



Effectiveness of a Peer Mentoring Program with First-Year Undergraduate Nursing Students Enrolled at Three Satellite Sites: A Mixed Methods Study

Kathleen Stevens RN PhD, Dr. Abubaker Hamed RN PhD, Joanne Smith-Young RN PhD, Janine Byrne RN MN, and Kathy Gillett RN MN



1 Introduction, Purpose, and Research Questions

- Peer mentoring in nursing education is defined as “a formal partnership between two individuals (mentor and mentee) with differing levels of nursing school experience” (Varbrough & Phillips, 2022, p. 1545).
- A student-led peer mentoring program (PMP) offers opportunities for personal and professional growth, shared learning, confidence-building, valuing creativity, navigating power relations and unfamiliar process by offering tips and tricks, offering acceptance, and moderating stress (Lim et al., 2022; Harrison et al., 2022).
- Students enrolled in a blended-learning program (i.e., online and in-person learning) report a lack of confidence with the learning approach and a sense of isolation with learning support (Jowsey et al., 2020).
- Support and peer communication have been identified as essential for student success with blended-learning (Jowsey et al., 2020).
- However, it remains unclear the benefits of a PMP for students at satellite sites where a blended learning approach is used.

Purpose:

- To further develop and evaluate a PMP for Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) first-year students enrolled at the three Memorial University Faculty of Nursing (MUNFON) satellite sites (Happy Valley-Goose-Bay, Gander, and Grand Falls-Windsor).
- These students experience a blended-learning approach with online and in-person components to their courses, separate from the main campus in St. John's.

Research Questions:

- In a BScN program, what are the perceptions of first-year students (mentees) enrolled at the satellite sites of a PMP?
- What is the impact of the PMP on stress, self-efficacy, loneliness, and a sense of belonging for students enrolled in a PMP?



Description of the Peer Mentoring Program

- The student led Nursing Society coordinated the program.
- Satellite-site students (i.e., mentees) who requested to join the PMP were assigned to a mentor. The goal was to assign a mentor to a student who was at the mentee's site.
- Mentors were required to complete an online peer mentoring program approved by the Nursing Society: "Introduction to the Theory of Mentoring".
- The Nursing society connected the mentor and mentee. Once the mentee and mentor were connected, the dyad established how they would communicate.

2 Methodology

- Design:** Exploratory sequential mixed-methods research project with two phases (See figure 1).
- Phase 1:** Conducted in August and September 2023. The goal of this qualitative phase was to explore mentors' and mentees' perceptions of the PMP that was implemented in Fall 2022 (e.g., what worked well, what areas need to be improved) and examine the needs of students, considering the local context.
- Phase 2:** Uncontrolled-before-and-after study conducted from September 2023 to April 2024. Mentees' perceptions of the PMP effectiveness was evaluated in relation to:
 - stress, sense of belonging, loneliness, and self-efficacy
 - student satisfaction and perceived benefits
- Integration:** Two points of integration. (1) Phase 1 informed the next offering of the PMP, (2) Interpretation phase. Each data set was analyzed separately then the "Fit of the Data Integration" was assessed.
- Measurement:**

Baseline	Baseline, Three months, and Six months	Six Months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Expectations Demographic Questionnaire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) Sense of Belonging Instrument (SOBI) Likert scale College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI) – Revised Student Satisfaction Scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student's Perceptions of a Peer Mentoring Program

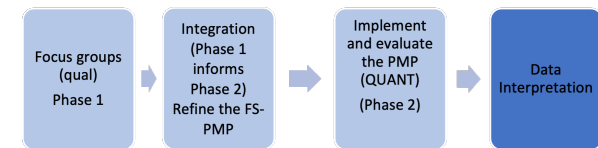


Figure 1

3 Results

Phase 1: (N= 7) Two focus groups were conducted, one with mentees and one with mentors who participated in the 2022 offering. The transcripts were analyzed to determine how the program could be improved. The following changes were implemented into the 2023 offering of the PMP based Phase 1:

- Mentor and mentee were from the same site (except for one mentor and mentee)
- The Nursing Society site representative helped facilitate the program.
- At the initial meeting, the mentor and mentee established how they would communicate.
- Contact was encouraged for the Fall 2023 and Winter 2024 semesters.
- Another structured session was held at the beginning of the Winter semester.

Phase 2:

Demographics: (N=10); 8 female; 2 male; aged 18 - 20 years (n=9), 21-29 years (n=1).
 Satellite Sites : Grand-Falls Windsor (n=8); Labrador (n=1); Gander (n=1)
 Highest level of education completed: high school (n=10)

Loneliness, Stress, Sense of Belonging, Stress and Self-efficacy:
 stable across Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3

Mentee's perceptions (Time 3)

Communication

Method	Frequency	Quantity	Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Texting: 50% Email: 40% In-person: 20% Facebook messenger: 10% Snapchat: 10% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once a week: 20% Once a month: 20% Once every two months: 20% Never communicated: 20% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> < 30 minutes: 40% 30-60 minutes: 20% 60-120 minutes: 20% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged: 60% Sometimes engaged: 20% Not engaged: 20% Friendly: 80% Helpful: 50% Responsive: 60% Not helpful: 20% Unresponsive: 10%

Mentor Engagement:

- Mentors were engaged: 60%
- Mentors were sometimes engaged: 20%
- Mentors were not engaged: 20%

Satisfaction of Mentee	Not satisfied % (n)	Slightly Satisfied % (n)	Neutral % (n)	Satisfied % (n)
PMP	0	10% (1)	30% (3)	60% (6)
Attitude of mentor	10% (1)	10% (1)	10% (1)	70% (7)
Frequency of communication	20% (2)	10% (1)	10% (1)	60% (7)

Mentees' Perceived Benefits of PMP	Agree/Strongly Agree
Support	70% (7)
Friendship	50% (5)
Information about assignments and exams	60% (6)
Information about psychomotor skills testing	30% (3)
Tips for studying	40% (4)
Tips for how to balance school and personal life	30% (3)
Information about nursing in general	60% (6)
Decreased my anxiety.	50% (5)
Encouragement	60% (6)
Improved communication skills.	30% (3)
Improved collaboration skills.	40% (4)
Improved critical thinking skills.	50% (5)
Gained understanding of the importance of mentoring to nursing.	50% (5)
Improved academically	30% (3)

4 Discussion and Conclusion

- The results did not show a change in loneliness, stress, sense of belonging, stress, or self-efficacy; however, mentees perceived benefits of having a mentor, with 70% reporting they received support and 50% reporting decreased stress. These perceived benefits align with the research literature (Lim et al., 2022; Harrison et al., 2022).
- Mentees who indicated satisfaction with the PMP reported that mentors were engaged, friendly, helpful, and responsive. These mentees had contact with mentors ranging from < 30 up to 120 minutes. This is in keeping with other research which states that availability and attitudes of mentors were vital factors that influenced rapport with mentees, with the quality of contact seeming more critical than duration of contact (Lim et al., 2022).
- Notably, mentees indicated that there were benefits related to key nursing competencies (e.g., critical thinking, communication, and collaboration). More research is needed to explore the benefits of PMPs for developing these competencies.
- Although mentees and mentors had varied communication and engagement levels, 90% of mentees had a strong interest in becoming mentors. More site-specific mentors and improved structure are needed. Addressing these areas could enhance the mentoring experience and support student development.