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A qualitative study: Perspectives of learning attributes among undergraduate nursing students in small group work

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Background & Aim: Nurses are required to work in collaboration with other healthcare disciplines. Small group work, as one of collaborative learning, is a favorable teaching method to develop and foster personal and professional attributes in nursing education. Evidence showed that this approach enhances knowledge and multi-skill development. Since nursing students are involved in small group work, their experience of learning attributes in small group work is under-investigation. Therefore, the aim of this study was to understand perspectives of learning attributes among undergraduate students in small group work.

Method: A qualitative design with a purposeful sample was conducted. Data were collected using an in-depth focus group interviews.

Results: Four groups of undergraduate students were interviewed. Three main categories, including self-motivation potentials, empowerment of interactive group dynamics, and barriers were derived towards student's learning in small group work. Each theme consists of key components that are crucial to direct supporting areas for optimizing student's learning in small group learning. Based on these identified themes, students can engage in small group learning with certain degree of knowledge enhancement and multi-skills development. The barriers students experienced reduce their feeling of satisfaction and achievement in small group learning.

Conclusion: Small group work is an effective teaching mode to enhance knowledge and skill development in nursing education. Such development embraces personal and professional attributes of all-rounds. A multi-disciplinary teamwork is required to achieve optimal patient outcomes in current healthcare services. Effective collaborative training becomes an essential component in nursing education. All themes identified in this study affect student's learning and performance in collaborative small group learning. The results provide directions for nurse educators to create appropriate collaborative small group working environment in order to enhance student's learning in knowledge and skills. Educators need to be aware of barriers and develop corresponding strategies to facilitate student's learning.

Biography

Wong Florence has obtained her Registered Nurse (RN) License in Hong Kong. She had worked as a RN in the Intensive Care Unit and Coronary Care Unit in Hong Kong and in Canada for more than 20 years. She has obtained her Specialty Nursing degree in Canada and her Master's degree in Nursing in Hong Kong. She has then received her Doctoral degree in Hong Kong. Currently, she is the Program Leader of Higher Diploma in Nursing at Tung Wah College, Hong Kong. Her research interests include nursing education, quality of life, patient and family care in acute care and critical care settings.

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