I know that I won't be judged. If you see an advisor as someone that you can trust you will go to them and tell them things that as a first-generation student it may be things that you are experiencing what you feel and what you think about stuff.

Beth explained trust with her advisor as:

> I have no fear of when I to go to her, I have that confidence that I can go to her about anything, be it my personal life, my education or challenges about the profession I have chosen to do and to pursue. So I have no fear and I have no doubts about that in relating that with her. I trust her so much.

Deb expressed the importance of trust by simply stating "I mean she has seen me cry a lot, like family issues, she has seen me cry about school …she is very important to me. I know I can trust her no matter what." Felicia reflected on the importance of trust when she was discussing having an unanticipated change in advisors. "To switch advisors was kind of difficult because I really trusted my first advisor and feel like I learned a lot from her. I wish I had that trust with my new advisor." Erin also affirmed the importance of a trusting relationship:

> I have gone to other schools and now here. And I have now seen how it is . . . you can honestly tell if your advisor cares about you or really has that personal relationship and

trust with you. For me it is important just because that is what is going to make me

succeed that is what is going to make me want to push forward.

These descriptions all acknowledge the trust experienced by participants with their

faculty advisor. Additional words and phrases used to affirm a trusting relationship included

helping, committed to, and responsible, and trust is the final attribute that emerged as a sub-

theme identifying relational connection as a major theme.

Overall Knowledge of Faculty Advisor

Faculty advisors have the unique ability to advise from the perspective of not only an

advisor and faculty member, but also the perspective of the professional field of nursing. This

knowledge can be beneficial to the development of student knowledge and skills specific to the

field in general, and to supporting potential specialized interests of the student within the field of

nursing. Participants repeatedly and clearly articulated the importance of having a faculty

advisor who was knowledgeable. Knowledge was not limited to a specific area of advising but

was rather a more global perspective of knowledge. Sub-themes related to overall knowledge of

faculty advisors was comprised of knowledge of the curriculum and personal knowledge of

advisee that included additional knowledge that assisted the advisee in setting both personal and

professional goals. These two sub-themes will be further discussed.

Knowledge of Curriculum. Knowledge specific to program curriculum and progression

was commonly addressed by participants. Having an understanding of the curriculum allowed

participants to better understand requirements and plan for the rigor of the program. When

discussing specific traits and abilities of faculty advisors, Amy quickly noted:

> She is very knowledgeable about things so if I have a question and I know she will be able to answer it and if she can't I know she is willing to look for the help that I need. She may be the only person that I depend on when I need help because she may be the only person that knows about this stuff.

Felicia also commented on the importance of her faculty advisor having curricular knowledge stating. "She helped me figure out classes that would be applicable to nursing with my minor and been able to say this would really benefit you in the future because you will probably see this on the floor." Felicia also expressed the importance of knowledge of the curriculum when working with her new faculty advisor, whom Felicia did not perceive to have an adequate understanding to be helpful to her:

> I don't necessarily know that she knows what next steps I need to take to go on to pursue whatever I want. Um, I don't know, I just feel like she doesn't know necessarily where I need to go after school. I have to figure out what the next step is or figure out the resources that um because she just doesn't seem to know sometimes.

Deb explained that:

> I told her that I was trying to get through this program or get in to the program the fastest I can. I did all of my pre-requisites in two semesters. So I mean they were loaded I had 17 credits but I passed them all with A's and B's. Like she knew how to split it up enough that I wasn't drowning.

Erin reflected on her faculty advisor's knowledge of the rigor of the program when advising her regarding additional extra-curricular activities that Erin was considering adding. "I was thinking about running as a class representative and she is like 'remember how much time is

actually committed to that' and areas that I probably wouldn't even expect." Beth also addressed the importance of her faculty advisor being knowledgeable of the curriculum, to better guide her, noting:

> She would tell me 'oh these are the necessary courses you need to take in order to be in nursing program but if you feel like not taking these courses now you can take them later' so she gives me the room to determine or make a decision on what I want to learn at that particular time and most of the time if I am having any difficulty with the ability or the quality of my understanding of my courses or I am challenged in understanding my lecturers I go to her and ask her for advice and she will be like 'oh do this do this do this' and it has been so helpful.

Cathy expressed:

> I think I was having a really hard time adjusting to the workload and to the paperwork and my first clinical day paperwork was just not to their standards so I wanted to improve um, so I did go to my advisor . . . she went through everything step by step with me and like she just like made me feel better that I could do it and I think that just started me off right, like that made my whole experience so much better so, and I still use her advice.

Having knowledge specific to the individual curricular requirements at each program is something that was deemed important by participants and contributing to the overall knowledge of their faculty advisor. An additional component was not only having this knowledge but being able to apply and individualize it to meet the needs of each individual participant.

Personal Knowledge of Advisee. Participants clearly articulated the importance of individualized faculty advising. One major component of this individualized approach was that

of the advisor taking time to get to know the advisee on a more personal level, beyond that of just being an undergraduate BSN student. Erin noted "She wanted to make a personal relationship because she wants to see me grow, not only as a student but as someone in a certain particular area." Cathy acknowledged the importance of what Erin stated "you can honestly tell if your advisor cares about you or really has that personal relationship with you and for me it is important because that is what is going to make me succeed."

Deb reflected on her advisor's awareness of Deb's difficulty with math. Because of this personal knowledge, Deb stated:

> I had to go to her every semester and I was like so what should I be studying this semester, during the summer, during Christmas break um, that was the most, that was the hardest thing for me, uh math wise, so I would always go to her and be like just give me a little taste of what is next semester going to be like, what should I be learning to convert, what should…stuff like that and it definitely helped me. I felt like she knew me and cared about me.

Amy summarized the importance of a personalized advising approach by noting:

> Someone is willing to help me out if I need the help and I really do have someone next to my side even though she is not physically there or if they are not with me every single day but I can go up to their office and say I need some more help and she is more than willing to help me so. I think that is important to have and I feel good that I have that here.

The majority of all participants in this study expressed the importance of having a personal, yet professional relationship with their advisor. By having the advisor know some

personal information about their advisee, this allowed not only for the advisor to individualize

the progression plan as much as allowed by the prescriptive nature of nursing curriculum, but

also gave the participants a genuine sense of belonging. The personalized nature of participants'

experiences in this research contributed to a perception of inclusion, being recognized, being

comfortable in their environment and being a part of the culture. The ability of faculty advisors

to have a personalized knowledge was an important sub-theme to the overall knowledge of the

faculty advisors.

An additional consideration of personal knowledge of the advisee on the part of the

advisee is establishing goals. These goals are both short and long term and can have personal

and professional components. Participants in this research study were asked specifically what

ways their faculty advisor assisted in establishing and meeting personal and professional goals.

It was clear that participants initially did not consider the importance and motivational capability

of establishing goals as a means of contributing to a successful progression through the

curriculum. Having faculty advisors that were knowledgeable and comfortable in this process

was an enlightening experience for participants. Goals ranged from assistance with exam

preparation, referrals to professional development and counseling services, to preparation and

application for graduate programs. Deb emphatically discussed this with phrases such as "this

one is a big one", "she has been amazing", and "she has helped me in many different ways to

meet goals so that I could come back this semester". Erin's faculty advisor took a different

approach with creating and meeting goals. Erin explained:

> The very first semester she had me do a lot of the sheets about my strengths and
>
> weaknesses and also set goals. We looked at those my second semester and how they
>
> (goals) transitioned and how I could improve on them and it has always kind of gone

each semester that way. She always checks with me at midterm and she is like 'have we

met this, how can we revise it, where can we improve, what needs to be changed in order

for you to gain this goal'? Because if it is not a realistic goal she will tell me and help me

understand that this is what is going on in my life and let me know it's not realistic. She

has helped me out with goals I've kind of set for myself and where I can see myself in the

future and where my goals for the long term. Goals of progressing in school or going

farther. . . It's kind of nice because it has set me up to where I know where I will be at in

the long run.

Felicia's discussion of goals related to her faculty advisor was similarly reflective of the benefit

of goal setting and monitoring. Felicia stated:

 I think that probably I have met a lot of my goals academically, with her assistance. She

has offered great guidance for my minor too what classes I should take and what would

be applicable and these are important to me because otherwise I would just take classes

that I would think are interesting but wouldn't necessarily benefit me the most so that has

been really helpful.

