

Applying the Essentials: The Role of Self-Efficacy in Nursing Education

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Topic: AACN Essentials

Category: Quality Improvement/Evidence-Based Practice Project

Abstract

Background/Introduction

Self-efficacy is covered in the AACN Essentials to encourage leadership development in nursing students. Self-efficacy, a concept introduced by Albert Bandura, is defined as the belief in one's own capabilities at accomplishing a task successfully. While the Essentials introduce the topic with a leadership driven focus, self-efficacy can be used as an educational tool to promote success in students throughout their nursing school journey.

Purpose

To define and explain the concept of self-efficacy as a tool to promote knowledge retention, self-confidence, and clinical judgement development in nursing programs.

Methods or Processes/Procedures

Most nursing students enter nursing programs with high self-efficacy that decreases over time due to negative evaluations or experiences. Nurse educators can learn to build activities and behaviors that promote learning, as well as self-efficacy. Strategies discussed will take into consideration its sources: actual performances, vicarious experiences, forms of social persuasion, and physiological indexes.

Results

Strategies were integrated into a pathophysiology and a remediation course to improve the student's perception of their competence. Results of the remediation course students are being replicated in the fall and will then be reported, but anecdotal discussions suggest that students left the semester with an improved sense of self-confidence and self-regulation. In the pathophysiology course, students who engaged in the self-efficacy practices, showed great improvement in their test scores and ability to apply information.

Limitations

The utilization of self-efficacy practices requires intentionally, patience, and a willingness to participate in self-reflection, both on the part of the student and the faculty member. Self-efficacy best practices also involve the modification of long-held strategies in nursing education.

Conclusions/Implications for Practice

Including self-efficacy development throughout a nursing curriculum can work to promote self-regulation, clinical judgement, and leadership capabilities. In return, nurse educators can work to cultivate students with higher levels of self-regulation who are intrinsically motivated to learn and apply content.

Biography

Kendall Henderson is an Assistant Clinical Professor at the Auburn University College of Nursing in Auburn, AL. She teaches in the undergraduate Bachelor's program in the areas of pathophysiology, pharmacology, and student success. Kendall is also the Academic Coach for the College of Nursing. In this role, she works with College of Nursing students to improve test taking, time management, and study skills. She also founded the National Consortium for Nursing Academic Coaches, a national organization that brings together academic coaches from around the country to collaborate and support each other in their academic and clinical roles.

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