Honor Society of Nursing Sigma Theta Tau International

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Are two heads better than one?

Students and educators explore dyad testing

By Sharon A. Vinte and Marsha L. Ellett

As nurse educators learn the advantages of cooperative learning from other disciplines, many have begun to incorporate these concepts into their teaching. Dyad testing, one form of cooperative effort, consists of two or more students taking an examination together—discussing questions and answers before submitting final results for faculty evaluation. As nurse education continues to shift to a student-centered, active learning paradigm, testing students as part of a group enhances the cooperative effort and initiates the collaborative decision-making situations students will encounter in the nursing world.

Johnson, Johnson (1989) and Bruffee (1999) have used cooperative and collaborative learning extensively in education since the 1970s when it was introduced. Group learning has worked well in laboratory settings in the sciences and is used from kindergarten through the collegiate level. Learning in this manner promotes interdependence, socialization, individual accountability, group processing and group skills (Johnson & Johnson 1989).

Student reaction to dyad testing
We have found that dyad testing accomplished several outcomes, some purposeful, others unintentional. Based on written and verbal evaluation after testing, students reported reduced levels of anxiety during the examinations, a sense that discussions promoted teaching and learning while testing ended, and that teamwork and communication were enhanced, as found in the work environment. Students appreciated the format provided by partners when providing a rationale for one response over another. These critical-thinking skills allowed students to critique answers from a different (partner) perspective and validated that “two heads are better than one.”

Testing in groups was not problem-free. Additional faculty to proctor examinations were two heads better than one? PAGE 2

Nurses lead evidence-based practice initiatives

By Suzanne Preveit

The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, in conjunction with Nursing Spectrum, is pleased to announce winners of the inaugural Innovations in Clinical Excellence contest, a program designed to recognize exemplars that champion the value and importance of evidence-based practice in nursing.

“Sigma Theta Tau International is proud to recognize excellence in evidence-based practice,” says Patricia E. Thompson, RN, EdD, president of Sigma Theta Tau International. “The society has always held a strong commitment to advancing and promoting nursing research and disseminating research findings, particularly those that are readily integrated into practice. A program such as Innovations in Clinical Excellence affords nurses the opportunity to share the evidence-based research that is made available to them.”

Nurses and administrators are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of teaching evidence-based practice to their students. The society’s first place award recognizes excellence in evidence-based practice initiatives to their students. The society’s first place award recognizes excellence in evidence-based practice initiatives to their students. The society’s first place award recognizes excellence in evidence-based practice initiatives to their students.

Academic catalogs, often a prospective student’s first experience with the nursing education process, have been shown to be uninformative and confusing.

Improving nursing’s first impression

Study finds course catalogs likely turnoff for prospective nurses

By Jennifer L. Hembie and Melodie Daniel

What does it take to be a nurse? As students ponder the possibilities, many become acquainted with nursing’s course requirements by navigating their school’s academic catalog. Unfortunately, many prospective students are discovering that maneuvering through catalogs is no walk in the park.

Initially, a review of nursing program catalogs was completed in order to design a tool that would help nurse managers properly place new graduates based on the educational focus of the students’ nursing programs. However, the investigatory study returned findings that were unexpected and alarming given the current need to attract the best and brightest students into nursing.

Early results surprising
The study began when we, as senior nursing students at San Diego State University, reviewed catalogs from every nursing program in the state of California. This included programs that offered a two-year degree, RN-to-BSN program and four-year degree. Seventy-five out of 104 programs agreed to participate in the study.

The catalogs proved to be difficult to read, prerequisites were not clear, admission...
Let the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, assist you every step of the way in your nursing career. From the prospective student to the experienced professional, CareerMap Online offers invaluable resources at no cost.

"This service effectively helps students and nurses find answers to questions about their careers," says Sigma Theta Tau International's director of professional development Linda Finke, RN, PhD. "It's a one-on-one advice from an experienced nurse, provided at no cost. For nursing students or nurses, this resource is an excellent opportunity for anyone interested in nursing careers.