Felicia went on to discuss that she and her faculty advisor "don't really talk about personal

goals." Beth discussed how her faculty advisor helped establish short term goals for success

with her individual course load. Beth was initially unfamiliar with this process, but because of

the assistance from her faculty advisor, she was able to share this technique with peers to help

them be more successful.

Felicia, Erin, Deb, and Cathy all had previous experiences with a non-nursing, non-

faculty advisor of whom spoke. The knowledge and experience of their faculty advisor being a

nurse was significant to not only the level of support noted, but also in the ability to assist these four participants in goal setting. The ability and ease in which their nursing faculty advisor was able to help not only with navigation through their undergraduate progression, encouraged them to consider graduate education. Cathy expressed "she has kind of helped me know that I want to go on in school, I hadn't really considered that before." This sentiment was also shared by Felicia when she talked about post-graduation considerations:

> I am a first-generation college student, so my parents have no idea what steps I need to take. So, just figuring out when do I need to apply to jobs and grad schools and should I work first before I apply to grad school, all of that stuff for nursing is such a broad profession so it is kind of hard to figure out.

Erin pointed out that when discussing her plans beyond obtaining her BSN, also spoke specifically about her faculty advisor when noting:

> Her strongest trait is that she is futuristic. She is always looking ahead. She always has a plan and we always look ahead. I love that. I am a planner too, so I mean it is important to me that she is too.

These descriptions exemplify the importance of a faculty advisor being familiar with the intricacies of nursing curricula. It is important to have this working knowledge, and to have a familiarity and personal yet professional relationship between both parties. This personal knowledge lends itself to realistic goal setting and measurement along with trust and support.

Supportive Behaviors

Students depend on advisors for help, information, and support throughout college (Higgins, 2015). Being comfortable in approaching a faculty advisor is critical for all students.

If a student is not comfortable in approaching their faculty advisor, perceiving behaviors such as

hesitant, rushed, uninterested, or arrogant they will be hesitant or avoid seeking them out for

help, information, and support. Participants were questioned specifically addressing their faculty

advisors strongest traits and abilities. They were also asked to describe what was important to

them in a faculty advisor-advisee relationship. Participants repeatedly identified the importance

of supportive behaviors, which emerged as a theme. Sub-themes that emerged were mentoring,

caring, and confidentiality.

    Mentoring. Students benefit from mentors in their lives. Parents, other family members,

or friends may serve as a mentor in many ways. Parents and family members of first-generation

students cannot provide mentoring specific to expectations, culture, and processes of college due

to their own knowledge deficit specific to the rigor of higher education. Having someone that

understands, is supportive, knowledgeable, and encourages persistence is vital to the success of

first-generation students across the spectrum of higher education. Participants described the

sometimes-parental role that their faculty-advisor had with them. Amy explained this when she

stated:

> After explaining to them (advisor) that I was actually a first-generation student,
>
> everything completely changed because I feel that someone really, genuinely cared about
>
> me and thought that what I was doing was worth it. It may sound that I don't have
>
> support from other people, which I do, especially like my family and my parents but it is
>
> a very different experience that you get. The whole thing being a first -generation student
>
> it is completely different so feeling like I was being understood and like I was actually
>
> impacting with my accomplishments that definitely changed my perspective. I realized

like I am really not alone, even though I may feel like it. I understand that someone is actually there for me.

Beth was also intentional in comparing her faculty advisor to that of a parent:

So, when I see her most of the time I see my mother in her and that has been a strong backbone for me. That even when I am going through some challenges, maybe in my courses I am just like 'oh, I want to give up', when I remember the two of them it gives me the courage to go on.

The importance of having a support person who understands the difficulty of higher education is important. Deb was reflective of this when stating:

And I don't think that I would be in the position I am now as a student . . . I have grown as an individual just by coming out to Nebraska and I feel that she has seen a big part of that. It wasn't like I could say 'mom, this test didn't go well'. She (advisor) understood. My advisor understood more what I was going through than my mother did. She is kind of like a mother figure to me.

Erin became emotional when discussing her role as a first-generation student and the unintentional lack of knowledge possessed by her parents. "They (parents) are both just high school graduates. They didn't really know what was going on with my school." She continued by discussing a difficult personal time, stating "she helped go through it and she really built me up. . . it was hard, but she (advisor) put me back together." Erin finished by saying "it is important (relationship with advisor) because that is what is going to make me succeed. That is what makes me want to push forward and get better grades. Even progressing my career."

Felicia also expressed the importance of first-generation students having a connection with their advisor. She noted that she had a negative experience with an advisor and "my parents had no idea what steps I needed to take" and the feelings of helplessness and loneliness she felt. "That advising put kind of like a bad taste in my mouth for advisors a little bit." She further pointed out that not having family or an advisor to help her was frustrating and almost led her to drop out of school. "My other advisor since, I just appreciate so much because they are giving me good advice." Cathy was also reflective of the importance of having someone who understood what she was experiencing and being able to be supportive and helpful:

> I was having a really hard time adjusting to the workload and my first clinical day paperwork was not up to standard, so I wanted to improve. I went to my advisor because I knew she would help me, calm me down and show me how to get back on track. My parents would tell me 'maybe this isn't for you' or not know what to say. Her advice (faculty advisor) just started me off right. Made my whole experience so much better. I still use her advice.

These comments are demonstrative of the importance of faculty advisors demonstrating supportive behaviors of being a mentor and a guide. With this group of participants, this mentoring was often used synonymously with that of parental role model. With the role of parent being consistently familiar coupled with the lack of familiarity of parents with higher education, these first-generation BSN students compared their faculty advisor in some scenarios with that of a surrogate parent.

Caring. Participant responses revealed that actions and behaviors reflective of caring were influential to participants. Participants stressed the importance of knowing that someone

genuinely cared about them and their success, both academically and personally. Cathy emphatically stated:

> I think the number one thing for me is the advisor is always going to be caring. They should listen, take in what you have to say and then use it to help you improve. My advisor is awesome! She checks up on me. She really cares about me. She listens and always wants to help me improve my school, everything.

Amy agreed with this sentiment. She noted that her faculty advisor's level of caring:

> Has helped me excel as a student and it has helped me with, you know, accomplishments that I have had to this point. Thanks to her for caring, guiding me, answering my questions and understands where I was coming from. It (caring) has definitely impacted with where I am at now. I am a junior and no one here, no one in my family has ever accomplished this and something that is very crucial when it comes to education is feeling that you have the support from someone and feeling like someone is actually cheering you on or willing to be there whenever you need them.

Beth noted a similar, consistent display of caring from her faculty advisor when she was reflecting upon being an English Language Learner (ELL), as well as an international student:

> If I hear some, maybe some vocabulary, you know, in nursing and I just feel like 'oh I think she (faculty advisor) would in the best position to explain better'. I need more enlightenment about this, but I just feel that comfort zone with her. I just meet with her and ask her questions. She helps me, she cares about me.

Beth also reflected on her faculty advisor's level of care and compassion when discussing her acclimation to higher education in the United States. From these frequent interactions, Beth noted "I have learned to be patient one. I have learned from her to respect people no matter what. Who they are or where they are from. I have learned to listen to people." Beth expressed "I want to be like her; care like her".

Feeling respected and cared about is important in any relationship. When asked to reflect on the overall experience with her faculty advisor, Deb was joyful in her reply, smiling and using hand gestures to emphasize her point. Deb reflected "She always asks what is bugging me, what is going on. And we talk about it and she settles my fears, I feel better when I meet her. I feel relaxed because I am so comfortable with her!" Participants were asked to specifically reflect on their first meeting with their faculty advisor. Many discussed how this experience was an introduction to each other and the advising process. Erin, noted that her advisor "went above and beyond. . . I thought that was really kind of special about her in general". She continued by pointing out:

> I really learned from her. Mostly how to time manage and with my relationship with her I have seen that she is always willing to go above what she needs to do in order to see students in general succeed.

Cathy simply stated "I feel like I wouldn't be where I am if it wasn't for her".

Caring was evident throughout this research to be an important and comforting characteristic for these participants. The caring demonstrated by their faculty advisor was influential in relationship building, and in some experiences, a significant factor in the decision to persist rather than abandon their BSN education.

Confidentiality. Educators and administrators must comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g (FERPA). Care providers must comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-191 (HIPAA). Both of these acts are intentional safeguards mandated by the Federal Government to protect student and patient privacy, respectively. One may assume then that confidentiality in both education and health care is an automatic practice. In this research, several of the participants, without direct questioning, remarked on the confidentiality demonstrated by their faculty advisor and the positive impression that this left.

