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Improving Nursing Students' Attitude Towards Research Course: Incorporating Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique

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Purpose:
This evidence based project investigates nursing students' attitude toward a required nursing research course before and after implementation of the Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique for testing. Nursing students often perceive research as complex, and do not have the context to connect to clinical practice (Keib, 2017). Complexity in research methodology and analysis, and high stakes in passing course examinations, can create anxiety and negative attitudes for many students. Improving students' attitudes concerning nursing research needs to begin in pre-licensure programs (Halibi, 2016). There is a need for evidence-based pedagogies in the design and delivery of nursing courses (Sowan & Jenkins, 2015).

Methods:
Students' attitudes were assessed at the beginning and end of the research course with a semantic differential scale (SD). SD is an established technique of measuring the meaning of concepts; it is applicable for comparisons of affective reactions on widely disparate items (Verhagen, van den Hoof, & Meents, 2015). Verhagen et al. state "Theory presents the SD as one of the most appropriate techniques to assess the intensity and direction of the meaning of concepts, especially complex and multidimensional concepts" (p. 109). The Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique incorporates evidence-based methods of team-based and cooperative learning. The IF-AT is a type of testing that is interactive, decreases stress from high stake exams, and provides motivation. This investigation used a group-testing format, with adequate time for intentional deliberation. Peck, Werner, and Raleigh (2013) incorporated IFAT into a Health Enhancement course, and report "findings are consistent with research results showing that decreased anxiety improves performance" (p. 403). Collaborative testing methods provide students an opportunity to actively engage with the content, obtain instant feedback, and foster their learning (Peck et al., 2013). A focused class discussion and course evaluations were also used in assessment.

Results:
The findings reflect a positive change in students' attitudes, statistically significant with p = .000, and 78% of students reporting teaching strategies positively improved their attitude toward nursing research. The students reported enjoying the format and the teamwork, and identified the importance to nursing practice. They also expressed feeling increased learning with the IFAT over traditional testing.

Conclusion:
The format of the examination forces students to rethink some of their answers that do not show initial mastery, increasing their understanding of concepts and correcting any misinformation (Peck et al., 2013). Another valuable benefit is that the test teaches as well as assesses; IFAT is a good example of assessment as learning (Merrel, Cirillo, Schwartz & Webb, 2015). Balancing the students' needs and responsibilities is necessary in moving towards meeting meaningful goals for learning complex concepts.

Evidence based engaging strategies such as the IFAT are needed to improve learning and attitudes concerning nursing research.

Title:
Improving Nursing Students' Attitude Towards Research Course: Incorporating Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique

Keywords:
Attitudes, Feedback and Research

Abstract Summary:
Students' often lack the clinical context to value a course in Nursing Research, having preformed negative attitudes. Incorporating the evidence based teaching strategy of the Immediate Feedback-Assessment Technique (IFAT) can lessen anxiety, increase learning, and promote engagement, leading to an improved attitude. Presentation demonstrates examples of IFAT.

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Author Summary: Dr. McDermott entered the nursing profession in 1975 with a BSN from SUNY, subsequently earning a Masters in Nursing Education from NYU, and a PhD from the University of Kansas. She transitioned to nursing education in 1998. Her dissertation was on podcasting with RN-BSN students' learning of research concepts. Current research includes improving students attitudes for Nursing Research and on-line learning and student utility of faculty feedback.