

EVALUATION METHODS USED DURING THE ASSESSMENT OF AN
ACADEMIC PROGRAM AT MICRO-LEVEL

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Chapter One

Executive Summary

Various learning institutions have always wanted to expand the range of programs that they offer. That is in a bid to increase the number of students that they can absorb into the programs, thereby expanding the institutions. An institution's size can be determined but the capacity it can accommodate in terms of the numbers of students depending on the number of programs offered. However, some institutions have the tendency to register programs and courses that they do not have the required resources to offer. Because of that, there is the likelihood of such institutions producing graduates that are not ready to meet the various requirements of the job market. Those are the doctors, lecturers, engineers, and other professionals that do not have the professionalism to deliver the services to the required standards. In order to get rid of this issue, the government and the private sector have come up with various accreditation bodies, institutions, and entities that are concerned with the evaluation and accreditation of the programs (Parker, 2014).

Even though there exist a number of institutions that are in charge of the accreditation and evaluation of the higher learning institutions, that is not enough to ensure that the institutions offer the best programs. The most important aspect of the evaluation is the evaluation methods or mechanisms that the regulatory or oversight bodies make use of in conducting the evaluation followed by the accreditation of these programs offered by the institutions. It is because depending on the nature of the course, the evaluation criteria informs the nature and quality of the evaluation carried out. It also can communicate to the stakeholders on what aspects of the course or program is

evaluated and how important each of the attributes under evaluation contributes to the success of the quality of the program in question. This paper, therefore, majors on the evaluation criteria and methods used for the assessment of health education programs in the United States. The choice of the topic is dictated by the fact that there is need to improve on the quality of the graduates that the different nursing and medical institutions in the United States produce. By looking at the assessment criteria or evaluation methods for the nursing programs, this paper aims at coming up with the best recommendations that can change the nature of the programs offered in nursing education so that they adapt to the current needs of the nursing and medical profession. The study or research on the assessment methods will help to outline the current methods used in the evaluation while recommending the necessary changes to the methods to make them better.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

According to Young and Paterson (2013) evaluation can be described as a systematic way or process through which the value or worth of an attribute or something in the nursing learning, teaching, or education is judged. In nursing education, evaluation aims at determining its effectiveness or the effectiveness of the educational experience by way of conducting a careful appraisal. It is a constant and continuous procedure that involves the collection, recording, the assembling, and the interpretation of the information gathered. The various forms of evaluation in nursing are done in accordance to the objectives that are set by the students and their teachers. Some of the objectives are also set by the policy makers in the ministry of health and as the teachers, lecturers, students and other stakeholders look at the objectives, they have to ensure that the objectives are in line with those determined and approved by all the stakeholders.

Oermann (2016) talks about the evaluation of nursing education programs. He says that various faculties in nursing schools or higher learning institutions have the obligation to make sure their students have got the information that is to help them in the provision of care to patients in the various real-health-care settings that they are to work in once they are done with their studies. There are professional bodies to ensure that that takes place. One of these is the ABHEs which is the Accreditation Bureau for Health Education Schools. It does the accreditation of the health education based on the availability of resources, facilities, the qualified staff, amongst other requirements. There are also professional examinations that the nursing students have to sit before they are allowed to practice as nurses. One of the institutions that offer such examinations is the

NCLEX which is a licensing board and offers the exams so that it gives the practice licenses to the nursing students who have completed their studies and would want to practice as nurses.

Faculty at nursing schools are tasked with ensuring that students know the information required to provide adequate care for patients in real health-care settings. The NCLEX licensing exam is a final test to ensure that students have obtained the required knowledge before they are granted a license to work in the profession. Prior to this, though, faculty can use different types of evaluation methods to ensure that their nursing students are on the right track (Parker, 2014).

The evaluation methods are determined by the purposes of the evaluation in the nursing education institutions. Because of that, it is in order to look at some of the purposes of the evaluation before settling on the evaluation methods. One of the purposes of evaluation is to determine the knowledge levels and understanding of the students at different levels of their classes in the various semesters of years of study. When the various bodies can get to know how much a student has learnt at a certain level in her course, they get to know how effective the education program is at imparting the required skills to the students. It also informs the researchers on the expected knowledge levels after a certain period of time. The other purpose is to assess the clinical performances of the students at the various stages of the learning process. In addition, there is the need to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of the students at various stages with the aim of making recommendations on further improvements on the course. When the evaluation procedures are done, the result is graduates that have the proper knowledge of what is required of them in the field.

