ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PAPER: The Use of Problem-Based Learning to Enhance Critical Thinking in Baccalaureate Nursing Students

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Critical thinking skills are essential for graduate nurses to function effectively in complex healthcare environments. Nurse educators are faced with the task of utilizing teaching methods which encourage the use of higher order thinking, and developing critical thinking skills of students. The purpose of this quasi-experimental study is to determine if critical thinking skill are enhanced using problem-based learning as measured by the California Critical Thinking Dispositions Inventory (CCTDI). Semi-structured interviews will also be conducted to obtain qualitative data. This is a replication of Tiwari, Lai, So and Yuen’s (2006) study. The framework is Lewin’s Force Field Learning Theory (1944) as it relates to human motivation. The target population is baccalaureate nursing students attending universities in northwestern Pennsylvania. The anticipated sample is 100 baccalaureate nursing students. The results of this study will offer insight into whether problem-based learning can serve as an effective teaching strategy for educators to enhance critical thinking skills in nursing students.