When discussing the influence of her faculty advisor on her overall college experience, Beth addressed the importance of the confidentiality when discussing different situations with her faculty advisor:

> So, it (faculty advising) is really helpful for most, especially international students because it gives me the room to express myself. The way I am feeling about this person, this situation, and if I don't like something I need someone I can voice this out with.

Feeling that she could go to her faculty advisor and talk to her about almost anything was very important to Beth. Especially, as she discussed, being an international student and having no one to use as a sounding board made it more important to ensure she felt connected and again, influenced her desire to persist.

Cathy was also reflective of the importance and positive influence that confidentiality played in her faculty advising experience:

> I can tell her anything and she will take everything into consideration and she will help me through anything, and there are some times when like, I tell her personal things and so

I know that she will never go and tell other people about it or discuss it with anyone else or bring it up and I have full confidence in her.

Deb had a similar example that exemplified the importance of confidentiality that has been a thread throughout her relationship with her faculty advisor. Confidentiality was the key factor that Deb spoke to when discussing the level of confidence that she had in her faculty advisor:

Anything that I have told her, I haven't had another advisor or teacher not use it against me, but if you talk to someone and they go and talk to someone else they can accidentally spill it maybe. And I have had that happen at the previous university I was at, and I didn't appreciate that, but I have never had this happen to me with her. My confidence level with her I have a very high confidence level with her . . . she is very professional. . . I love her.

Confidentiality was not only discussed when reflecting on the level of confidence that participants had in their faculty advisor. Erin addressed confidentiality when reflecting on how her faculty advisor has influenced her:

Letting her know if I am overwhelmed or letting her know if it is something that I normally wouldn't really talk with anyone else like I had come back last semester after I had a baby. It was really hard. I knew I could talk to her about it.

The importance of confidentiality in the relationship with their faculty advisor was an important sub-theme of the overall theme of behaviors that are supportive. Having the comfort of an outlet to disclose information that was important and private in nature was expressed by

participants. This information was personal and academic, but regardless of the origin, was significant enough for participants to feel the need to disclose without fear of exposure.

Overall Rating of Faculty Advising Experience

At the completion of each interview, participants were asked to rate their overall experience with their faculty advisor. Rank options included poor, fair, good, average or excellent. By asking for this rating, the researcher's goal was to obtain a cumulative reflection of the overall perceptions of participants specific to their experience with their faculty advisor. This allowed the researcher to compare the overall rating to the themes identified through the interviews. Five rated their experience as excellent and one participant rated her experience as average. The themes identified within this research, coupled with these overall experience ratings, reflect the importance of a holistic and personal approach by the faculty advisor and in turn, the positive impact that the faculty advising experience had upon participants.

Summary

The findings in Chapter Four display a detailed representation of the data ascertained from six interviews of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students at two Midwestern colleges. Throughout the interviews, participants described their experiences with faculty advising with honesty, excitement, and sincerity.

The identified themes were demonstrated by multiple participants meeting the requirement of data saturation while also adding credibility to the research findings. Significant themes and sub-themes that emerged from this study include:

1. Relational connectedness with faculty advisor

   a. Support

   b. Availability

   c. Trust

2. Overall knowledge of the faculty advisor

   a. Curricular knowledge

   b. Personal knowledge

3. Supportive behaviors exhibited by the faculty advisor that encouraged participant persistence

   a. Mentoring

   b. Caring

   c. Confidentiality

A detailed discussion of the findings and the researcher's recommendations for future research will conclude in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions

of first-generation undergraduate BSN students specific to their experience with faculty advisors

at two Midwestern colleges. Because many first-generation students have limited to no exposure

to higher education processes, both formal and informal, faculty advising is essential for a

smooth and seamless transition from high school to college. Faculty advising will assist the first-

generation students to acclimate to both formal and informal processes that they are unfamiliar

with due to lack of experience. These processes may be as simplistic as where to park on

campus or as complex as how to adequately study. This assistance with the transition into higher

education will potentially promote student retention and persistence through their nursing

program. Having a clear understanding of the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate BSN

student's specific to their interactions with faculty advisors will be helpful to establish, develop

and strengthen faculty advising within BSN programs. The findings from this study are helpful

because of the lack of research specific to first-generation undergraduate BSN students and their

experience with faculty advising. Engle and Tinto (2008) noted the largest gap in baccalaureate

degree attainment was in health fields with only 25% of low-income, first-generation students

completing degrees as compared to 76% of their peers who were not low-income or first-

generation students. This disparity supports the need for intentional faculty advising early in the

educational process, especially for students aspiring for a degree in health fields, such as nursing.

A qualitative design with an interpretive approach was utilized in interviewing six first-

generation undergraduate BSN students. Participants provided thick, rich descriptions of their

experiences with faculty advisors that contributed to a greater understanding of the importance of

faculty advising with first-generation undergraduate BSN students. The data were transcribed,

analyzed, and coded to identify themes. Three major themes, each with subthemes were derived

from the data analysis (Table 2). This chapter includes an analysis of the themes and sub-themes

for each research question and contrasts results with current literature. In addition, comparison

with the theoretical framework, implications and recommendations specific for nursing

education, limitations, and recommendations for future research will be discussed.

Interpretation of Findings

The first section of this chapter is a discussion of the findings related to each of the

established sub-questions.

Research Sub-Question #1. How do first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate

nursing students describe the role of their faculty advisor? Participants were asked to reflect

regarding specific reasons they sought advice from their faculty advisor, an influential and

memorable interaction with their faculty advisor, and how their faculty advisor has assisted in

creating and meeting goals, both personal and academic. Participants identified the theme of

knowledge. Knowledge about the program curriculum, personal knowledge of the advisee, and

how to create an individualized advising plan were identified by many of the participants as

being important.

A sub-theme that emerged that was specific to knowledge was the benefit of having a

faculty advisor that possessed a global understanding of the entire program and curriculum.

Having an advisor who was familiar with the rigor of the program was beneficial in

individualizing progression plans for students. Participants indicated that by having a faculty

advisor with this knowledge and familiarity made them feel less intimidated to ask questions or

seek clarification. This was consistent with a study by Cameron, Roxburgh, Taylor and Lauder

(2011) who found that an advisee's personal experience with an advisor who was also a nurse

had a significant and positive influence on student perseverance. The importance of program

knowledge was addressed by a participant in the current study who felt that her nursing advisor

had a knowledge deficit about curriculum and program progression. This participant felt a

heightened need to be aware of their progression plan due to her perception that her faculty

advisor was unfamiliar with what was necessary for progression through the curriculum and

planning for post-graduation. This finding supports the importance of continued education for

all faculty advisors. All participants in this study shared an ardent desire for a faculty advisor

who was knowledgeable about the nursing program. Nursing faculty must be properly educated

specific to faculty advising (Mooring, 2016). Faculty advisors must approach advising in a

holistic manner, seeing each advisee as unique and multidimensional in their needs.

Administration must support, develop, and encourage professional development and

educational opportunities for all advisors (Swecker, Fifolt, & Searby, 2013). Harrison (2009)

studied nursing faculty perceptions of characteristics and functions of an academic advisor.

Faculty indicated that a lack of knowledge specific to advising detracted from their ability to be

effective in their role as an advisor (Harrison, 2009). This research, along with current literature

supports the premise that faculty advisors are important to student progression and retention and

must have a working knowledge of advising and the program to be effective.

Not only was curricular and program knowledge important to participants but having

personal knowledge about the advisee was equally as important. Multiple participants

commented on the importance of being recognized by their faculty advisor, being called by

name, and having their advisor know something about who they were beyond a nursing student.

Barker and Mamiseishvili (2014) found that students had a strong preference for personalization

of the advising relationship; participants preferred advisors that could recall personal details and

were familiar with their personal goals and academic abilities and demonstrated a genuine

interest in the individual needs and characteristics.

Maintaining personal knowledge allows the faculty advisor to guide and mentor the

advisee in establishing goals. Participants in this study identified goals as being motivating and

encouraging. These goals were short term and long term, and reflective of both personal and

professional intentions. Personal knowledge allowed the faculty advisor to help the advisee

create and meet goals. The short-term goals were an opportunity for the participants to approach

their experience through a scaffolding approach, focusing on one thing at a time, rather than the

entire experience of higher education all at once. By having short term goals, long term goals

were less overwhelming and viewed as more attainable to participants.

