

Nursing Education Research Conference 2020
Knowledge of Environmental Health Concerns and Its Influence on RN-BSN
Nursing Practice

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Purpose: Upon completion of jointly developed course between the School of Nursing and the Department of Environmental Sciences (EVS 205: Global and Environmental Health) and created specifically for the Online Accelerated Program (OAP) RN-BSN nursing students, the students will:

- Demonstrate an increase in environmental and global awareness as well as a better understanding of the impact humans have on the environment.
- Discuss the impact environmental quality has on humans.
- Explore positive ways to impact the environment through nursing practice.

Methods: The Mental Modeler is an adaptive learning platform utilized in this project to allow each student to identify the components of their own "environmental system" and form them into concept maps of their choosing. Students the assigned positive and/or negative relationships between identified components. There were no correct or incorrect answers to this exercise.

Students completed the Mental Modeler exercise twice during the 7-week class, as part of the course requirements: during the first and last week of class, along with a reflective essay. The essay reflected how/ if at all, the introduction to global and environmental issues impacted the RNs nursing practice. Data were collected, analysis done and learning outcomes examined.

Results: Comparison of the Mental Modeler exercises identified a pattern of increased learning and understanding of global and environmental concepts and influences on human behavior and health throughout the 7-week class. Qualitative analysis of reflective essays revealed RN-BSN students reporting an increased knowledge and awareness. Students also described a willingness to incorporate more environmentally "friendly" actions into both personal and professional lives.

Conclusion: RNs completing EVS205 demonstrated an increase in environmental and global awareness as well as a better understanding of their own environment footprint. Students reported plans to take newly gained global and environmental knowledge and incorporate it into their nursing practice in creative and innovative ways. The course itself was very highly received by students, and highly recommended for nursing students as well as those in other disciplines and age groups because of the importance of the information delivered.

Title:

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Keywords:

Mental Modeler, environmental health concerns and environmental nursing

Abstract Summary:

The School of Nursing, and that of Environmental Science, jointly developed a new course entitled Global and Environmental Issues, for RN-BSN students. The goals of this research were for students to develop increased awareness of environmental health care concerns, human's impact on the environment, and to positively impact nursing practice.

References:

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Author Summary: Dr. Hrelc's career in nursing has spanned over 39 years. She has been a staff nurse, a staff educator, a patient educator, nursing faculty and a nurse researcher. Currently Dr. Hrelc is the Academic Program Coordinator for the University of North Carolina in Wilmington's RN-BSN accelerated online program which has approximately 2000 students, and is ranked by US News & World Reports as the 8th Best Online Program in the US for 2018.