Fostering Holistic Learning: Aligning Fink's Taxonomy with the AACN Essentials in Nursing Education

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Topic: AACN Essentials

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Abstract

Background/Introduction
Nursing education is evolving to provide meaningful learning experiences for students, preparing them for the clinical practice setting. Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning offers a holistic framework to for this purpose, going beyond cognitive aspects to engage students emotionally and guide them toward becoming self-directed learners. The taxonomy includes six interactive domains: (1) foundational knowledge, (2) application, (3) integration, (4) human dimension, (5) caring, and (6) learning how to learn. By aligning instructional strategies and assessments with the six domains, educators can create a more engaging and impactful learning experience for nursing students.

Purpose
To present a practical methodology for aligning Fink's domains with the AACN Essentials.

Methods or Processes/Procedures
Using a backward design approach, course learning outcomes (CLOs) were identified first, followed by mapping them to Fink's Taxonomy. Reflective questions guided the alignment of learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessments with Fink's domains. Specific action verbs associated with each domain were utilized to create Fink's Learning Outcomes (FLOs), ensuring alignment with intended cognitive and affective aspects. Meticulous attention was given to aligning course components with AACN Essentials sub-competencies to provide transparency for students.

Results
The integration of Fink's Taxonomy resulted in a comprehensive mapping that aligned CLOs, FLOs, student assessments, and the AACN Essentials, facilitating a more comprehensive learning experience for students. The mapping exercise also prompted course revisions to ensure that all six domains of Fink's Taxonomy were addressed, with certain domains mapping to multiple course learning outcomes.

Limitations
The results are limited to an undergraduate nursing research course at one institution.

Conclusions/Implications for Practice
The integration of Fink's Taxonomy in nursing courses offers a learner-centered approach that goes beyond cognitive learning. By fostering meaningful connections and promoting self-directed learning, Fink's Taxonomy equips nursing students with essential skills for their professional practice. Further research is required to explore its effectiveness and impact on student outcomes fully.

Biography

Dr. Beverly Dabney is an Associate Professor of Nursing at the University of Michigan-Flint's School of Nursing. She primarily instructs in the RN to BSN program and mentors DNP students on their scholarly projects. Her research sheds light on inpatient service quality, patient-centered care, and the evolution of nursing education, especially for non-traditional students and online platforms. Dr. Dabney also emphasizes the importance of continuous quality improvement in the nursing education.

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