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Using Collaborative Testing in a Clinical Nurse Leader Program: One Program's Experience

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Faculty in all nursing programs are continuously challenged to develop teaching strategies that enhance learning and actively engage students in content to promote student success and high quality clinical practice. Meeting this objective may be more difficult for faculty working with adult learners, sometimes identified as nontraditional students. In this project, nontraditional students are defined as college students over 24 years of age, with responsibility for family, work or other life circumstances (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). At this university, one educational option for adult learners is the entry level Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) program. This option is designed for individuals who have academic or career experience in a non-nursing field and want to become a nurse. Students who successfully complete this program graduate with a master's degree in nursing and are eligible to take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for RNs. Some have suggested that active learning environments facilitate acquisition and understanding of material for adult learners and ultimately contribute to academic success (MacDonald, 2018). Collaborative testing has been identified as a promising way to meet the need for active participation and enhance learning in the classroom for students in a variety of disciplines, including nontraditional students (Gilley & Clarkston, 2014; Hanna, Roberts & Hurley, 2016; Leight, Saunders, Calkins & Withers, 2012). Collaborative testing and review are defined in many ways. Some suggest it is group work to enhance team work skills while others describe it as group testing with at least two people per group (Eastridge, 2014; Martin, Freisen & De Pau, 2014). Whether additional points are earned for the original test/quiz also varies.

Collaborative testing was implemented over three academic semesters (fall 2017, spring 2018, and fall 2018) in the 5-credit pathopharmacology course in the entry level CNL option. The class size ranges from 50-65 students. In each 15-week semester, students had three 75-items tests and four 25-item quizzes, using multiple choice items. Collaborative testing was used exclusively for each of the quizzes. A two-test collaborative model was used. In this format, students completed the first assessment individually during the prescribed time. Immediately following completion of the individual assessments, the same assessment was repeated by collaborating in small groups. Group assignment for some assessments was done randomly; for other assessments, students self-selected groups of the prescribed size. In the model using in this course, no additional points were earned from collaboration. Students completed an anonymous evaluation of the collaborative testing process using a paper-pencil tool. This paper will describe the collaborative testing process used in this course, outline the rewards and challenges of this interactive strategy and provide evaluation data from three semesters. Implications for the future will also be presented.

Title:

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Keywords:

Clinical Nurse Leader, Collaborative testing and Nontraditional students

References:

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Abstract Summary:

Faculty are challenged to find interactive ways to engage students, particularly nontraditional learners, in challenging content. In this 5-credit pathophysiology CNL course, collaborative testing was used to enhance learning while engaging students. This paper describes the collaborative testing process, outlines rewards and challenges, provides evaluation data and details future implications.

Content Outline:

I. Background

A. Faculty challenge to engage students

1. learning

2. quality clinical practice

B. Nontraditional student challenges

1. Definition

2. Need for active learning

II. Collaborative testing

A. Overview of descriptions

III. Collaborative testing in this program

A. 5-credit pathopharmacology course

B. Completed in 15 week semesters, fall 17, spring 18, fall 18

C. Used following 4 quizzes each semester

D. Two-test model with no additional points

IV. Paper presents

A. Description of process

B. Rewards and Challenges

C. Evaluation data from each semester

D. Implications for future

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Author Summary: Dr. Regina Phillips has been a nurse educator in a variety of undergraduate or graduate settings for for more than 20 years. She has extensive experience adult health, nursing research and leadership in these programs. Dr. Phillips has developed many strategies to enhance difficult material; in addition, Dr. Phillips has published about effective ways to enhance content.