Creating a Successful Online Learning Environment for Introverted Nursing Students

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Session Title:
Evidence-Based Practice Poster Session 3

Slot (superslotted):
EBP PST 3: Sunday, 30 July 2017: 9:45 AM-10:15 AM
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EBP PST 3: Sunday, 30 July 2017: 2:00 PM-2:30 PM

Keywords:
distance learning, introvert and online learner

References:


Cain, S. (2012). Quiet: The power of introverts in a world that can’t stop talking.


Richfield, CA: Pfeiffer.


Interactive Learning Environments, 19(4), 333-349.

(2009).

Abstract Summary:
Nursing instructors are being asked to teach online with little guidance on best practices and how to engage the introverted online learner. Introverts are drawn to online learning but have a unique learning style which instructors should understand. Participants will learn how to implement best practices for online introvert success.

**Learning Activity:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The learner will describe behaviors of online introverted learners.</td>
<td>Behaviors of introverts will be reviewed. Behaviors of online introverts will be reviewed.</td>
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<td>2. The learner will compare and contrast learning needs of introverted online learners and extroverted online learners.</td>
<td>Learning needs of extroverted students will be reviewed. Learning needs of introverted students will be reviewed. Participants will be given an exercise to compare and contrast introverts and extroverts.</td>
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<td>3 The learner will recognize positive qualities of introverts.</td>
<td>Common misconceptions of introverts will be reviewed. Positive qualities of introverts will be reviewed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The learner will design an online learning activity with the needs of the introverted learner in mind.</td>
<td>Different types of synchronous and asynchronous activities will be reviewed. Pros and cons of each type of activity will be reviewed.</td>
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**Abstract Text:**

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.

How instructors engage with students is an important factor in whether or not a student will be successful. Instructor interaction is a major component in success of online learning (Kim, Hong, Bonk & Lim, 2011). In the traditional face-to-face classroom, nursing instructors can usually identify the introverted students sitting in the back rows of the class. In an online environment however, nursing instructors may have a hard time identifying introverts. Why is it helpful to identify introverted students? Introverts are thinkers and like to take their time when answering in class. Nursing faculty may falsely conclude that the introverted online student is less engaged or less interested if the student is lagging behind others,
such as being last to post to a discussion bulletin. Introverts may want to think about their response for a few days before they post their thoughts for others to see. Studies have demonstrated a relationship between learning style and the use of e-learning systems (Clark & Mayer, 2011). Nursing faculty may label the introvert as a “lurker” and assume they are not as engaged as they should be. Student personality has been shown to affect involvement in discussions as introverts prefer written assignments and extroverts may prefer a more “revealing communication medium” (Blau & Barak, 2012). When creating online exercises, introverts may appreciate asynchronous activities more than synchronous live sessions where they would be expected to spontaneously answer in class. Al-Dujaily (2013) found extroverted/introverted personal traits significantly influenced learning activity on adaptive e-learning system for computer science students. Online nursing instructors may want to consider allowing students options of assignments to complete so they may demonstrate competency in a variety of ways. An introvert may choose a written assignment and an extrovert may choose an oral report. There are multiple ways for students to demonstrate competency. Because introverted students are less vocal in class, many instructors may view them as uninterested or not as smart as their extroverted classmates (Cain, 2012). Introverted students may not be appreciated for their thoughtful nature and ability to critically think through problems. Many times the extroverted student is viewed as the ideal student because they will eagerly answer in class and participate in live discussions. Instructors who learn the positive qualities of introverted students, and learn to design exercises in which all students have an equal chance for success, may enjoy greater satisfaction and improved student outcomes. The introverted student may also benefit from the instructor gently encouraging them out of their comfort zone.

Appreciating that introverted learners have unique needs and best practices in online education need to be implemented, instructors at a small, urban college of nursing received education on the unique needs of introverted online learners. After review of this information, several online master's nursing courses were designed, considering the needs of the introverted learners. Student feedback was positive after implementing best practices for introverted learners. Faculty response was also positive after receiving education on introverts and how to implement best practices for introverted online learners.

This work has implications for nursing education practice. Although there are millions of online learners, there appears to be dearth amount of work done on instruction of online introverted nursing students. As the technology and innovation revolution continues, and more nursing courses are being taught online, nursing instructors have yet another
area in which they need to receive additional education and training. First, nursing faculty should not assume that introverted students are not as smart or not as engaged as their extroverted classmates, and instructors should not discriminate against students based on personality traits. Second, when nursing instructors are using innovations and technologies and teaching online, they should learn how to design and implement best practices for online education and learn how to engage students with different personalities including the introverted learner. Finally, if more online nursing instructors understand introverted students and implement best practices, we could see more nursing students graduate, the nursing shortage may be minimized and students and faculty may have greater satisfaction with online teaching and learning.