Transforming Graduate Nursing Education Through Innovation: A Team-Based Learning Approach

Maeghan Arnold, DNP, APRN, AGACNP-BC, ACHPN, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Nursing

Co-Author(s): Mike Anders, PhD, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences; Bridget Plesich, DNP, APRN, AGACNP-BC, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences; David White, MSE, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

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Abstract

Background/Introduction
Nurse educators have a prime directive to prepare graduate nursing students for advanced practice. To help students achieve requisite competencies, active learning strategies such as Team-based Learning (TBL) can be used. However, a dearth of literature exists about TBL in graduate nursing education.

Purpose
Our project's purposes were to examine students' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement, approach to learning, critical thinking, and satisfaction related to TBL.

Methods or Processes/Procedures
Consistent with TBL methodology, a flipped-classroom instructional design was used. Students completed pre-work reading assignments. Difficult content was presented through pre-recorded lectures. Synchronous, online class sessions began with an individual readiness assessment test (iRAT) to assess pre-class preparation. Next, student teams, in breakout rooms, discussed and submitted a single team readiness assessment test (tRAT). A debriefing session followed the iRAT/tRAT to prepare students for application-based exercises (ABEs). Post-course, anonymous questionnaires elicited student satisfaction with TBL and its impact on engagement, critical thinking, and surface, strategic, and deep approach to learning. Comparison of iRAT/tRAT scores sought to demonstrate effects of peer instruction on preparedness for ABEs. Qualitative inquiry elicited students' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement. Descriptive statistics expressed student engagement, critical thinking, approach to learning, and satisfaction. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test compared iRAT to tRAT.

Results
Students were highly satisfied with TBL, engaged, applied critical thinking, and predominately used a strategic or deep approach to learning rather than a surface approach. Scores on tRATs were significantly higher than iRATs, demonstrating positive benefits of peer instruction. Qualitative data demonstrated high levels of engagement in all domains.

Limitations
A small sample size of nine adult-gerontology acute care students was the primary limitation, reducing power.

Conclusions/Implications for Practice
The results suggest TBL promotes student engagement, strategic and deep learning, critical thinking, and satisfaction. Future implementation with larger cohorts will be helpful in determining long-term success of TBL.

Biography

Dr. Maeghan Arnold is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) and serves as the Specialty Coordinator for the Adult/Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner track within the BSN to DNP program. She is passionate about high quality education and using innovative teaching strategies to reach the next generation of learners. In addition to her teaching duties, she serves on committees at the college, university, and national level, and works in neurocritical care at UAMS.

Contact Information

Maeghan Arnold, DNP, APRN, AGACNP-BC, ACHPN
Clinical Assistant Professor, Specialty Coordinator for Adult/Gerontology Acute Care NP Track
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Nursing
mearnold@uams.edu
(501) 686-6516