Title: Implementing Collaborative Testing Across a Prelicensure Program

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Abstract Describes: Completed Work/Project

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Abstract Summary: Testing technology within a learning management system and a secure testing platform facilitated collaborative testing, an assessment technique and learning strategy which emphasizes clinical reasoning, communication, and interpersonal skills.

References:

Abstract Text:

**Purpose:** An appraisal of course assessments of an accelerated master’s direct entry (MDE) prelicensure program revealed an opportunity to gain more from assessments than scoring students’ content knowledge. The delivery of quality healthcare requires nurses to collaborate rapidly and effectively with numerous other healthcare professionals as patients’ needs change and plans of care evolve. Collaborative testing is an assessment technique and learning strategy which emphasizes clinical reasoning, communication, and interpersonal skills, key components in the ability to collaborate (Sandahl, 2009). Numerous methods of implementing collaborative testing in nursing education programs have been explored generating evidence to support wider adoption of the technique (Billings, 2017). Martin, Friesen, and DePau (2014) identified a benefit of practicing effective communication within a group. Exploring language use in NCLEX style questions with peers, whether English or non-English speakers, benefits students (Eastbridge, 2014). Improved content retention has been reported as a benefit of collaborative testing in all types of prelicensure programs as well as a graduate nurse practitioner program (Green, Worthey, & Kerven, 2018; Hanna, Roberts, & Hurley, 2016; Phillips, Munn, & George, 2019; Rivaz, Momennasab, & Shokrollahi, 2015). Therefore, to enhance collaborative clinical reasoning amongst peers and to increase expertise in test-taking strategies, faculty at the MDE program gradually implemented collaborative testing in formative assessments across the program in the Nursing Fundamentals, Childbearing Families, Medical-Surgical Nursing, Community and Public Health, Mental Health Nursing, and Health Promotion courses.

**Methods:** During collaborative testing, several learners complete an exam by discussing potential answers with each other to arrive at a consensus, using critical-thinking skills and peer interaction to analyze each question and the rationale for each potential answer. The features and functionality of the learning management system (LMS) was critical to the success of collaborative testing within the program. Each faculty member used the LMS differently to accomplish collaborative testing, and in some courses, the LMS and a secure testing platform were both deployed to achieve the test grade.

**Results:** In every participating course, faculty observed students advancing valuable clinical reasoning arguments with each other in defense of their position on a test answer during collaborative testing. Students explored vocabulary and meaning in item stems and choices to identify correct answers. Performance on summative assessments improved as well.

**Conclusion:** Each faculty member participating in collaborative testing plans to continue or add more collaborative testing to each course. Course evaluations highlighted student satisfaction with collaborative testing. Collaborative testing provides an opportunity for students to clinically reason rapidly and effectively, with each other, in an increased stress environment of testing.