SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN NURSING STUDENTS

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Purpose: The purpose of this presentation is to describe factors that may influence learning and academic success for African American nursing students and to identify strategies that the nurse educator can use to increase potential for academic success in African American nursing students.

Background: The need to increase diversity in the nursing workforce is well documented in the literature (Harris, Rosenberg, & O’Rourke, 2014). Equally noted in the literature are the many factors that negatively impact retention of African American students in pre-licensure nursing programs (Payton, Howe, Timmons, & Richardson, 2013). Retention of African American nursing students is often related to academic success (Dapremont, 2014; Gardner, 2005). However, traditional approaches to teaching are not always inclusive of the diverse ways of learning demonstrated by minority students (Hassoun, 2008; Leonard, 2006). Since effective teaching and learning processes underlie the student’s ability to experience academic success (Carrick, 2011), it is important for nurse educators to use teaching strategies that meet the unique learning needs of diverse nursing students.

Implementation: A literature search was conducted to identify factors that influence retention and academic success for African American nursing students. The search was conducted using Proquest Nursing and Allied Health Source. The key terms that guided the search were “African American” and “retention” and “nursing student”. Articles of interest had been peer reviewed, published in scholarly journals between January 1994 and December 2014, were written in English, and focused on factors that influence academic success for African American students. The search was also limited to titles with an available abstract. The search resulted in 979 titles. Forty-four articles were retained for review. Additional sources were found using an ancestry search after reviewing the citations of the 44 articles retained from the original literature search.

Evaluation/Results: African American students demonstrate various approaches to learning (Haskell & Champion, 2008). This literature search revealed trends specific to cognitive style, climate of the learning environment, and teacher characteristics that facilitate learning for African American students. This presentation will summarize the findings from the literature and recommend strategies that the nurse educator can use to facilitate successful learning for African American nursing students.

This abstract is being submitted for a poster presentation.
Conclusion: Incorporating teaching-learning strategies that meet the needs of diverse learners can promote an inclusive learning environment and positively influence the learning process. Traditional learning environments may not always accommodate the ways of learning exhibited by African American students (Rovai, Gallien, Wighting, 2005). Being aware of factors that influence learning for African American students can assist the nurse educator in implementing strategies that promote success for African American nursing students.