Use of a Blog in an Undergraduate Capstone Course

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Purpose

- To utilize blogging in an undergraduate nursing capstone course
- To evaluate student and instructor perceptions about the usefulness of blogging in relation to student learning and socialization to “become a nurse”

Rationale

- Teaching strategies should be tailored to generational values and learning culture to facilitate student learning.
  - Today’s generation has grown up with technology and expects information presented in an entertaining way.
- Narrative pedagogies provide learning benefits including interpreting, critically thinking, and analyzing concepts, ideas, and situations.
  - There is limited research about how learning is affected by narrative pedagogies.
  - Research is needed to examine which strategies enhance critical thinking, promote learning, and develop autonomy in professional practice.
- Blogging, which is online journaling, could be suited to today’s generation of nursing students.

Method

- IRB approval was obtained for this qualitative descriptive study.
- Two capstone courses, one with 7 students and another with 8 students, in two different semesters participated in blogging as part of their course.
- Student opinions about the use of blogging were obtained by focus group interviews.
- Instructor views of the blogging activity were also compiled.

Results

- Initial feelings expressed by students were annoyance and intimidation, but these quickly dissipated.
- Blog posts were primarily related to student experiences, with student comments on other students’ posts providing support.
- Positive aspects of the blog identified by students:
  - Viewed it as a “safe” place to comment
  - Felt connected as a group
  - Valued feedback provided by peers on the blog
  - Learned from their and others’ experiences
  - Synthesized thoughts in written form to enhance learning
- Positive aspects of the blog identified by clinical instructors:
  - An effective form of immediate debriefing, since time is limited in weekly bridging
  - A venue for students to synthesize their thoughts, especially on how their experiences in clinical will influence their nursing practice
  - Provides group support so students can see they are not the only ones experiencing struggles
  - A way to monitor how students are learning and progressing throughout the semester

Conclusion

- Blogging was identified as a helpful and fun learning activity by both students and instructors and will be continued in future semesters.