

Paper Session E1: Student and Faculty Perspectives in Nursing Education

Evaluating a Coding System to Assess Student's Affective Learning

Maureen E. Wassef, PhD, RN, University of Massachusetts Worcester, Worcester, MA ~ Jean Boucher, PhD, APRN, University of Massachusetts Worcester, Worcester, MA ~ Teresa Finn, MSN, RN, University of Massachusetts Worcester, Worcester, MA ~ Anne Kane, PhD, RN, University of Massachusetts Worcester, Worcester, MA ~ Susan Sullivan-Bolyai, DNSc, RN, University of Massachusetts Worcester, Worcester, MA ~ Melissa Tuomi, BS, RN, University of Massachusetts Worcester, Worcester, MA

Purpose: Faculty often struggle with evaluating the elusive dimension of the affective domain in reflective journaling. Students in turn are equally frustrated when required to submit journal entries after clinical experiences and frequently receive minimal constructive feedback. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the feasibility of a coding system to assess student's level of affective learning in a nursing program

Theoretical Framework: A theoretically based coding system was developed based on the combined works of Krathwohl's taxonomy of affective learning and Mezirow's theory of transformative dimensions of adult learning. This coding system includes five identified stages, a definition of each stage and specific assessment criteria. The rationale for the coding system is to provide a guide for faculty to identify student's level of affective learning in the clinical setting and provide appropriate feedback to foster growth to the next level.

Methods: Four faculty members independently performed content analysis on student practicum journals. Consistent criteria were utilized for journal review based on the established coding system. In addition to coding each journal, each faculty kept a personal log, documenting any issues or difficulties with the coding system or guidelines. Inter-rater reliability of the journal coding was performed between faculty members at five different intervals through-out the study and faculty logs were reviewed at that time for consistent themes.

Results: A total of forty-nine student journals were reviewed with an inter-rater reliability from .50-.75. After each group of journals was analyzed, faculty met, shared their logs, and discussed issues around the differentiation between stages. This resulted in fine-tuning the assessment criteria.

Conclusion and Implications: This study allowed for the revision/refinement of the coding system. In addition, fictional exemplars of each stage were developed to assist in guiding faculty and facilitating the implementation process scheduled for spring 2011.