The above findings align with Peplau's Interpersonal Relations Model (PIRM) (1969,

1992) and with the evolution of the faculty advisor-advisee relationship during the orientation

phase, which would allow a more natural transition to establishing individualized, advisee

specific goals (Parker & Smith, 2010). O'Banion (1994) promoted a developmental approach to

advising that was composed of a five-tiered sequence that addressed exploration of life goals,

and exploration of vocational goals before even addressing what program or courses were

chosen, or even scheduling classes. By creating goals, students are better able to make informed

decisions specific to their major, courses, and ultimately, long-term career goals (Hutson, 2013).

Most first-generation BSN students in this study knew they wanted to be a nurse but were

unaware of the intensity of the program and the additional stressors that higher education

provided including, being away from home, being in an urban setting, unfamiliarity with

campus/dorm life, and financial stressors. By having an advisor who has some personal insight

into each student, students are better able to negotiate, manage, and ultimately, meet their goals

(Grites, 2013). Participants in this study verbalized that having something to work towards in small increments made the arduous task of completing a degree less intimidating. These goals also encouraged the participants to persist and when meeting goals, the participants had a sense of accomplishment and validation, motivating them to meet their next goal. While participants recognized the importance of goals, they could not have created measurable and realistic goals alone. Because their faculty advisor had a working, personal knowledge of these students, they were better able to help advisees engage in realistic goal development and attainment. Because persistence is an intentional choice an advisee makes, faculty must be creative and use innovative measures to assist in the development of goals that encourage persistence (Mooring, 2016). Advising guides students with skills such as time management and, more importantly, helps them to establish goals for a career roadmap on their path (Williams, 2010). Establishing a relationship between the faculty advisor and the advisee that is sincere and personal, yet professional, allows for advisees to be persistent in their quest to become a Registered Nurse with a BSN degree. This persistence is inspired by short term goals that are the foundation for long term goals including, degree completion and career establishment.

The importance of personal knowledge of the advisee is also supported by the PIRM theoretical framework. In the orientation phase of the model, both parties get to know each other. This is the phase where the advisor uses their assessment skills to better get to know the advisee and their specific needs, both personal and professional (Peplau, 1992; Peterson & Bredow, 2013). Faculty advisors must be knowledgeable of advisee personal and educational needs and then create individualized approaches to address those specific needs.

Research Sub-Question #2. How do first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students describe their relationship with their faculty advisor? Participants were

asked to specifically reflect on their personal advising experiences to richly describe perceptions

of relationship building with their faculty advisor. Participants identified the theme of

relationships. Specific components of the relationship being availability and trust were

described. Each participant specifically addressed the importance of establishing and maintaining

a relationship with their faculty advisor as a part of their overall experience with faculty

advising, regardless of their placement level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior). Having a

strong relationship, as discussed previously, was important to first-generation BSN students in

this study. This was widely supported in the research. Advisors who give personal attention to

students, valued each student's individual needs, and encouraged the student's continuous

improvement were viewed as highly effective (Barbuto et al., 2011). Students want a personal

relationship with advisors and seek more from the advising relationship that simply information

and course selection (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009).

Advisor availability was a crucial factor identified by participants in this research when

queried about their relationship with their faculty advisor. Walker, Zelin, Behrman, and Strnad

(2017) conducted research of 162 students during their freshman year, exploring perceptions of

their advising experience. Their study confirmed the importance of advisor accessibility as a

major theme. Each showed participants appreciating that advisors that were available via a

variety of ways, including, drop-in office visits, scheduled appointments, telephone calls, texting,

email, and social media contacts. Students who were unable to access their advisor, or who had

limitations due to time or other availability considerations placed on them were less satisfied

with not only their faculty advisor, but the academic institution (Walker, Zelin, Behrman, &

Strnad, 2017). Bitz (2010) supported the importance of advisor availability when finding that

freshmen, regardless of enrollment status or demographic characteristics had favorable

perceptions of their relationship with their advisor; specifically mentioning concern shown by the advisor, perceived quality of the relationship, and advisor contact and availability. Smith and Allen (2014) studied specifically the relationship between contact with advisors and student success. Students who were in the group that was advised frequently scored significantly higher overall than those that were advised occasionally. Contacting an advisor and doing so more often was associated with greater self-reported knowledge. The knowledge gained contributes to student success, a more positive attitude toward advising and greater likelihood of reporting a significant and positive relationship with faculty and staff on campus (Smith & Allen, 2014). Student perceptions of the way faculty advisors advise are influenced by experiences with their advisor's interpersonal skills and approach to advising (Walker et. al, 2017). Participants in this study were more influenced by the quality of advising rather than the quantity of advising contacts and appointments. Participants reflected on the ability to drop in and speak with their advisor when necessary and not always have to wait for a scheduled appointment or returned email as important to them.

Trust was another sub-theme that emerged when asking participants about their own role within the advising relationship and what they had learned from their experience with their faculty advisor. The participants placed high value on the importance of a trusting relationship with their faculty advisor, both personally and professionally. Feeling comfortable in seeking out and confiding in their faculty advisor was identified early in each of the interviews when participants were queried on their perceptions of their faculty advisor after their first meeting and how those perceptions may have changed over time. Similar findings were described by Fontaine (2014) when studying retention in an Associate Degree nursing program when she found that establishing and promoting a culture of trust and communication early (during

orientation) was influential in retaining and maintaining satisfaction amongst these students. Jeffreys (2012) emphasized the importance of a trusting relationship between advisees and faculty advisors, pointing out that trust is an essential component for building an open and caring learning environment.

The importance of availability and trust are in alignment with Peplau's Interpersonal Relations Model (PIRM). Peplau's (1992) model emphasized the importance of a partnership as a shared experience between the nurse and patient. This partnership was established through an evolution of six distinct roles of the nurse utilizing specific skills, with the result being personal growth for both parties (Peplau, 1969, 1992). The purpose of the PIRM was to improve the relationship between the nurse and patient (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). By applying the model to the shared experiences between advisors and advisees, the purpose of faculty advising could be described similarly as improving the relationship between the advisee and faculty advisor.

Peplau (1969, 1992) identified four phases of the relationship: orientation phase, identification phase, exploitation phase, and resolution phase (D 'Antonio et al., 2014; George, 1990; Parker & Smith, 2010; Peplau, 1992; Peterson & Bredow, 2013; Tomey & Alligood, 2002). Participants' responses did indirectly address the importance of building relationships through a similar progression over time when asked to specifically reflect on their first and subsequent meetings with their advisor and how that relationship has grown and evolved with subsequent meetings. These phases are not independent of each other, but rather, have characteristics that are intertwined, connecting them to one another, yet also having unique characteristics. Participants and advisors appeared to go through an orientation phase noting that their initial meeting with their advisor was a time of introductions and becoming familiar with what faculty advising was and its benefits and exploring the advisee's goals.

The second phase of the PIRM is the identification phase. During the identification phase, the advisee gains a clearer understanding of what the relationship is and can then better understand what the system as a whole has to offer (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). Participants in this study reflected on the importance of recognizing that their advisor was a consistent presence to help them navigate their entire education experience. Participants who identified themselves as juniors and seniors were reflective of the exploitation and resolution phases within the PIRM. During the exploitation phase, the advisee is able to recognizes the full benefit of the services being offered and is fully engaged in taking advantage of these services (Peterson & Bredow, 2013). During the resolution phase, the relationship begins to terminate as the advisee can identify that prior goals were met and formulates new goals (Parker & Smith, 2010). These participants spoke to preparing for employment and graduate school following their degree completion, being reflective of the progression through the stages of the PIRM. The participants in the final semesters of their undergraduate education reflected on their work preparing for graduation, preceptor experiences, and graduate school. This demonstrated a shift from the relationship with their faculty advisor to their 'next steps' following graduation.

Research Question #3. What are the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students regarding their level of connectedness with their faculty advisor? Relational connectedness with the faculty advisor was expressed consistently and emphatically as one of the most valued attributes of faculty advising. Participants reflected on the importance of establishing and maintaining a supportive connection. The relationship between the faculty advisor and advisee can have a positive influence on a student's overall experience and personal connection to the institution (Higgins, 2015). Hughey (2011) pointed out that advising, whether faculty or strictly academic, is the only activity on many campuses

that allow for students to have an intentional interaction with a consistent representative of the college. That was echoed in this study with participants reflecting on the sense of relief they had knowing that they had their faculty advisor available for support and guidance. Vianden and Barlow (2015) found that students who perceived to have a positive connection with their advisor ranked the quality of their advising significantly higher and overall experience more positive than peers who did not feel a connectedness with their faculty advisor. Drake (2011) emphasized the importance of establishing a positive connection within the dyad when stating "it's about building relationships with our students, locating places where they get disconnected and helping them get reconnected" (p. 8). All six participants in this study gave statements that addressed the importance of their connection with their faculty advisor.

