

Examining and Improving Active Learning Strategies in an Undergraduate Nursing Curriculum

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Topic: Leading & Advancing Improvements in Health, Health Care, & Higher Education

Category: Quality Improvement/Evidence-Based Practice Project

Abstract

Background/Introduction

Nursing education is being redesigned to align with the competency-based pedagogical approach, i.e., active learning, of the revised 2021 American Association of Colleges of Nurses (AACN) Essentials. Evidence reveals this approach achieves competency and can close the gap between academia and practice for new graduate nurses. Barriers to implementation include nurse faculty lack of knowledge about active learning, experience, confidence, and skill.

Purpose

This quality improvement project sought to equip undergraduate nursing faculty with knowledge and strategies to facilitate competency-based education through active learning.

Methods or Processes/Procedures

Six full-time nursing faculty members at one nursing program participated in three, ninety-minute faculty development workshops. Participants utilized the S.O.A.R. (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, & Results) method to discuss the utilization of active learning in the curriculum. Curriculum mapping of one AACN Essentials domain was developed to evaluate the use of active teaching strategies in the current curriculum with a goal of increasing active learning teaching methods by 10%. Faculty participants practiced active learning tasks and activities to increase faculty knowledge, confidence, and skill. A Post-Workshop Knowledge Survey was disseminated to participants.

Results

Curriculum mapping revealed a 75% increase of intended use of active learning strategies after faculty participated in the workshops. Faculty scored 92% on the Post-Workshop Knowledge Survey. Participants also reported a greater understanding and willingness to apply new active learning knowledge to the classroom.

Limitations

Limitations of this pilot QI project include a small sample size of undergraduate nursing faculty and it occurred over a short 3-month implementation time frame.

Conclusions/Implications for Practice

It is essential that faculty development workshops be implemented to move nursing curriculum toward competency-based education with active learning in order to facilitate new graduate nurses to achieve competency. Implications for sustainability of active learning strategies include the development of super-user faculty to train-the-trainer, drop-in learning sessions, and ongoing faculty active learning workshops.

Biography

Kathleen Monforte is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the nursing program at the University of Vermont. She began her nursing career as a staff nurse on a cardiology unit and then as a nurse educator in the hospital. She transitioned into academia in 2017 and continues to work per diem as a staff nurse on a specialty surgical floor. Kathleen enjoys mentoring nursing students in the classroom and clinical setting by creating a positive, exciting, compassionate, engaging, and supportive learning environment. Her interests and research are in medical-surgical nursing and creating active learning environments for large classes.

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