Don't Take Away My Spark: A Humane Approach in Nursing Education
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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Nursing educators are challenged to construct a nursing curriculum that seeks to prepare competent and humanistic professional nurses. The typical nursing student enters the program overflowing with aspirations to become a nurse because of an enormous desire to care for others.

A Body, Soul & Spirit course was developed for nursing students to support this caring aspiration.

Qualitative Phenomenological Study

- Paul Colaizzi: “Lived Experience”
- Purpose:
  1) To assess the meaning of the “Body, Soul & Spirit” course for 31 Associate Degree nursing students.
  2) To consider curriculum revision based on study findings.

Selected humanities modalities such as short stories, film, poetry, music and art were employed to cultivate a deeper understanding of the complicated nature of the human condition and the meaning of the human response.

“THE MASK, I AM HUMAN, AND I STILL RISE”

By Maya Angelou:

- When you hear the words “respect human dignity”, what does that mean to you?
- What are some of the themes or messages that come to you from listening to these poems?
- As a professional nurse, what does it mean to “respect the human dignity” of your patient?

Methodology of Study

1) Pre-Course Survey Questions: Student motivation for taking the course, understanding of a humanities modality and its’ connection to becoming a better thinker, development of empathy, creativity of the nurse. (30 SURVEYS)

2) Post-Course Survey: same questions were asked. (29 SURVEYS)

3) Focus-Group Discussions: Held five months after course completion investigating the long term impact that the course provided to their professional development. (Seven students participated)

Findings from Pre-Course Survey

- Practical motivation: “I needed an extra course to be a full-time student”.
- Unsure of the meaning of a humanities modality: “Not sure what this means”.
- Superficial or unclear understanding of the value of the humanities: “I think it will help to better treat the patient”.

Data Analysis

Involved extracting significant statements per Colaizzi’s method from the anonymous student surveys and focus group discussions to identify major themes.

Findings from Focus Group Discussions

- The course provided an appreciation of “why I became a nurse”: Nursing care should not be task driven….should involve creativity….need to include more empathy activities in curriculum
- Classroom environment described: “therapeutic”
- The course shed light onto students’ current places of employment: “I hear nurses say, the shift hasn’t even started and I’m ready to go home”, which is very discouraging…we need to focus on connecting with the patients”.

“ANTHROPOLOGIST ON MARS” by Oliver Sacks

- Describe an insight that you gained from reading this short story that may enhance your ability in interacting with a person with autism spectrum disorder as a person and nursing professional.

Recommendations

Strengthen affective development opportunities for students (classroom & clinical experiences) rather than “random opportunities”.
- Implement strategies for intentional integration of humanities modalities; support personal & professional identify formation.
- Integrate methods to create a therapeutic climate to support the learning of nursing students.