Participatory Visual Thinking Strategies in Baccalaureate Nursing Education: Impact of Using Art to Define Family

Amber Vermesessch, PhD, MSN, FNP-C, RN, CNE
University of Portland School of Nursing

Meg Moorman, PhD, WHNP-BC, RN
Indiana University School of Nursing

Joane Moceri, PhD, RN
University of Portland School of Nursing

Susie Stragnell, MS, RN
University of Portland School of Nursing
Disclosures:
The authors, Drs. Vermeesch, Moorman, Moceri and Ms. Stragnell have no relevant conflict of interests or disclosures related to this presentation.

Objective:
To determine the impact Visual Thinking Strategies on defining family among baccalaureate nursing upper division students.
What is Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)?

• Developed by Abigail Housen and Philip Yenawine to engage museum visitors with art for a longer time

• Teacher facilitated discussion of art by asking 3 questions associated with VTS
  1. What is going on in this work of art?
  2. What are you seeing that makes you say that?
  3. What more can you find?
Purpose

• To determine impact of VTS in BSN students on observational and communication skills in didactic upper lever course
• To bridge student connections from classroom to practice in teaching about caring for families
• To expose students to various definitions of families
Methods

• IRB approval obtained
• Multisite study, 4 sections
• 144 upper level nursing students in 2 large undergraduate BSN programs
• Homework assignment:
  • create a work of art that symbolizes family and bring to class
  • could use any medium
• Teachers facilitated discussions about student-created work
Methods (cont.)

After discussions concluded, students were asked to complete 6 questions anonymously in Qualtrics survey:
1. Were you aware of VTS before class?
2. What did you think of creating a visual representation of family?
3. What was impact on your observational skills?
4. What was impact on your communication skills?
5. Would you participate in a similar activity in the future?
6. What impact will VTS have, if any, on your clinical skills in the future?
Results

144 students, 92 competed survey (63.8%)

1. Were you aware of VTS before class?
   Less than half of the student were aware of Visual Thinking Strategies before the class activity.

2. What did you think of creating a visual representation of family?
   Over half of the students (57.6%; n=53) reported that VTS aided them in learning about people’s different perception of what family is and how they differ from one’s own views (n= 27), enabled them to think about their own families and how much they mean (n=21), and enabled them to think about families in a novel way or outside the box (n=5).
3. What was impact on your observational skills?

Over 57.8% of nursing students reported thinking deeper and more abstractly or had increased evidence to back up their observations (n=52).

4. What was impact on your communication skills?

66.3% of students thought that VTS was either beneficial, increased ability to give reasoning behind thoughts, or allowed students to be open in their communications (n=61).
5. Would you participate in a similar activity in the future?

81.5% (n=75) stated “yes.”

6. What impact will VTS have, if any, on your clinical skills in the future?

66.3% of students (n=61) reported that VTS either increased their awareness and understanding of family, increased their ability to be considerate and nonjudgmental, or increased understanding that every family is different.
Conclusion

• This assignment allowed students to explore meaning of family
• Allows students an opportunity to explore definitions of family and to express how these relationships vary from person to person
• Assignment allows students an opportunity to explore definitions of family and to express how these relationships vary from person to person
• Gives students the opportunity to discuss and explore personal ways that one defines family and to express what meaning family has for them
• Knowledge gained from this study aligns with implementation of evidence-based practice and promotion of healthy communities by increasing insight into how one defines and works with families
Implications

• VTS positively impacts visual skills
• VTS positively impacts communication skills
• Increased or changed understanding and awareness of family
• Baccalaureate nursing education benefits with the inclusion of VTS to increase observational and communication skills
• Should be utilized in multiple courses to increase communication and visual skills imperative to nursing
Questions?

• Visual Thinking Strategies website: https://vtshome.org/