One of the evaluation techniques is through the use of the test scores that the students in different learning institutions obtain from the exams offered by the institutions. As an integral component of the learning program, nursing students are often subjected to examinations or tests. The tests are aimed at assessing their knowledge of various medical terminology in addition to the different procedures that apply in the nursing profession. The faculties make use of the test scores in gauging the students' progress in the various nursing programs that they undertake. There is a minimum number of times that a student is allowed to fail in the tests after which they are discontinued from the programs.

The other criteria are the nursing competencies. In this regard, there are certain procedures and tasks in the field of nursing that the nursing students should be in a position to perform before they are released into the workforce. There are a variety of nursing procedures and tasks that nurses must be able to perform before they enter the actual health-care workforce. Instructors often evaluate students on these procedures using competency checklists. Students demonstrate how to competently perform tasks that are outlined on the list. Instructors evaluate each student's ability to perform the task. Before a student is allowed to graduate from the program, she must demonstrate proficiency in all nursing competencies. The clinical evaluations are also important in the in the assessment of the nursing institutions. As a matter of fact, the nursing students have to work or deal with real patients, doctors, and nurses in addition to the other healthcare workers at one point in their training program. For that reason, the evaluation focuses on the nursing services that the students can be able to offer to their patients that they interact with during the clinical practice. The clinical instructors that supervise the

students provide that form of supervision and give the recommendations on either the improvements to be done or on the best practices to be initiated (Oermann, 2016).

Finally, the entry behavior of students and their performance after each and every level is important in the evaluation of the programs. Those who have certain grades should not be allowed into the program. In addition, those who fail to meet certain grade are not allowed to proceed with the study.

Chapter Three

Analysis

The evaluation criteria that is introduced in the above paragraphs are important aspects of the assessment of the nursing education programs. However, it is in order to note that the various institutions or bodies that are in charge of accreditation and approval of nursing programs. When it comes to the examinations or test scores of the students, the regulatory bodies will not just look at the scores of the students. Instead, they will also look at the quality of the examinations, how they are administered to the students, and how they seek to test and determine the particular attributes of the students in relation to the case under study. That is the essence of the utilization of the test scores. Because of that, the institutions in charge of evaluation of the learning institutions should not just look at the individual performance of the students. That is because the institutions may set either very difficult exams or simple ones that cannot reflect on the quality of the grades that the students score. When the proper exams are given to the students, it ensures that the various elements being tested are determined. When it comes to the nursing competencies, there has to be a benchmark for the evaluation of the nursing competencies. For instance, there can be an assessment of the interaction of the student nurses with the other healthcare services providers during their internship programs. In case the engagement of interactions improves the efficacy of care, one can be able to conclude that the institution is effective in the production of qualified nurses. However, if the presence of the nurses leads to a different result, the reverse can be true. Those are some of the ways in which the evaluation techniques above can be applied by the different institutions that perform the evaluation and assessment of the nursing education

providers. Even as the evaluation has more focus on the students, the availability of equipment in the learning institutions or in the learning environment should also be one of the indicators of the quality of education that the universities or learning schools offer to their students. Apart from just having the equipment and relevant resources, the colleges should have technical staff that is capable.

Chapter Four

Summary

This paper talks about the various evaluation and assessment criteria for the providers of nursing education. There are several reasons given for the choice of the topic. The main reason is to ensure that the trainers of the nurses produce qualified nurses that can be able to provide the services need at the required standards. There are different methods that have been used in the evaluation of nursing programs and they all aim at ensuring that the nation and the world at large has the right nurses as required by the industry. However, there is a need to improve on some of these programs. One of the improvements should be on the way the tests are carried out. Instead of the examiners using examinations and a few clinical experiences to test the quality of the nursing education, they can go for more advanced ways like testing how the student nurses make use of certain programs and how their actions improve on the overall delivery of healthcare. That can be a great idea to enhance the evaluation criteria for nursing students and nursing institutions.

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