Harrison (2012) developed and piloted a tool that evaluated faculty advising. Results from the 635 participants identified 10 characteristics of an effective advisor, with three of the 10 being support, trust, and availability. Many participants in their study commented on the idea that when entering their BSN program, they 'didn't know what they didn't know', and having the support of their faculty advisor became even more important to them. Having someone to offer clarification, guidance, and knowledge was highly important. Jeffreys (2007) studied retention and success within nursing education, looking specifically at nursing students, pointing out that first semester students often underestimate the rigorous demands of a nursing program and often overestimate their support network, primarily their family. The participants in this study, while pointing out the importance of a strong connection with their faculty advisor, noted that there was not an established and automatic connection with their faculty advisor.

Research Question #4. What experiences with faculty advisors influenced first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students to persist or leave their nursing

program? The theme and sub-themes found to connect to this research question focused on

three supportive behaviors of faculty advisors that contributed to an overall positive experience.

Participants specifically identified mentoring, caring and confidential behaviors as most

important to them. These behaviors were reflective of promoting resiliency and persistence

amongst the participants. As discussed earlier, trust is essential for building an open, caring

relationship. Behaviors specific to caring were listening, providing honest feedback, and being

sincere in their actions. Museus and Ravello (2010) studied advising characteristics specific to

racial and ethnic minority success and their results were consistent with the importance of caring.

Advisors who were perceived to care about and be committed to their students' success directly

influenced those students' desire to persist despite unforeseen obstacles. Without that level of

advisor support, these same students would have likely abandoned their education (Museus &

Ravello, 2010). Knowing that someone is behind you and believes in you was identified

frequently by participants.

   A sub-theme of overall supportive behaviors was that of mentoring. Participants widely

identified that they had support from their families. However, this support was more global and

generalized to a sense of pride that the participants were pursuing higher education. This support

was limited because the parents or familial support systems were unaware of how to specifically

support these individuals. They did not know how to encourage navigation through the

curriculum, and often did not understand the demands that a rigorous program such as nursing

requires. Participants identified this type of support as coming from their faculty advisor. Some

compared their faculty advisor to a parent in some ways. First-generation students often lack the

skills to be successful in higher education because they did not acquire them from their parents

(Soria & Stebleton, 2012). Because of this lack of parental understanding of the culture of

education and how it contributes to personal development, first-generation students are at a disadvantage compared to their non-first-generation peers. Bowden (2008) specifically studied nursing students who had considered leaving their nursing program but decided to stay and what factors influenced their decision to stay. Students identified that if they had relied on the sole support of their family network, they would not have stayed, but because of their faculty advisor providing additional support and guidance, they stayed (Bowden, 2008). First-generation students are at risk for unrealistic expectations and lack of a back-up plan for controlling external, environmental factors (Jeffreys, 2015). Non-first-generation students have support from family members who are aware of the culture of higher education and can offer recommendations based upon personal experience. Students in this study identified that their family-support network wanted to help, but did not know how, often escalating the level of stress on the student. Having a faculty advisor who possessed some parental attributes and could offer support and empathy was comforting and calming to participants. The idea of having a mentor who had already experienced what they were experiencing was inspiring and promoted a sense of persistence and determination.

A final sub-theme identified specific to supportive behaviors exhibited by faculty advisors was that of confidentiality. Participants reflected on their sense of hesitancy to ask questions or seek clarification for fear of appearing ignorant. Furthermore, they often did not know what to ask because they were unfamiliar with the higher education experience as a whole. Having an outlet such as their faculty advisor that they were comfortable in approaching and asking these clarifying questions was important. Some participants discussed extenuating circumstances that significantly impacted their progression but were private in nature and not something that they felt comfortable disclosing. After developing a relationship of trust with their faculty advisor,

they felt relieved to be able to share these things and know that they had someone who could be a source of support. This same sense of relief was felt when faculty advisors made referrals to offer additional information and support while maintaining a sense of confidentiality. While confidentiality itself was not mentioned widely in the literature, behaviors that were reflective of confidentiality were more common. Harrison (2009) discussed specific features of an effective advisor, and maintaining confidentiality was one of the most important characteristics identified. The demand for confidentiality in higher education and health care is apparent. It is important to note that in this research, participants felt it to be important enough to frequently reflect on and reiterate its importance.

Central Question. What are the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing in two Midwestern undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs specific to their experience with faculty advising? First-generation students enter higher education with many questions and often, little confidence in their ability be successful. First-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students are unfamiliar with the established culture of what obtaining a BSN degree requires. These same students are disadvantaged from a perspective of who and where to go to for assistance. Without intentional intervention from faculty advisors, these students may lose their motivation and confidence in their abilities, causing them to abandon their education. Having a faculty advisor provides them with someone who emulates the characteristics of what a professional nurse was, described by these students to be important and reassuring. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students regarding their experience with faculty advisors. This relationship was not instantaneous, but rather evolved over an extended time. The participants stated that the advisor and advisee relationship

progressed to a level of comfort, confidence, and trust over time. The importance of relational

connectedness was imperative to the advisees' perseverance and progression. The results of this

study emphasized the importance of the development of strong interpersonal relationships, which

is consistent with the phases outlined in Peplau's Interpersonal Relations Model. Participants

noted the importance of their connection with their faculty advisor being a positive and central

component to their overall college experience. Successful advising could not have taken place

without an established relationship and connectedness between the faculty advisor and advisee.

Having a consistent source of support, knowledge, and encouragement was welcome, reassuring,

and promoted a sense of positivity for the participants. The researcher found that the faculty

advisor-advisee relationship is of utmost importance to the advisee. Growth and progression of

the relationship was influenced by faculty advisor behaviors such as knowledge, caring, trust,

support, availability, and confidentiality.

Implications and Recommendations

This study showed first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students reported

that their experience with faculty advising was important to them. Participants identified key

factors about the effectiveness of their interactions with faculty advisors that have implications

for preparing advisors. All participants reflected on the importance of this experience and the

influence that the relationship had on their overall college experience. Cathy summarized this

best when she stated:

> When I came here it really just hit me hard. I am like 'nursing school is no joke like it's
>
> going to be difficult' and like I said before, she has made a positive impact in how I do
>
> things within the program, how I have improved in the program. She has made it a good

experience and I feel like I am learning a lot. I don't know, I feel like I wouldn't be

where I am if it wasn't for her.

When noting the impact the faculty advisor had on the participants, it is important to address the need for qualified faculty advisors. Faculty advisors that have received education will further enhance the experience of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students. For faculty advising to be most effective, faculty advisor professional development and education must be addressed, along with a process for evaluating faculty advisors and faculty advising programs.

Faculty Advisor Development and Continuing Education

Recruitment and retention of undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students is a priority of many health care education programs. Competition between programs requires colleges and universities to seek out opportunities to recruit and retain qualified candidates. These candidates come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences with each having unique and individualized needs. It is not acceptable to ask these students to rely solely on their own personal or family experiences to navigate their chosen program. It is also unrealistic for faculty advisors to be asked to provide a holistic advising experience with no formal education or continuing education opportunities.

Advising extends far beyond class selection and declaration of designated major and minors. Institutions should encourage and provide ongoing professional development for faculty advisors specific to the needs of students served (Swecker, Fifolt, & Searby, 2013). Faculty advising programs should be developed with an established mission statement, philosophy, and objectives that are in alignment with facility and program mission statements as the core of the

program (Harrison, 2009). Consideration should be given to workload calculations that includes faculty advising in addition to academic requirements (Cameron, Roxburgh, Taylor, & Lauder, 2011). Administrators must support the development of quality academic advising programs on their campus and place a strong emphasis on the importance of connecting advising to the teaching and learning missions of their institution (Drake, 2011).

Approaching advisor education from the perspective of teaching and learning promotes new knowledge in a manner that is already familiar to faculty advisors. Advisor professional development programs should be progressive, much like the scaffolding of curricular requirements. Basic information that gradually evolves into more complex information specific to institutional knowledge and relational components allows faculty advisors to develop from a novice to an expert faculty advisor with leveled education. Leveling the education allows for retention and application of knowledge.