Answering questions such as "What is a nurse's role in the work setting?", "How do I become a nurse?" and "Where should I work?" CareerMap Online includes students as they explore nursing and provides scholarship, occupational outlook and Sigma Theta Tau International membership information. And soon, another resource for students will be offered through the University of Oklahoma Health Science Center's nursing division has developed a career assessment tool for Sigma Theta Tau that provides teenagers and other individuals with fun, easy-to-use advice if nursing is right for them. Look for this exciting tool on our Web site in the future.

For more experienced nurses, CareerMap Online currently offers the following tools and information.

LOtUIING IN NEW DIRECTIONS? When you are an extern or nurse or are thinking about becoming one, uncover the resources that are perfect for you. People for perfect people. Easy to use and ready to move in a new direction.

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ACTIVE NURSEMENT IS A FAST-TRACK PROGRAM that isn't what it used to be. From philanthropy and volunteering to leadership and writing, nurses are enjoying exciting opportunities in a wide range of fields. Learn how you can successfully translate into a rewarding and active retirement.

Have a career question you would like to ask one of our experienced nurses on staff? Visit our Web site and e-mail an expert today.

PRACTICE INITIATIVES FROM PAGE 1

Diane HALEEN, RN, MS, CCRN, CNS, California Pacific Medical Center; San Francisco, Calif., "Evidence-Based Development of an Anticipating Care Services—Generating New Evidence"; S. JILL HALEEN, RN, MS, CCRN, CNS, California Pacific Medical Center; San Francisco, Calif., "Caregiver Support in Early Antenatal Testing: Generating New Evidence"

Michele Wagner, RN, APN, ISS Nursing, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics; Iowa City, Iowa, "Using Existing Databases for Product Evaluation: Silver-Treated Catheter Trial; Innovations in Clinical Excellence winners will be formally recognized during the "Welcome Circle of Friends" reception on Saturday, November 10, 2001, at Sigma Theta Tau International's 36th Annual Convention in Indianapolis, Ind. Contest winners have also been invited to present their submissions as poster presentations during the Clinical Simulation Day, Sunday, November 11, 2001. Suzanne Prevost, RN, PhD, is a professor and NHC chair of excellence in nursing at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tenn. She is also the chair of the Evidence-Based Practice Workgroup.

Two Heads Better than One? From Page 1

The same examination was given to those who dyad and individually tested. Discussions were encouraged but at a pitch that would not disturb others in the room. We also allowed the termination of the dyad during the exam if students felt the partnership was not working. This never occurred.

Examination scores have been consistent. In an associate nursing course, scores remained approximately 6 percent above the other examination scores in the course. In a baccalaureate nursing program, who scored dyad testing 5 percent higher.

Is dyad testing for you?

We found dyad testing being used in nursing settings throughout the country. Two issues have been continuously published in nursing at this point (Durrant, Pierson, & Allen, 1985; Phillips, 1988). No one has yet studied issues dealing with learning disabled students or those with English as a second language in relation to dyad testing. As with any other assessment and learning strategy, dyad testing has advantages and disadvantages that need to be studied further to determine its most appropriate use.

Sharon A. Vitten, RNC, MSN, WHNP, is a clinical assistant professor with Indiana University School of Nursing; Marshall L. Ettet, RN, DNS, is an assistant professor with Indiana University School of Nursing.

References


Jersey Shore Medical Center; Ocean, N.J., "Evidence-Based Development of a Heart Failure Center"

Nurse Joins Woman's Day magazine health advisory board

Recognizing that nurses were not included on the advisory boards of some well-known magazines, Sigma Theta Tau member and past president Veronica Ferguson, RN, IRCN, FAAN, wrote compelling letters to the editors-in-chief of Woman's Day and Family Circle. Soon the Women's Day editors informed them that they would, in fact, like to add a nurse to their health advisory board. Woman's Day assistant editor Margaret McLean Heitkemper, RN, PhD, FAAN, to fill the prestigious position. Woman's Day had previously added a nurse and Sigma Theta Tau member on the Woman's Day advisory board," says Christine Johnson, RN, CRRN, Dickenson-Hazard, RN, MSN, FAAN, "It will provide readers with cutting-edge health information from the nursing perspective and afford an excellent opportunity to showcase the best of nursing to the public.

