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Assessment of nursing graduates' critical thinking abilities as an Intended Learning Outcome (ILO) of the BSN program at KSAU-HS

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Background & Aim: Under the impact of globalization and the coming of the information age, there is a paradigm shift occurring in curriculum and academic structure in higher education, as well as, approach and orientation have also been shifted from objective-based/input-based education to outcome-based education. Additionally, higher education in KSA is remarkably facing challenges; consequently universities' program developments are taking place. Ministry of Higher Education strategic planning reflects the need of such development. Nursing programs has also been reflecting assessment of the learning outcomes as an indicator for quality education. Critical thinking (CT) is one of these outcomes because it shapes goals of nursing education and practice as it is needed for solving problems and making decisions by creating reasoned judgments in academic and clinical settings. Therefore the aim of the current research project is to assess the nursing graduates' critical thinking disposition as an intended learning outcome of the BSN program at KSAU-HS in Saudi Arabia.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional design was used to assess the senior students at their last academic year from three campuses where a unified nursing program is provided. Potential subjects were invited to fill the study questionnaires (demographics, the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory, teaching strategies used during the program and the preferred educational strategies).

Results: Preliminary data analysis showed that most of the graduates were positive toward their critical thinking abilities and perceived that the program contributed to their critical thinking abilities. Students reported the preferred and the actually used teaching strategies during the program that contributed to their critical thinking abilities.

Conclusion: For nursing graduates to be engage in complex problem solving and critical thinking, educators need to consider the teaching strategies used to develop students' critical thinking.

Biography

Amel Abouelfetoh is an Assistant Professor of Nursing and Assistant Dean of Clinical Affairs at the King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Science. She is a graduate of joint PhD program between Cairo and Case Western Reserve University. She completed three years of Post-doctoral Studies at Frances Bolton School of Nursing, CWRU, USA during which she had two funded grants and three international publications. She is passionate about improving the quality of teaching and learning strategies used in nursing education. She had received several extramural funds and produced 13 publications and had more than 15 presentations in international conferences.

Dr. Hanan Gabry is working as a professor of nursing at the King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Science. Her research interest includes nursing education and nursing practice.

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