Creating a Successful Online Learning Environment for Introverted Nursing Students
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**BACKGROUND**

In order to educate more nurses, many nursing instructors are beginning to teach online, often with little instruction on how to teach online or how to teach students with different learning styles. Introverted students may be more drawn to online learning due to the attractiveness of a low-stimulation environment, yet introverts have unique learning needs that instructors are often unaware of. Instructors who understand online pedagogy and create online learning environments with the unique needs of introverted learners in mind, may notice greater student satisfaction and success.

**IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM**

- How instructors engage with students is an important factor in whether or not a student will be successful.
- In the traditional face-to-face classroom, nursing instructors can usually identify the introverted students sitting in the back rows of the class.
- Nursing faculty may falsely conclude that the introverted online student is less engaged or less interested
- Introverts may want to think about their response for a few days before they post their thoughts for others to see
- Nursing faculty may label the introvert as a “lurker” and assume they are not as engaged as they should be

**REVIEW OF EVIDENCE**

- Student personality has been shown to affect involvement in discussions as introverts prefer written assignments and extroverts may prefer a more “revealing communication medium”
- Introverts may appreciate asynchronous activities more than synchronous live sessions
- Online nursing instructors may want to consider allowing students options of assignments to complete so they may demonstrate competency in a variety of ways.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

- Several master’s online nursing courses developed with introverts in mind
- Best practices in Online Education were implemented
- Universal Course Design was embedded
  - Different assignment choices
  - Variety of ways to learn (videos, text, audio)
  - Personal, individual learning styles considered
  - Much personal attention from online instructor
- Positive, caring environment created

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Positive student feedback
  - “I love having time to prepare my answers before having to say them out loud”.
  - “My professor really cares about my success”.
  - Positive feedback from faculty
  - “I want to learn more about online learning and creating better environments for all students.”

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

- Nursing faculty need education on best practices for online teaching
- Introverted students benefit from universal course design
- Increased satisfaction of faculty and students may lead to decrease in nursing shortage
- As the technology and innovation revolution continues, more instructors have another area in which they need additional education and training.

**REFERENCES**

