Development of a School of Nursing Rubric

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Introduction

The information available about Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing to Learn (WTL) offers a perspective about the importance of writing in the nursing curriculum. Students need to write in their respective disciplines to obtain jobs upon graduation, as writing is considered a “threshold skill” for hiring and promoting (College Board, 2004). And by examining the WTL paradigm’s assumptions that writing is learning and writing helps to produce critical thinking, nursing faculty members and administrators identify a need for implementing writing assignments in nursing curricula. Increased student support and improved faculty-student relationships have been reported after implementing these strategies such as short, in-class writing assignments and portfolios. In nursing education, rubrics can be excellent tools for both clinical and didactic writing assignments.

- Rubrics create clarity for students when beginning and progressing through a written assignment, and expectations are made concrete and clear.
- Rubric categories represent goals for students, giving them a realistic destination for their assignment.
- Rubrics help students to follow the correct route so as to not waste valuable time and effort and so scores can be higher.
- Faculty members frequently support the use of rubrics, as rubric use assists in timely, just evaluation as well as appropriate feedback.
- Rubrics help to decrease student protest once grades are returned.
- The use of rubrics can assist in creating continuity in scoring between and among instructors.

Literature Review

- Suffolk County Community College (2007): describes through example how to integrate a rubric into clinical nursing and clarifies expectations by including performance criteria needed to be met in each category in order to demonstrate critical thinking for each step of the nursing process used in the development of a nursing care plan.
- Truemper (2004): describes importance of using a tool that can consistently assess and evaluate student work, while providing feedback; explains that rubrics help with focusing students on areas that need improvement, but also give credit for those items completed well; says rubrics can be used for both written and oral assignments and can be individualized to fit the context of the subject matter.
- Goodrich (2001): explains that rubrics reduce the time teachers spend grading work and make it easier for teachers to explain to students why they received the grade they did and what they can do to improve.
- Donaldson and Gray (2012): mention the grade inflation phenomenon and determined many rubrics have not been fully evaluated and require rigorous evaluation; suggestions for rubric improvement include more open communication about guidelines, methods of evidence collection, and grading systems.

Components of a Nursing Rubric

Evaluation Criteria

- What objectives do you want the student to meet with this writing assignment?
- Are there broader nursing standards that you believe students should be demonstrating with this written assignment?
- Are there other writing qualities that are important to you or your program of nursing?

Appropriate Scoring

- Do you want to use a certain number scale, letter scale, or something else?
- What is important for the faculty members who will be using the rubric?
- How do you determine wording for your point assignments?

Issues with Rubric Development

Specificity

- Are your evaluation criteria specific or vague?

Individualization

- Does your rubric work for one assignment or can it be used for numerous assignments in a variety of courses taught by any faculty member?

Criterion Interpretation

- Are different faculty members who are scoring using the rubric interpreting the criteria differently?

Continuous Review

- Is the rubric effective or ineffective?
- Are students continuing to struggle with the assignment?
- Are faculty members struggling with evaluation?

References


Suffolk County Community College (2011). Critical thinking rubric to analyze the application of nursing process in student nursing care plans. Retrieved from depthome.sunysuffolk.edu