Investigating Aromatherapy as a Test Anxiety Intervention for Undergraduate Nursing Students

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Presentation Outline

- Background & Purpose
- Scope & Approach
- Work Plan
- Risks/Constraints
- Quality Assurance Plan
- Results/Benefits
- Reflection
- Areas for Future Study
- References
- Q&A Session
Background & Purpose

• “Imagine the following scenario. You are taking a test, but you know that you cannot make any mistakes. If you fail the test, you will have to leave the course” (Røykenes, Smith, & Larsen, 2014, p. 350).

• “Test anxiety (TA) is a common response to the stress of academic examinations” (Brodersen, 2017, p. 131).

• The Anxiety and Depression Association of America ([ADAA], 2016) discusses common causes of test anxiety. These include fear of failure, lack of preparation, and poor test history (ADAA, 2016).
Background & Purpose (Continued)

• “...TA may be severe enough to impair exam performance for some students” (Brodersen, 2017, p. 135).

• Research has shown that “Test-taking anxiety effects the students’ exam scores negatively” (Cürcani, Küçükoğlu, & Tan, 2015, p. 52).

• Ultimately, the expected outcome of the project would be to reduce test anxiety for all students within the Hunt School of Nursing who take exams.
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<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Update</th>
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<tr>
<td>Develop an aromatherapy intervention program for undergraduate nursing students.</td>
<td>Goal met. The doctoral candidate allowed students to trial the intervention on an informal basis and received positive feedback. The doctoral candidate also created a policy draft for utilization, which may be shared with faculty in the future.</td>
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<td>Reduce undergraduate nursing student test anxiety.</td>
<td>Goal in progress. There have been no formal attempts for assessing or measuring effectiveness of the intervention due to Institutional Review Board (IRB) restrictions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage faculty in promoting aromatherapy as an intervention for undergraduate nursing student test anxiety.</td>
<td>Goal in progress. Several faculty members are using the aromatherapy lotions or other aromatherapy-based products as an intervention for reducing test anxiety.</td>
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Scope & Approach

• This project would correlate with the Hunt School of Nursing mission statement by adhering to “…the provision of student centered programs of study for a diverse student population” (Gardner-Webb University Hunt School of Nursing, 2018, p. 7).

• Aromatherapy is a student-centered intervention in that it may potentially assist with relaxation and may allow students to better focus and channel positive energy prior to an exam.
Scope & Approach (Continued)

Idea (Initiated approximately January 2018)
Research and Development (Completed May 2018)
Informal Trials/Modification as Needed (Ongoing)
Goal of Implementation (Ideal: August 2019)
Project Presentation (Expected October 2018)

Figure 1. Project Management Process. This figure illustrates the management process of the project as anticipated by the doctoral student.
Work Plan

• During the life cycle of this project, there were multiple tasks undertaken and delegated as appropriate.

• In addition, there were multiple resources used to facilitate the work plan of this project.

• Overall, a dynamic combination of resources and work made the development of the project possible.
Work Plan (Continued)

- Ongoing Assessment and Modification
- Project Outline
- Project Application Submission
- Research

- Feasibility of Project
- IRB Review
- Project Approval

- Doctoral Student Guidance
- IRB Preparation
- Periodic Updates

- Doctoral Student Consultancy Coach

- Site Advisor
- Feasibility of Project
- IRB Review
- Project Approval

- Organization Administration

Figure 2. Work Breakdown Structure. This figure illustrates the work breakdown structure used for the project.
## Risks/Constraints

<table>
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<th>Risks</th>
<th>Constraints</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Mild Test Anxiety</td>
<td>• Approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Failure to Approve the Study</td>
<td>• Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local Skin Reaction or Systemic Reaction</td>
<td>• Funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Negative Perception of Aromatherapy by Faculty</td>
<td>• Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Negative Perception of Aromatherapy by Students</td>
<td>• Time</td>
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Quality Assurance Plan

- **Observe:** needs of the students
- **Plan:** project research and proposal
- **Do:** initiate research project
- **Check:** draw conclusions from data
- **Act:** implementation of project

*Figure 3. OPDCA Cycle. This figure illustrates the modified Deming Cycle of quality assurance.*
Results/Benefits

• The actual organizational benefits that have been realized so far with this project are student response and faculty consistency.

• A goal of the project is to reduce undergraduate nursing student test anxiety. Students have positively responded to the use of aromatherapy as an intervention for test anxiety.

• Faculty consistency has also been an added benefit of this project. The majority of undergraduate faculty members are using some form of aromatherapy on test days.
Reflection

• This consultancy project has helped me discover who I want to be for my organization.

• What worked well was the support from the students and faculty I received during informal trials of the project.

• What did not work well for me was the assessment and measurement process.

• I should challenge myself to always find ways through innovation and research to create a positive balance between the faculty and students.
Areas for Future Study

• Consider aromatherapy for graduate nursing students and other programs of study.

• Brodersen (2017) noted aromatherapy as an applicable intervention for test anxiety, and further research is necessary in this topic.

• Challenge yourself to always find ways through innovation and research to create a positive balance between the faculty and students.
References


