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Assessing the efficacy of student centered learning through nursing research

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Statement of the Problem: Student centered learning (SCL) has received tremendous support in higher education because of its focus on students and the benefits to their learning. Some of the benefits of SCL are: promoting students' problem solving and critical thinking skills, increasing communication skills and the ability to work in teams, and promoting interest in lifelong learning. While SCL continues to be well supported as the teaching approach that can prepare health professionals for the rapid changing 21st century work environment, some educators and students have expressed concerns about the approach including its emphasis on openness which creates an instructional approach that appears to lack structure and guidance. This paper presents the perception of nursing students and faculty on their transition to a context-based learning (CBL) program, a form of SCL using an exploratory descriptive design.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: Focus groups, participant observations and document analysis were used to collect data from nursing students and faculty members using problem-based learning (PBL) as the framework for the study.

Findings: Although both students and faculty members identified the many benefits of CBL, all participants expressed that they would like both the CBL and lecture approaches to be used in the preparation of nursing students.

Conclusion: Through research, the evidence supporting the effectiveness of SCL is verified and confirmed as an appropriate teaching approach to prepare health care professionals for today's health care environment. Students in the health sciences such as nursing learn discipline specific concepts, which require explanation to students, especially in first year of the program. Thus, didactic instruction on some occasions is needed to clarify concepts and guide students in their learning. Based on this study's findings and previous studies, both SCL approaches and lecture methods are recommended to efficiently prepare students for the 21st century health care system.

Biography

Vivian Afrah Puplampu obtained her Bachelor's degree in Nursing from the University of Ghana, Ghana, and a Master's and Doctorate degrees from the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. She has practiced as a Registered Nurse and a Nurse Educator both in Ghana and Canada for sixteen years. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Nursing, University of Regina, Canada. Her expertise is in geriatrics and nursing education. She is very passionate about using innovative teaching strategies such as context-based learning in facilitating students learning.

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