Engaging Students in the Classroom Using Active, Team-Based Learning Strategies

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Abstract
As students enter into nursing school faculty are charged with socializing students into the professional role of nurses while helping students develop a sound knowledge base of critical nursing concepts. Along with teaching students critical nursing concepts, faculty must also assist students to develop skills in communication, teamwork, and collaboration in order to be a safe and effective member of the interprofessional health care team. Research has shown that a transformation to learner-centered, active learning strategies must be incorporated into nursing curriculums for students to meet future demands required of new nurses to provide safe, quality patient care. By providing students with the opportunities to consistently practice communication, giving constructive peer feedback, and dealing with conflict in a safe environment, students are better able to transition to practice already possessing some of these crucial skills. A discussion of strategies implemented in a beginning level nursing course to create a learner-centered classroom environment that engaged students while focusing on communication, teamwork, and collaboration is discussed. Strategies include: Team-based learning activities, use of technologies in the classroom, constructive peer review, and collaborative testing.

Objectives
1. Identify active learning strategies that could be implemented in a current course.
2. Discuss the use of team-based learning strategies to facilitate teamwork and collaboration skills.
3. Describe the benefits of collaborative testing in a learner-centered classroom.

Team-based Learning
• An active learning strategy, which uses a structured cycle of pre-class preparation, individual and team testing, and application exercises. (Mennenga, 2013)
• Deliberate team formation based on a selected set of questions was used
• Complete in-class and out-of-class activities as a team
• Complete group testing (collaborative testing)
• Develop video commercials related to recruitment, nursing image, or health promotion
• Prior to implementation, explained rationale for team-based learning related to QSEN
• Provided examples and practice on how to handle group dynamics
• Set clear expectations for team-based learning
• Provide peer review opportunities for groups

Student Evaluation Results
• Maintained positive student evaluations
• Students reported they did not want more lecture
• Students reported they understand the need to apply concepts rather than be passive learners
• Reported activities aided in understanding concepts
• Noted active learning required more work on their part
• Some students still resist group work

Peer Review
• Provide peer review opportunities for students
• Allowed for feedback about participation in group projects
• Students get opportunity to practice giving and receiving constructive feedback
• Process includes students speaking to their fellow classmates about issues before seeking faculty intervention
• Numerous peer review tools available

References

Why Collaborative Testing?
• The increased importance of interprofessional collaboration is becoming more apparent (IOM, 2010).
• Future nurses need to be prepared to work collaboratively as a team for the benefit of cost effective, quality patient care (Sandahl, 2009)
• Collaborative learning strategies are active and student-centered (Sandahl, 2009)
• Collaborative testing is an example of a collaborative learning strategy that promotes critical thinking, student achievement, and interpersonal and group processing skills (Sandahl, 2009)

Collaborative Testing
• Provides an opportunity in the classroom where teamwork and collaboration can be achieved and is seen as a positive experience
• Provides an opportunity for peer to peer learning and student ownership
• Allows for greater review of tested material
• Seen as a valuable teaching strategy by students
• With thoughtful implementation can be used to increase learning while not inflating grades of unprepared students
• Increase test scores across disciplines
• Students report less anxiety
• Improved student relations
• Improved thinking skills
• Increased motivation
• Increased communication skills
• Improved clinical reasoning

Collaborative Testing Research Findings
• Students liked the collaborative testing overall
• Students reported collaborative testing did not affect study time for the exam
• Collaborative testing helped improve critical thinking skills, understanding of rationale, and understanding of the material
• Collaborative testing allowed for group teamwork, communication, and collaboration
• Students felt that they had a voice and were provided opportunities to contribute within their groups.

Classroom Technologies
• Socratic/Clickers
• Unbound Medicine
• You Tube videos
• Podcasting
• Discussion board postings
• Twitter
• Wiki pages
• Learning platform (Canvas, Blackboard)
• Online testing (ExamSoft)