Heitkemper is an adjunct professor in gynecology and at the University of Washington School of Medicine and the John and Margaret Corbally Endowed Professor for Women's Health Service at the University of Washington. She is also director of the NIN/HNR-funded Center for Women's Health Research at the University of Washington.

Margaret McLean Heitkemper, RN, PhD, FAAN

"Woman's Day is committed to providing its 20 million readers with health information that is accurate, valuable and possibly even lifesaving," says Madonna Bellen, Health Director at Woman's Day. "To fulfill that goal, we rely a great deal on the members of our health advisory board, a distinguished panel of experts in varied fields of health and medicine. We've chosen to add nurses to our board because of the significant impact that nurses can have in all areas of women's health across this country. Dr. Heitkemper has certainly raised the bar in the field of nursing and women's health, and we're honored that she has agreed to become a member of our advisory board."
How are you dealing with “information overload”?  

By Anne Hennessey  
Keeping abreast of the enormous amount of health care information is a daunting task. How often have you wished you could find an easy, time-saving way to keep up with new developments in your professional areas of interest? A new online service called “My Info Search” may be the answer.  
Imagine having a trusted expert send you weekly developments in reported book and journal literature. Detailing only subject areas that you’ve selected, you wouldn’t be burdened with information you’re not interested in; it would take only a few minutes to review; and if you wanted more in-depth information, you could link to it instantly.  
That’s essentially what “My Info Search” is all about. The result of Sigma Theta Tau’s long-standing partnership with Publishing, a leading provider of health care information and review services, “My Info Search” is an Internet-based service available at Sigma Theta Tau’s Web site.  
Doody’s Book Review Service®  
Doody’s Book Review Service® evaluates books and electronic products across a wide range of clinical specialty areas in nursing, pharmacy, basic science, medicine, allied health and other disciplines.  
Information on approximately 3,500 book and software titles is collected each year from more than 230 of the world’s leading publishers of professional-level health care publications. Experts review approximately 2,500 of the titles are prepared each year.  
An automatic filtering system sifts through nearly thousands of books and electronic products each week to customize the information for your requirements. In addition, every book in the database (more than 70,000 titles in all) can be easily ordered online. A unique “price comparison” shopping feature allows you to compare prices and availability from a number of leading ebookstore vendors.  
Online Literature Review  
The other main branch of “My Info Search” is the Online Literature Review. Entering the system searches 4,300 journals and approximately 8,000 new articles added to the Medline® database weekly.  
When you first visit the site, you construct an interest profile that automatically records the information you want to receive. It takes only minutes to set up, and it can be updated any time. Based on the topics you select, a weekly e-mail bulletin gives a quick summary of the lastest articles published in the pre-selected interest areas. With the bulletin, you can link right to your personalized Web page to review concise abstracts of the articles and gain access to the full text, if available.  
Online Literature Review offers other features including a core journal section that allows searching across a smaller list of key journals selected by Sigma Theta Tau.  
Registering for the Service  
If you haven’t yet signed up for “My Info Search,” take a few seconds to visit now. Just click on the “My Info Search” link at the Sigma Theta Tau home page, www.nursingsociety.org, and enter your e-mail address in the sign-in box. You can then enter the service, visit the book and journal databases and establish your personal profile.  
All members receive free and unlimited access to Doody’s Book Review Service®, an online literature review. Online Literature Review is provided on a 60-day trial subscription basis. If members elect to continue a subscription for Online Literature Review after the trial period, they can then enter the service, visit the book and journal databases and establish your personal profile.  
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Call for abstracts  
The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, and the Royal College of Nursing, Australia are proud to co-sponsor the 18th International Nursing Research Congress featuring The Adventures of Nursing Practice through Research: How Far Have We Come—Where to from Here?  
Join us from July 24 to July 26, 2002, in Brisbane, Australia.  
We are now accepting abstracts for paper, poster, workshop, and symposium presentations on a variety of topics. Please visit our Web site, www.nursingsociety.org, for details and submission instructions. The deadline is October 28, 2001.
Looking for some stress relief?

