Exploring nursing education from a phenomenographic approach to help project mental health education into the 21st century.

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Aim

The purpose of this literature review was to collect evidence for future research into mental health nursing education. The aim is to share findings from nursing education research studies in which phenomenography was used to understand how students’ approach studies in nursing.

Background

Phenomenographic studies have been valuable in investigating students’ experience of learning to inform thinking about higher education curricula.

Research Question

What are the current findings from studies using a phenomenographic approach in pre-registration nursing curriculum to identify variation in student learning? And, what are the specific content areas within the pre-registration nursing curriculum that have used a phenomenographic approach to improve student learning?

Methodology

- Literature search: CINAHL, ProQuest Education Journals, Linguistics + Language (LLBA), ProQuest Central, ERIC (+ ProQuest SCPUS) (Elsevier)
- Search terms included: phenomenography, student, education, learning
- Search results combined (n=283)
- Papers screened on reference of publication date range (2006-2016) & peer reviewed (n=154)
- Papers screened on the basis of title and abstract (n=24)
- Papers screened on the basis of full manuscript (n=9)
- Papers identified from reference lists of included papers

Findings from the literature review

- Exploring variation in teaching methods to encourage effective learning
  - Digital stories
  - Suicide intervention
  - High Stakes Testing
  - Classroom based teaching versus high fidelity simulation

- Effective in exposing variation in understanding of nursing concepts with important implications for student learning.
  - RN buddy role
  - Death and dying
  - Health

Conclusion

Consideration of nursing education’s role in bridging the theoretical and clinical gap requires further phenomenographic research exploring how students approach studies in mental health nursing. Based on this my PhD ‘A phenomenographic exploration of undergraduate nursing students’ understandings of mental health: implications for an undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing curriculum’ will help address this current gap in nursing education.