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Teaching Strategy: In-class Debates

In nursing the nurse must be able to negotiate, advocate for the client, and express themselves in a professional and respectful manner. These soft skills can be incorporated into the content in the nursing program. One strategy that allows for the students to practice soft skills while incorporating content is in-class debates (Herrman, 2016). In-class debates when incorporated into content gives students the opportunity to reflect on the material they have read, their feelings on the topic, and how it relates to clients (Zare & Othman, 2015).

When planning for an in-class debate the instructor must plan and set ground-rules for the students to communicate and act as a mediator during the debate (Herrman, 2016). According to Herrman (2016) there are multiple different methods to develop a debate. Some of these include pulling topics from a hat or planning a “hot topic” for the debate (Herrman, 2016). Debating can occur in the classroom setting, online setting, or post conference. When planning a debate the instructor can also ask the students to advocate for the opposite side they initially believe in which will promote a deeper level of thinking (Herrman, 2016).

Often time’s instructors may avoid using debates, fearing of creating a hostile environment in the classroom. In research conducted by Zare and Othman (2015) they concluded that debating actually enhances communication skills and critical thinking skills. Students had a positive reflection on participating in debates and enhanced their interest on the concepts being discussed (Zare & Othman, 2015).

References

Herrman, J.W. (2016). Strategies for Discussion Groups. In *Creative Teaching Strategies for the Nurse Educator.* Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company

Zare, P., & Othman, M. (2015). Students' perceptions toward using classroom debate to develop critical thinking and oral communication ability. *Asian Social Science*, *11*(9), 158. doi:10.5539/ass.v11n9p158