

RUN LEARNING AND TEACHING AWARDS 2023

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Title: Reducing student anxiety in practical nursing laboratory assessments

Application Category: Innovation and Learning

Abstract:

Introduction

Nursing student laboratory classes known as preparation for practice classes at the University of Sunshine Coast are used to supplement clinical practice and prepare students for placement. These preparation for practice courses are ungraded courses which means students must pass all assessment pieces in order to pass the course. All students from first to third year must complete a practical assessment as one of the assessment items.

Background

Until June 2023, the criteria or marking guide used for marking this practical assessment has been a checklist where students were either successful or unsuccessful at a task. Depending on the focus of the practical assessment, some sections of these checklists were mandatory to pass to be eligible to pass the course.

Introduction of a new innovative rubric

This year I introduced a rubric which was based on the Nursing and Midwifery board of Australia (NMBA) Nursing Standards as a trial to see if it would reduce stress and anxiety around the practical assessment. This new rubric is innovative and aligns NMBA standards as well as the Australian Nursing Standard Assessment Tool (ANSAT) which is used to evaluate students on placement. It allows students to be marked according whilst taking into consideration the increased anxiety and nerves around practical and simulation assessments whilst still ensuring they are safe to commence their nursing placement.

Results

The new rubric has been proven to have a successful outcome thus far with positive qualitative feedback coming from students and tutors. Fail percentages for the practical assessment are down by 5.7% compared to 2022.