Effective advising preparation programs must include information specific to institutional knowledge including policies and procedures, curriculum plan, minors, graduate programs, and referral sources. Current evidence-based practices related to advising must be routinely shared with faculty advisors. Education programs should address how and where to find academic information and how to identify the administrative chain of command to be followed when functioning in the role of faculty advisor. This recommendation would be consistent with the finding from this study that participants recognized and valued faculty advisors who were knowledgeable of the college and curriculum. Being proactive in educating faculty advisors of this information strengthens their knowledge and confidence in sharing this information. Providing resources for faculty advisors to utilize in a proactive versus reactive manner leads to faculty advisors who are confident in their ability to guide students.

Relational connectedness with the faculty advisor and supportive behaviors exhibited by the faculty advisor were also themes identified within this study. Faculty advisors would benefit from education and ongoing professional development that addressed behavioral expectations of all parties within the advisor-advisee dyad. Education that specifically addresses how faculty advisors can effectively conference with advisees, demonstrating how to prioritize and triage questions and concerns that the advisee may have are important for faculty advisors. Guidance on identifying student expectations for faculty advising is important for advisors to have in order to be consistent and prepared for the diversity of student needs. Incorporating simulation, role play, case studies, and mentoring of experienced advisors are all activities that could be used to enhance education and promote establishing concrete expectations that have a positive impact on faculty advising (Folsom, Joslin, & Yoder, 2005). By incorporating information utilizing strategies that are familiar, faculty advisors will more readily retain and apply knowledge. Providing novice faculty advisors with a mentor who is an experienced faculty advisor would provide additional support and guidance.

As faculty advisors incorporate short and long term goal setting with advisees, advisor development should also include developing and incorporating short and long term goals specific to faculty advising. Comprehensive education, along with specific expectations for faculty advising, and providing clear guidelines for evaluation of advising programs and faculty advisors will strengthen faculty advisor knowledge and overall confidence in their ability to provide the highest quality faculty advising. Figure 2 represents the plan for orientation and professional development for faculty advisors.
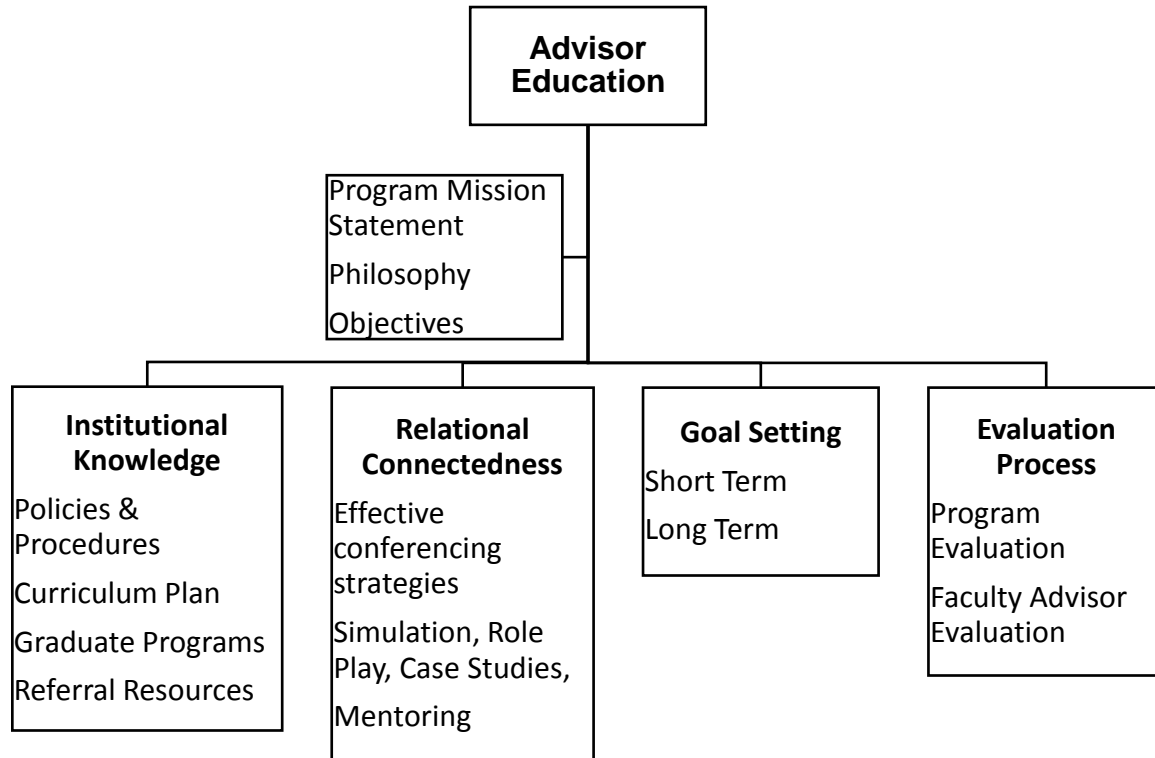
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                           ┌──────────────────┐
                           │     Advisor      │
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                    │ Program Mission        │
                    │ Statement              │
                    │                        │
                    │ Philosophy             │
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                    │ Objectives             │
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Institutional Knowledge	Relational Connectedness	Goal Setting	Evaluation Process
Policies & Procedures	Effective conferencing strategies	Short Term	Program Evaluation
Curriculum Plan		Long Term	Faculty Advisor Evaluation
Graduate Programs	Simulation, Role Play, Case Studies,		
Referral Resources	Mentoring		

Figure 2. *Orientation and Professional Development Plan for Faculty Advisors*

Evaluation Process for Faculty Advising Programs

Processes that persist without assessment and evaluation become stagnant and

ineffective. Administrators and leaders within higher education programs need to create and

support strategies that evaluate the desired outcomes of faculty advising. The evaluation data

can then be used to revise and improve the processes. Evaluation should address faculty advisor

development and education, faculty advisor performance, and the impact that faculty advising

has on the institution in relationship to retention, attrition, and student success. Evaluation

processes should include faculty advisor perceptions and suggestions for program improvements

based upon experience. Receiving feedback for performance is essential for assessment

(Kennemer & Hurt, 2013). Without feedback, faculty advisors are unaware of opportunities for

growth and unlikely to change their advising approach and strategies for improvement (Kennemer & Hurt, 2013). Assessment data collected via evaluation of advisors allows for identification and implementation of professional development opportunities to enhance faculty advisors' knowledge specific to advising and enhance their overall advising practice. Faculty advisors can additionally reflect on evaluation data to replicate strategies that are identified as being effective and modify strategies that may be perceived to be less useful. Routine evaluation of advising programs and faculty advisors as individuals is important to ensure that faculty advisors possess adequate knowledge of the process and that the advising program is functioning as designed. Such evaluation tools have been tested in the literature and could be used as a template for individualized program needs (Harrison, 2012; Hutson, 2013).

Limitations of the Study

The small sample size of the study may be perceived to be a limitation and the results may not be generalizable to the perceptions of all first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students. Another limitation is that the study was limited to two small Midwestern Colleges, which also limits generalizability of the results to other colleges and universities outside of the Midwest and in areas with different populations. While saturation of data was achieved, it was sometimes challenging to recruit participants. It is important to note that there were three additional prospective participants who had inquired about participating but did not finalize arrangements to meet. The researcher questioned if this was due to a lack of familiarity from being a first-generation student and not being familiar with research studies. This lack of familiarity could then translate to a lack of trust with the researcher and research process. The researcher perceived that saturation of data was reached following the fifth participant and the sixth participant did not provide substantial information that affected identified themes.

Interestingly, with the significant percentage (66%) of minority participants, there could be a possibility that minority students who are also first-generation were more willing to participate in studies such as the current study. It will be important to examine attributes beyond their first-generation status, such as race and ethnicity that may also be influencing their progression through their post-secondary education. Museus and Ravello (2010) studied the influence that advisors played in generating racial and ethnic minority student success. The advisors in this study ensured that racial and ethnic minority students accessed the support they needed regardless of the nature of their problems. It is important to note that some faculty advisors may not be aware of a student's first-generation status, or perhaps have a knowledge deficit that first-generation is indeed a risk factor for student attrition.

A final limitation to consider is that there was only one interview completed with each participant. By completing only one interview with each participant, the possibility that participants may have had difficulty recalling specific information on the day that the interview took place. By having only one chance to reflect and share their experiences, some of the information gathered could be limited. This limitation may have been mediated as participants were sent identified themes and asked to review them for accuracy and clarity. Participants were encouraged to contact the researcher with any additional information they may have thought to be pertinent to the research after the initial interview, and none of the participants offered clarifications or added information.

