Nursing Education Research Conference 2020
Group Coursework in the Online Classroom: Ways to Reduce Stress for Students and Faculty
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Purpose: Research has shown group coursework potentially has the ability to improve student engagement and facilitate accomplishment. The ability to work effectively as a team member is a necessary skill for all nursing graduates. It is problematic that both students and faculty have reported an aversion to group coursework. Research indicates group coursework can lead to greater academic achievement, but faculty must use a well-defined approach to help make group coursework both effective and meaningful for students, particularly within the online classroom. The purpose of this presentation is to share evidence related to best practices, skills, and technologies that can be used to transform online group coursework into a positive and meaningful learning experience for both students and faculty.

Methods: A qualitative research study provided contextual evidence related to why students dislike group coursework. Retrospective qualitative content analysis of student (n = 192) responses to a discussion board query about current and past experiences with group coursework was completed. The analyzed qualitative data was gathered over the course of an academic year, from four different online courses.

Results: Findings included student reflections about group coursework being a stressful, negative experience, with the asynchronous environment of the online classroom increasing student anxiety. Students reported different academic goals, non-participative group members, and concern about the reality of managing group coursework, while dealing with professional and family responsibilities, but still achieving good grades.

Conclusion: Social constructivist theorists assert that cooperative learning is more successful than individual learning (Slavin, 1990). Faculty adhering to this theoretical framework argue student’s engagement in group coursework provides an opportunity for students to take responsibility for their own learning. Guiding students towards self-learning is within the purview of the online faculty role. Group construction, defined roles, clear instructions, and technology to improve communication can transform group coursework and improved student learning. Nursing faculty who have knowledge about the most up-to-date evidence about the management of online group coursework processes, including technology tools, will be able to better facilitate collaborative online student learning.

Title:
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Keywords:
Abstract Summary:
Group coursework can facilitate student engagement and learning; however, the negotiation of group coursework can be stressful for students and faculty, particularly in the online classroom. The purpose of this presentation is to share evidence regarding best practices and technology to transform online group coursework into a meaningful learning experience.

References:

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