Faculty Collaboration for Horizontal Integration of Nursing Curriculum: Innovative Teaching Strategy

Manju Daniel, PhD, MSN, APN, FNP-BC  
Jeanette Rossetti, EdD, MS, RN  
School of Nursing, Northern Illinois University

Background

- Critical thinking - core competency that nursing students need to have so they can efficiently address simple to complex clinical situations  
- Discipline-specific "teaching-learning strategies" - facilitate development of critical thinking among nursing students  
- Horizontal integration of undergraduate nursing curriculum - innovative discipline-specific "teaching-learning strategy"  
- Horizontal integration involves - fusion of nursing curriculum content across different courses within the same phase of the curriculum  
- Collaboration among intra-professional nursing faculty - key element for implementing horizontal integration of an undergraduate nursing curriculum

Purpose

- To examine impact of nursing faculty collaboration for horizontal integration of nursing curriculum on:  
  - Students' attendance  
  - Student collaboration for interactive learning and critical thinking  
  - Course grades reflecting achievement of course goals  
  - Student satisfaction with the course learning outcomes

Method

- Mixed methodology design  
  - Descriptive quantitative  
  - Qualitative data for students' perspectives  
  - Pilot the intervention of horizontal integration of nursing curriculum from two undergraduate courses:  
    - Nursing research & Mental health nursing  
    - Nursing research - three consecutive semesters  
    - Observation phase - 52 first semester students  
    - Observation phase - 39 subsequent second semester  
    - Intervention phase - 40 students subsequent third semester  
- Purposive sampling was used.  
- Students were divided into eight groups  
- Mental health nursing curriculum integrated into nursing research:  
  - Written assignments  
  - In-class group activities

Integration Strategies Needed at Every Level

Descriptive statistics

- Frequencies, means, and standard deviations  
  - Demographics, students' attendance, collaboration, grades

Codes and Themes:

- Students' perspectives R/T curriculum integration categorized into themes.

Results

Demographics

- Mean age 22 years  
- Caucasians (n=428, 69.1%)  
- Hispanics (n=76, 2.6%)  
- Asians (n=45, 7.3%)  
- African Americans (n=43, 6.9%)

- Two main themes for student satisfaction with course learning outcomes:
  - Increased comprehension of research concepts  
  - Additional learning opportunity

Attendance

- Week before mental health nursing exam  
- Day of mental health nursing exam

Student-student collaboration

- Class participation for group activities  
- Group of 5-6 students  
- Week before mental health nursing exam  
- Day of mental health nursing exam

Average Grades

- Exam #1: 43/50, 35-40%  
- Exam #2: 44/50, 35-40%  
- Exam #3: 47/50, 100%

Conclusion

- Horizontal integration of a nursing curriculum with the intra-professional collaboration:  
  - Innovative teaching-learning strategy, which leads to:  
  - Enhanced critical thinking  
  - Quality student learning outcomes  
- Administrative teams at nursing schools to consider:
  - Supporting nursing faculty collaboration to implement:
    - Horizontal integration of undergraduate nursing curriculums  
    - In order to achieve quality teaching and learning outcomes.