

Fostering Enthusiasm for Nursing Research

Barbara Celia, EdD, RN

Drexel University

Kathleen Faulkenstein

Background:

Nursing research is the cornerstone of the nursing profession and, to that end; a nursing research course is required in most undergraduate nursing programs. However, students typically view the course with some anxiety and resignation due to their limited experiences with research. Students have evaluated prior research courses as boring and unnecessary. We believe learning that is interactive and stimulating for students will foster a positive teaching-learning environment and appreciation of nursing research.

Theoretical Framework:

Constructivism theories (Bruner, 1966, 1996) are based on principles that support both autonomy and belongingness, embed reasons for learning something into the activity, and strengthen the learner's tendency to engage in intentional learning. The learner is an active constructor of knowledge, and the faculty supports the learners' efforts and encourages them to reflect on the process. Maximizing students' autonomy and participation in the teaching-learning process increases the likelihood that students will respond with enthusiasm to the learning activity.

Methodology:

This nursing research course was developed based on the assumption of active student participation in the learning activities. The focus of the course is development of in-depth understanding of the research process and evidence-based practice rather than focusing on conducting nursing research. Students' ability to understand and critique nursing research is a prerequisite to fostering their enthusiasm to conduct research.

This four credit course meets in-class four hours per week in (2) 2-hour sessions. The first 2-hour session is designed to provide structure through discussion of the language of research and the concepts of the research process. A variety of instructional methods is utilized including lecture, discussion, videos, and power point slides. The second 2-hour session is designed for maximum student participation with the faculty acting as facilitator and guide. Students are assigned to read one to two research reports in preparation for the session. The students lead the discussions focused on critiquing the nursing research articles while employing previously learned research concepts and language within the discussions. Evaluation methods include graded participation, written critique papers, quizzes, exams, and evidenced-based practice group presentations.

Conclusions:

Students have been consistently positive and enthusiastic in their evaluations of the nursing research course in its current format. We believe students develop a deep understanding of the nursing research process and the critical importance of evidence-based nursing practice with this instructional approach.

References

- Bruner, JS. (1966). *Toward a Theory of Instruction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, JS. (1996). *The Culture of Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.