Future Research

There are many opportunities for future research specific to perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students and their experience with faculty

advising. This study identified the importance of faculty advising through interviews with six

first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students. Perceptions identified in this

study included the importance of establishing a relationship that was made up of trust, support,

availability, knowledge, and supportive behaviors.

This study could be replicated at community, additional private colleges, state

universities, and for-profit institutions to further add to the literature. Additionally, while the

focus of this study was with baccalaureate nursing students, future research could include

associate degree seeking first-generation students, as well as diploma and graduate level nursing

students. Increasing diversity of programs and students would expand the generalizability of the

results. By studying different levels of students, further consideration could be made regarding

the role that program duration contributes, as well as the impact of undergraduate education upon

first-generation graduate level nursing students and their experiences with faculty advising.

Future qualitative research could focus on faculty advisors' perceptions of advising first –

generation students. Examining the perceptions of faculty advisors could offer a depth of

additional information about advisor-advisee relationships that could provide additional insights

and further strengthen student experiences, and the program overall.

Research that would be inclusive of both the advisor and advisee jointly would be

beneficial to further understand the phenomena from shared perspectives of both faculty advisor

and advisees. This research including both faculty advisors and advisees could address the

overall faculty advising experience within specific dyads.

Future research may address the benefits of faculty advising with first-generation

undergraduate nursing students from a quantitative perspective, identifying relationships that

could exist between faculty advising and specific criteria that influence retention such as grade

point average (GPA), and motivation. Kot (2014) studied the impact of a centralized advising

approach with first-year students. Results reflected that students who utilized academic advising

had a significant increase in GPA, as well as a decreased first-year attrition compared to peers

who did not utilize advising. Vander Schee (2007) examined the effectiveness of intrusive

advising strategies with students who were on academic probation. Results of that study

demonstrated a statistical significant difference in GPA increase with participants who had three-

eight meetings with their advisor. While neither of these studies were specific to first-generation

students, the results reflect the positive impact that advising had on two other populations

considered to be at an increased risk for attrition. Both Kot (2014) and Vander Schee (2007)

utilized advising models that did not include faculty advisors. By comparing faculty advisors to

strictly academic advisors, future research could support the findings of this research that

demonstrated the importance of having an advisor who was knowledgeable of the program

curriculum.

There is limited research that specifically addresses first-generation undergraduate

baccalaureate nursing students and faculty advising. There is abundant research specific to the

needs of first-generation students and advising as a process in general (Barbuto et al, 2011;

Jeffreys, 2012; Stebleton, Soria, & Huesman, 2014). Continued research that is specific to

faculty advising and first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students will be

helpful in recruitment and retention of these students by addressing specific advising behaviors

and practices that are significant to these students. Future research could extend to include other

diverse characteristics such as race, ethnicity, and gender. Research inclusive of these specific

diverse characteristics could identify strategies that had a positive influence on retention of these

students. These strategies could then be implemented by programs to establish and strengthen faculty advising and to increase positive impact with diverse student populations.

Conclusion

The findings in this study demonstrate the positive influence that faculty advising has on the success for first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students. Faculty advisors possessed knowledge and experience specific to their advisees' area of study. The participants' thick, rich descriptions of their experience generated a better understanding of the importance of faculty advising and its influence on persistence. This research was focused specifically on advisee interactions with faculty advisors and may serve as a catalyst for continued research specific to the perceptions for first-generation students regarding the role of their faculty advisor.

Nursing programs continue to be challenged by high attrition rates (Harris, Rosenberg, & O'Rourke, 2013). First-generation students are proven to be an at-risk population in terms of attrition. The importance of advising has been shown to be influential in retention of students. However, despite the challenge of increasing attrition, first-generation student risk factors, and the importance of advising, and its impact on retention, very little research exists that specifically addresses all three components together.

It is important for institutions of higher education to approach advising from a global perspective, beyond merely the academic component of course scheduling alone. Recommendations to enhance the experience of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students with faculty advising included: establishment of faculty advisor professional development and educational programs and development of a process for evaluation of faculty advising programs. Establishing ongoing professional development programs for faculty

advisors requires administrator support for the value of faculty advising. Strong faculty advisors,

as evidenced in this research, build relational connectedness between advisees and faculty

advisors, convey knowledge specific to the program, address personal needs of advisees and

engage in supportive behaviors that encourage student persistence in program completion.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Email to Deans and Program Directors

INSERT DATE

IRB # CSM

Dear Program Deans and Directors,

I am a nurse educator currently in the Doctor of Education program at the College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Nebraska. I am reaching out to you requesting your assistance in obtaining participants for my research study entitled *The Impact of Faculty Advising on First-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing Students*. The purpose of this phenomenological, qualitative study is to explore the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students regarding the role of BSN faculty advisors.

The intention is to identify strategies that are relevant and useful in enhancing retention and overall satisfaction of all students, but especially those perceived to be at risk for attrition. In this study, those at-risk students will be first-generation students.

Participants in this study will be comprised of undergraduate baccalaureate nursing who self-identify as first-generation. First-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students are students whose parents or guardians have no personal college experience. Participants will not be restricted in terms of academic year, but must be current undergraduate BSN students. Participants in this study will need to be at least 19 years of age to take part in the study. It will also be necessary for participants to have had at least one semester of faculty advising, in order for an in-depth reflection of their individual experience of the phenomena being studied.

I am interested in recruiting first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students from your respective colleges. I would like to interview six to 15 students. Programs and participants involved in the research inquiry will be given complete anonymity.

Please confirm your acceptance or denial of institutional participation via email to rkappler40@csm.edu. If in agreement to participate, I will provide you with the Institutional Review Board approval documentation from the College of Saint Mary, and I will also seek Institutional Review Board approval from all participating institutions.

If you have additional questions or are seeking further clarification, please contact me via phone at 402-481-8840 or 402-432-3597. I am working under the direction of my advisor, Dr. Melanie Felton. You may also contact Dr. Felton at 402-399-2625 or at mfelton@csm.edu.

Sincerely,

Robin R. Kappler, Ed. D (c), RN
Primary Investigator
Rkappler40@csm.edu
(W) 402-481-8840
(C) 402-432-3597

Appendix B: Recruitment Email Directions to Deans and Program Directors

From: Robin Kappler
Sent: Wednesday, May 10, 2017 3:34 PM
To: Robin Kappler <Robin.Kappler@bryanhealth.org>
Subject: research participant study

Dear Deans and Program Directors,

Thank you for permission to solicit participants for my doctoral research from the undergraduate nursing populations at your respective facilities. Please disseminate the attached Recruitment Invitation Letter to prospective participants, undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students, in a manner that you feel best reaches this group. As a reminder, students will have to have had at least one semester with a faculty advisor in order to participate, should that influence how you forward this request.

I appreciate your assistance with this process. If I can be of any assistance, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Robin R. Kappler, Ed. D (c), RN
Primary Investigator
Rkappler40@csm.edu
(W) 402-481-8840
(C) 402-432-3597

Appendix C: Recruitment Invitation Email for Participants

INSERT DATE

IRB # CSM

Dear Nursing Student,

I am a nurse educator currently in the Doctor of Education program at the College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Nebraska. I am reaching out to ask you to consider participating in my research study. I am studying the impact of faculty advising on first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students.

In order to qualify to participate in this study, you must be a first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing student. First-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students, for this study, are defined as "students whose parents or guardians have no personal college experience". You must be at least 19 years of age and have completed at least one semester in which you met with your faculty advisor.

Should you decide to participate, I would like to conduct one 45-60-minute interview about your experience with faculty advising. The interview will be scheduled at a location and time of your convenience. At that time, you will be asked to complete an informed consent and a short written demographic survey, prior to the interview.

After interview transcripts have been analyzed, you will be contacted through email and will be asked to spend about 20-30 minutes reviewing the themes that have been identified. This study will not cost you in any way other than your time.

Participation in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw for any reason at any time. Participation and records of participation will be confidential. To ensure that data collected cannot be linked back to participants or academic institutions, data will be kept in a secure, locked location. In addition, names and/or identifiable information will not be included in the study findings. The results of this study may be published in scientific research journals or presented at professional conferences. However, your name and identity will not be revealed and your record will remain anonymous.

