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An Educational Method to Enable Nursing Students to Develop the Skills Needed for Clinical Reasoning

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One of the challenges in nursing education is the need to enable students to internalize the skills needed to implement the thought processes of critical thinking and clinical reasoning. The research of Patricia Benner has been instrumental in explaining the need to improve the critical thinking and clinical reasoning skills of newly licensed registered nurses. Dr. Benner's research has changed the focus of nursing to include these skills in the education process. The

study was designed to evaluate the efficacy of a classroom educational method designed to help students improve these skills. The ex post facto study was conducted at one Southern community college with students enrolled in an Associate Degree nursing program. The study used the nursing educational theory of Patricia Benner and the general educational theory of constructivist educational theory as a theoretical base. Archived data was collected from the results of two cohorts of nursing students based on their performance on two separate administrations of the Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) critical thinking examination. The data was analyzed using central tendency statistics, a paired sample t-test to determine the differences between ATI scores for each group and an independent sample t-test to determine the differences in the change in ATI scores for the two groups.

The results of the investigation indicate that the education method was effective in assisting students to improve the cognitive skills needed for clinical reasoning. The cohort that used the method had significant increase in the ATI critical thinking examination scores from the initial administration to the second administration. It was interesting to note that the most growth occurred with those students who struggled with the critical thinking process at the beginning of their education. It was also noted that there was no significant change in the scores for the cohort of students who did not use the educational method. This was the case even though both cohorts had the same curriculum, resources, faculty, and facilities.

The conclusions from the research were that the method should be researched further to identify if similar results would be obtained if a different curriculum were involved and with Baccalaureate programs to compare results. Research could be conducted to determine the growth of specific cognitive skills related to clinical reasoning. It is also suggested that qualitative research be initiated related to the method. In general, this research suggested that the method was effective and would be appropriate for implementation in nursing education programs.

Title:

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Keywords:

Clinical reasoning, Educational Method and Quantitative research

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Abstract Summary:

The educational method researched is applicable to classroom or clinical situations and assists students with the internalization process for the skills needed to clinically reason. The method was shown to be effective in allowing growth in the cognitive skills needed for the clinical reasoning process.

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3. Results

- A. Null and alternative hypothesis
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4. The Method

- A. The process
 - a. Group formation
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 - d. The form
 - e. Group reformation

B. Debriefing

- a. Rationale review
- b. Changes in direction if more information was available
- c. Frustrations

5. Conclusion

6. Questions

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Professional Experience: Undergraduate nurse educator of 7 years PhD in nursing Clinical nursing instructor 12 years Multiple poster presentations at regional and national events I have implemented this educational method at two different institutions in 7 different courses with success.

Author Summary: Dr. Cynthia Booher has taught undergraduate nursing students for 7 years and been a clinical instructor for 12 years. Her research emphasis for her PhD research was educational activities that will enhance clinical reasoning in nursing students. She is active in research on educational methods for nursing students and published one book related to the Clinical Reasoning Teaching Method.