No matter where you work, no doubt you encounter stressful situations on a daily basis. To uncover what can be done to reduce the effect of stress on our lives, we spoke with Joanne Herman, RN, PhD, CSME, a certified stress management educator and an associate professor with the University of South Carolina College of Nursing.

Q: Why does there seem to be more stress now than ever before?
A: We are all living increasingly fast-paced and complex lives. Culture and society are changing much faster than our bodies are able to adapt and evolve. Therefore, past methods of coping with stress are not effective when managing new challenges. As a consequence, we are seeing a dramatic increase in diseases related to stress.

Q: If stress is due to our increasingly complex society, how can an individual do anything about it?
A: Stress is a perceptual event—not an external one. Each of us perceives events, people, places and relationships in different ways, sometimes as stressful and sometimes not. The good news is that we have control over our own perceptions.

Q: Is there anything that can be done to protect against stress?
A: There is a number of stress inoculation behaviors that you can adopt. Eating a healthy diet, doing aerobic physical activity on a regular basis, getting adequate sleep and limiting caffeine intake will help you be stress-resistant. Obviously, all these things done together are more powerful than any one alone.

Q: Are there any new or different ways to cope with stress today?
A: The ways to manage stress are probably familiar to most people. The difference is that we need to use the techniques in a deliberate and systematic way rather than allowing them to happen randomly.

Q: How can you control stress?
A: There are a lot of strategies you can use. I divide them into four categories: avoidance, perception change, life-style management and relaxation techniques.

Q: But how can you avoid stress?
A: The most effective way to handle stress is to avoid it. Most people can find at least one stressor that they can eliminate from their lives. This requires reflecting on your daily activities and interactions to determine which ones could be eliminated. Another way to avoid stress is to manage your worrying. I call this having a well-controlled “worry list.” You can have as many things as you want on your worry list, but only worry about a few of them at a time. Isn’t it true that most of the things you worry about never come true?

Q: How can you use perceptions to manage stress?
A: Since stress is a perceptual event, it is possible to change perceptions and eliminate the stress. This strategy is especially helpful when dealing with things you cannot control. Changing perceptions is much like learning any new skill. It takes practice. You identify the stressor and perceptions you have about it. Then, write a new healthier perception. Every time the event happens, practice saying the new perception. Over time, the new perception will replace the old.

Q: Do you recommend the same stress relief techniques for retirees vs. baby boomers vs. 20-somethings?
A: Age and occupation are not as important as humanness. By that I mean each person has a unique way of experiencing stress as well as dealing with it. The important thing is that individuals find strategies that match their lifestyles and interests.

Q: What does recent research reveal about stress and the importance of stress management?
A: For many years, health care professionals have had anecdotal evidence that stress was one of the contributors to disease. Technological advances such as biofeedback instruments and monitoring devices have enabled researchers to measure the physiological response to stress. The development of psychoneuroimmunology knowledge has dramatically increased our understanding of the consequences of stress on the mind/body. The newest area of research is beginning to identify the physiological connection between stress and disease. For example, the hormone homocysteine has been identified as the probable link between stress and coronary artery disease.

Q: Where can I find more information about stress management?
A: Any bookstore will have a large number of books about stress management along with relaxation tapes. An easy-to-read resource is Stress Management for Dummies. Community colleges, universities and health care systems often offer stress management programs. The Web has extensive information on stress management. Also, many employers have human resources, employee health or health promotion departments that provide classes and interventions to help with stress.

Dr. Herman's top 10 tips for reducing stress

1. Make time every day to do something you enjoy.
2. Cultivate a social support network and use it when you feel stressed.
3. Do an aerobic activity for 20-30 minutes at least four times a week.
4. Listen to your body. Be aware of when you are stressed and do something about it.
5. Learn new skills that might help you like basic communication, assertiveness training, conflict resolution, time management or how to deal with difficult people.
6. Learn a relaxation technique and use it regularly.
7. Don’t be responsible for everything and everyone.
8. Be realistic about what you can do and only take on those activities most important to you.
9. Adopt a positive attitude toward life.
10. Find a person who handles stress well and ask for suggestions.