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Evaluating associate degree nursing students' self-efficacy in communication skills and attitudes in caring for the dying patient

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It is vital that a curriculum provides nursing students with the skills and confidence to meet the health care needs of society. Clear communication is an essential skill for all nurses and some areas of communication are more challenging for both students and educators. Communication regarding end of life (EOL) is perhaps the most challenging because of our death-denying culture and discomfort with this topic. There is one curriculum, The End of Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC), studied at the graduate level; however, this program has not been implemented at the associate degree level. ELNEC is comprised of nine teaching modules that enhance knowledge, attitudes, and skills by using the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning. This study is focused on the sixth teaching module: communication. Employing a pretest, post-test quasi-experimental design this researcher planned didactic content related to EOL to two groups of first year nursing students. Both groups used a common nursing curriculum at two demographically separate campuses of the same university. The intervention group also received the ELNEC communication module. Tools used for collecting information focused on any change(s) in self-efficacy and/or attitudes. Each participant completed the Visual Analog Scale (measuring self-efficacy) pretest and posttest intervention, as well as the from melt Attitudes Toward Care of the Dying Scale. The results of this pilot study provided positive outcomes similar to studies completed with the ELNEC curriculum at the graduate level. It also added the measure of self-efficacy in communication with the dying patient, which is new to the research in this area.

Biography

Georgann V Weissman completed her DNP from Case Western Reserve University and has a Post Master's Certificate as a Geriatric Nurse Practitioner from Binghamton University. She has combined academia with clinical practice focusing primary care on the elder adult and their needs at the end of life. She is presently a part time faculty at Capella University.

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