TEACHING STRATEGIES USED BY BSN NURSE EDUCATORS: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Participants will be able to recall significant components of the research study.

- Participants will be able to describe the project that stemmed from the research study.

- Participants will be able to identify three ways they can apply ideas from the research project in their nursing program.
THE PROBLEM

- NCLEX pass rates declined over a 5 year period in a BSN program.

- During faculty meetings and casual conversations about the decline in pass rates, nursing instructors expressed that they believed students were unable to think critically in order to make accurate clinical decisions.

- Faculty communicated that this inability is apparent when assessing students’ knowledge during the theory portion of their courses and while observing students in the clinical setting.
Current exploration of nursing research has uncovered a consistent theme: a theory-to-practice gap.

Current research discussed that an effective way to close this gap in nursing education was to integrate teaching strategies into the curriculum that promote critical thinking (Spiers, Williams, & Gibson, 2010).

It is imperative for the program to evaluate teaching strategies in order to improve the success of student’s learning.
The guiding research question for this study was: What teaching strategies are instructors using that emphasize critical thinking skills for BSN nursing students?

The subquestions addressed were:

Question 1: Why do instructors select and use specific instructional strategies in their nursing courses?

Question 2: What are instructors’ perceptions of critical thinking strategies regarding student performance on the NCLEX-RN exam?
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

- Constructivist Theory of Learning
- Critical Thinking Defined
- Critical Thinking as a Program Outcome
RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH

- The study incorporated an exploratory, qualitative case study design.

- This research design was chosen because I wanted to explore what teaching strategies nursing instructors were using that promoted critical thinking skills of their BSN students.

- The sample for this study was comprised of five full-time nurses and the department chair.
Data Collection

- Data that were collected for this study consisted of course syllabi and clinical evaluation tools.

- Classroom observations were conducted to validate assignments that were recorded on the course syllabi and to directly observe the teaching strategies that each instructor used to present course content.

- A survey was also distributed to faculty.
After all data were reviewed, each data set (course documents, classroom observation field notes, and a questionnaire) was compared with the others to determine common patterns.

Common patterns that were identified from each data set included the importance of patient data and students knowing what to do with those data.

Knowing what to do with patient data related to how well students could critically think in order to solve patient problems.
Data revealed that there was a significant difference between how teaching strategies were used in the didactic portion of courses compared to the clinical portion of courses.

Multiple strategies were used to ensure that students understood didactic content.

Strategies for teaching the clinical portion of courses centered primarily on the nursing process, patient care planning, and the performance of psychomotor skills.
After collecting and analyzing data through qualitative means, it was determined that the project needed to focus on a professional development workshop that focused on the creation of effective clinical evaluation tools and rubrics related to clinical assignments.
Clinical Evaluation Methods
Let’s Get on the Same Page!
WORKSHOP GOALS

- The goals of the workshop were to help participant’s transform clinical education by improving their clinical evaluation tools, aligning clinical learning activities to a course/program outcome, and designing clinical grading rubrics for clinical assignments.
PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP

- Through research we now understand that nursing instructors must provide other activities requiring problem solving and critical thinking other than using the nursing process (Caputi, 2010d; Tanner, 2009).

- This workshop was designed (a) to provide faculty with information and tools for clinical evaluation, (b) to improve clinical evaluation methods of nursing faculty, and (c) to assist nursing faculty in adapting to this new process of clinical evaluation.
COMPONENTS OF THE WORKSHOP

- Tanner’s clinical judgment model
- How to Apply Tanner’s Model to Clinical Learning Activities
- Critical Thinking Defined
- Lasater’s clinical judgment rubric
- Why Rubrics are Important
- Caputi’s clinical activities portfolio (CAP)
- How to Organize CAP
- Problems with Care Planning
- Ideas for Concept Mapping
- Tanner’s Guide for Reflection
- How to Evaluate and Give Feedback on Student Reflection
- Faculty Responsibilities in Using Reflection
COMPONENTS OF THE WORKSHOP

- The workshop consisted of break-out sessions for large and small group activities such as discussions and group work.

- Example of a Group Assignment:
  1. Write a student-learning outcome from one of your courses.
  2. Write an idea for a clinical assignment related to the student-learning outcome.
  3. Create a grading rubric for the assignment you have chosen.

- Examples of assignments and rubrics were included in the workshop packet.
REFERENCES


Project References
(Handout for Participants)


