ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PAPER: Evaluation of Concept Mapping as a Strategy to Enhance Critical Thinking

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The demands of caring for more acutely ill patients in health care settings requires nursing graduates to demonstrate critical thinking. The National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) require schools of nursing demonstrate students’ critical thinking competence. This study’s purpose is to evaluate concept mapping as a strategy to promote critical thinking in clinical settings with nursing students. Replicating Abel and Freeze’s (2006) study which partially replicated the study by Daley, Shaw, Balistrieri, Glasenapp, and Piacentine (1999), its conceptual framework is based on Assimilation Theory. The study includes a convenience sample of all senior baccalaureate students (n=75) enrolled in clinical courses at a Midwestern university. Variables are measured with scores from the first and last of 4 concept maps created during the students’ senior year utilizing scoring criteria from Daley et al. (1999). Measurement methods include 2-instructor scoring for validity, awarding points for propositions, hierarchy, cross-links, and examples. Findings will provide information on the effectiveness of concept mapping as a teaching strategy to improve critical thinking over time.