If you are interested in participating in this important research, please contact me at rkappler40@csm.edu. This research is part of my dissertation. I am working under the direction of my advisor, Dr. Melanie K. Felton. If you have questions regarding the study or your eligibility, you may contact me at 402-432-3597 or at rkappler40@csm.edu. You may also contact Dr. Felton at 402-399-2625 or at mfelton@csm.edu. Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Robin R. Kappler, Ed. D (c), RN
Primary Investigator
Rkappler40@csm.edu
(W) 402-481-8840
(C) 402-432-3597

Appendix D: Participant Demographic Survey

Thank you for participating in this study. Prior to beginning the interview, I would like you to complete the demographic information identified below. Please select the choice which best describes you. This survey will take approximately one to two minutes to complete.

My current age is:

- o   18-24
- o   25-35
- o   36-44
- o   45-55
- o   56 and over

I describe my gender identify as:

- o   Male
- o   Female
- o   Transgender
- o   I do not identify as male, female, or transgender

I would describe my ethnicity as:

- o   African-American
- o   American Indian or Alaskan Native
- o   Asian or Pacific Islander
- o   Caucasian/White
- o   Hispanic
- o   Other

My current grade level is:

- o   Freshman
- o   Sophomore
- o   Junior
- o   Senior

Appendix E: Rights of Participation

THE RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS*

AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT AT COLLEGE OF SAINT MARY

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT:

1. TO BE TOLD EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE RESEARCH BEFORE YOU ARE ASKED TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO TAKE PART IN THE RESEARCH STUDY. The research will be explained to you in a way that assures you understand enough to decide whether or not to take part.

2. TO FREELY DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO TAKE PART IN THE RESEARCH.

3. TO DECIDE NOT TO BE IN THE RESEARCH, OR TO STOP PARTICIPATING IN THE RESEARCH AT ANY TIME. This will not affect your relationship with the investigator or College of Saint Mary.

4. TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH AT ANY TIME. The investigator will answer your questions honestly and completely.

5. TO KNOW THAT YOUR SAFETY AND WELFARE WILL ALWAYS COME FIRST. The investigator will display the highest possible degree of skill and care throughout this research. Any risks or discomforts will be minimized as much as possible.

6. TO PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY. The investigator will treat information about you carefully and will respect your privacy.

7. TO KEEP ALL THE LEGAL RIGHTS THAT YOU HAVE NOW. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by taking part in this research study.

8. TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT AT ALL TIMES.

THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSURING THAT YOUR RIGHTS AND WELFARE ARE PROTECTED. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS, CONTACT THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD CHAIR AT (402) 399-2400. *ADAPTED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER, IRB WITH PERMISSION.

Appendix F: Informed Consent

ADULT CONSENT FORM

IRB#:   **Approval Date:**   **Expiration Date:**

Title of this Research Study:

The Impact of Faculty Advising on First-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing Students.

Invitation:

You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you have any questions, please ask.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students in a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program and it is understood that you have had at least one semester of faculty advising.

What is the reason for doing this research study?

The purpose of this phenomenological, qualitative study is to explore the perceptions of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing regarding their experience with BSN faculty advisors. The hope is to identify strategies that are relevant and useful in enhancing retention and overall satisfaction of all students, but especially those perceived to be at risk for attrition. In this study, those students will be undergraduate first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing.

Participant Initials _____

ADULT Consent Form - PAGE TWO

What will be done during this research study?

- The interview will be conducted face-to-face in a quiet location free from distractions and at a time mutually agreed upon by the participant and researcher.

- The researcher will ask the participant for consent to participate in the study. A signed copy of the Adult Consent Form will be given to the participant prior to initiating the interview.

- Prior to the start of the interview, the researcher will review with the participant the Adult Consent Form and the Rights of Research Participants.

- The participant will complete a short one to two-minute written demographic survey prior to starting the interview.

- The interview will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes and will be audio-taped for later transcription.

- At the conclusion of the study, the researcher will email the transcribed interview themes to the participant. Participants will be asked to review these themes for accuracy and clarity. This process will take an additional 20-30 minutes of time.

What are the possible risks of being in this research study?

There are no known risks to you from being in this research.

What are the possible benefits to you?

You are not expected to get any direct benefit from being in this research study.

What are the possible benefits to other people?

Participants' perceptions have the potential to provide insight into the needs of first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students specific to faculty advising.

What are the alternatives to being in this research study?

Instead of being in this research study you can choose not to participate.

What will being in this research study cost you?

There is no cost to you to be in this research study.   **Participant Initials _____**

ADULT Consent Form - PAGE THREE

Will you be paid for being in this research study?

You will not be paid or compensated for being in this research study.

What should you do if you have a concern during this research study?

Your well-being is the major concern of the researcher for this study. If you have a concern as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact one of the people listed at the end of this consent form.

How will information about you be protected?

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. The only persons who will have access to your research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other person or agency required by law. Information will be reported as an aggregate and participants will not be identified. The information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

What are your rights as a research participant?

You have rights as a research participant. These rights have been explained in this consent form and in *The Rights of Research Participants* that you have been given. If you have any questions concerning your rights, talk to the investigator or call the Institutional Review Board (IRB), telephone (402)-399-2400.

What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study ("withdraw") at any time before, during, or after the research begins. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator, your institution or with the College of Saint Mary. You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled. If the research team gets any new information during this research study that may affect whether you would want to continue being in the study, you will be informed promptly.

Participant Initials _____

Documentation of informed consent.

You are freely deciding whether to be in this research study. Signing this form means that (1) you have read and understood this consent form, (2) you have had the consent form explained to you, (3) you have had your questions answered and (4) you have decided to be in the research study.

If you have any questions during the study, you should talk to one of the investigators listed below. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are 19 years of age or older and agree with the above, please sign below.

Signature of Participant: Date: Time:

My signature certifies that all the elements of informed consent described on this consent form have been explained fully to the participant. In my judgment, the participant possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research and is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent to participate.

Signature of Investigator: Date: Time:

Authorized Study Personnel

Principal Investigator: Robin R. Kappler, Ed. D(c)   Phone: (402) 432-3597

Secondary Investigator: Melanie K. Felton, Ph.D.   Phone: (402) 399-2625

Appendix G: Interview Tool

Time of Interview:

Date:

Interviewee Number:

Definition of First-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing Student: For this
qualitative study, first-generation undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students are
students whose parents or guardians have no personal college experience.

1. Think about a meeting with your faculty advisor that was especially memorable. Why
   was that particular meeting memorable to you?

2. What things are important to you in a faculty advisor-advisee relationship?

3. Reflect to your first meeting with your faculty advisor. What were your impressions?

   How have those impressions changed?

4. Describe specific things that you seek advice from your faculty advisor about?

5. Describe your comfort level when you approach your faculty advisor. How do you feel

   when you meet for an appointment?

6. Explain the level of confidence that you have in your faculty advisor.

7. In what ways has your faculty advisor helped you in setting and meeting your goals, both

   personally and academically?

8. What have you learned from your experience with your faculty advisor? How has this

   relationship influenced you?

9. What are your faculty advisors' strongest traits and abilities? How are these important to

   you?

10. Describe your role within the advising relationship. How has the relationship grown or

    changed over time?

11. What, if anything, would you change about your advising experience?

12. How has your faculty advisor impacted your overall college experience to this point?

13. Is there anything else you feel is important to share about your advising experience?

14. Please indicate your overall satisfaction with your faculty advisor:

    a. **1**-Very Dissatisfied **2**-Dissatisfied **3**-Neutral **4**-Satisfied **5**-Very Satisfied

Additional Interviewer Notes:

From *The Influence of Faculty Advisor-Advisee Relational Fit on the College Academic Advising Experience: A Collective Case Study* (Doctoral Dissertation) by E.M. Higgins (2015). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3703544). Adapted with permission.

Appendix H: Permission to Use Interview Questions

From: Elizabeth Higgins [mailto:bhiggins@maine.edu]
Sent: Friday, December 16, 2016 11:57 AM
To: Robin Kappler <Robin.Kappler@bryanhealth.org>
Subject: EXTERNAL SENDER: Re: dissertation

Hello Soon to Be Dr. Robin Kappler!

My apologies for the delay Robin. Yes, please feel free to utilize the questions and information that would be helpful to you. I would appreciate knowing when your dissertation is complete in order for me to learn from you and your findings. Would you please let me know once I can access it or send me an electronic copy?

Good luck with your final stage in your doctoral student career.

Sincerely-

Beth