Student Perceptions of the Classroom Community in an Online Graduate Nursing Research Course

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Purpose of the Study:

This study was a pilot study to identify classroom communities (learner connectedness and perceptions of learning) among students who had taken an online graduate research Nursing course during the 2012 academic year and who were currently enrolled in the University
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

• ROVAI, ALFRED (2002) USED IN THIS STUDY

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS
(N=35)

Female  83%
Age  41 years old (average)
Caucasian  80%
Married  80%
Caring for dependents  less than 5 hrs per day
Graduate school  more than 6 months
Computer skills  77%
FT employment  77%
Grade A  89%
STUDY INSTRUMENTS

A. Demographic data

B. Researcher generated open-ended survey questions asking:
   1) what classroom behaviors students liked the most
   2) what could students have done to make the course better and,
   3) what could faculty have done to make the course better
C. Closed ended questions:

- Rating scale of computer skills
- Whether students worked full time?
- If they cared for a dependent and whom?
- Satisfaction with the course
- Perceptions of faculty satisfaction
- Letter grade received in the course
D. Classroom Community Scale
(Rovai, 2002)

Likert scale with 20 items (Cronbach’s alpha .862) (Total score range 30-75, sample mean 48.83, SD 9.51) consisting of two sub-scales (10 items each):

A. Connectedness (range=30-75; mean 21.97, SD 4.41)
• “I feel that students in the course care about each other”

B. Learning (range=14-35; mean 26.86, SD 6.39)
• “I feel I am encouraged to ask questions”
Procedure

• Human Subjects Consent was obtained
• Each student who met the inclusion criteria was selected by a designated individual at the University
• Sent an email with a link to complete and return survey to “Survey Monkey” (online data depository)
STATISTICAL METHODS

• Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample and data collection instruments

• To examine differences in Classroom Community scores, independent sample t-tests, and one-way ANOVA tests with Tukey’s pairwise comparisons were used with an alpha of .05
RESULTS

• Majority satisfied or very satisfied with the online course (83%)

• Majority reported an increase in critical thinking skills (72%)

• Total score on the classroom community scale was higher than the average score (mean= 48.83) so generally students felt they were connected and learned in the classroom environment
Connectedness Subscale - Significant Differences

Gender
(p-value: 0.049)

Critical Thinking Skills Improvement
(p-value: 0.033)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Very Well</th>
<th>Well</th>
<th>Not Very</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>No Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>25.17</td>
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<td>Females</td>
<td>21.31</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Learning Subscale – Significant Differences

Critical Thinking Skills Improvement

- Very Well: 29.78
- Well: 28.5
- Not Very Well: 27.67
- Not At All: 21.75
- No Comment: 15.33

Course Satisfaction

- Very Satisfied: 29.92
- Satisfied: 27.2
- Neutral: 25.33
- Dissatisfied: 11.33

Faculty Satisfaction

- Very Satisfied: 30.17
- Satisfied: 27.73
- Dissatisfied: 21
- No Idea: 17

p-value: <0.001
Thematic Analysis of Student Perception of the Classroom Community

• Positive Behaviors
  1. Applied assignments
  2. Instructor feedback
  3. Time flexibility

Faculty Suggested improvement
  1. More feedback
  2. Options to earn participation

• Negative Behaviors
  1. Classroom format
  2. Group work
  3. Grading variation

Student suggested improvement
  1. Keep on track
  2. Spend more time on assignments
Thank You