Andragogical Methods Applied to Nursing Education:  
Adult education for adult students

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An urgent health care need is to recruit nurses to become educators and to equip them with effective teaching strategies. The literature has documented there is little orientation provided to nurses who choose the role of educator. Faculty are not prepared to utilize adult teaching strategies and resort to pedagogical methods using lecture, memorization, quizzes, and examinations. According to nursing education organizations, faculty should be teaching with more interactive, student-centered, adult methods.

A systematic review of the literature was conducted to discover how nurse educators are prepared to teach. The findings indicated that most nurse educators, having had no formal education in teaching, resort to teaching the way they were taught. This pedagogical approach is often too behaviorist for many nursing students, especially when one considers younger generations. One study found that nursing students prefer to learn from academically prepared nurse educators (Williams, 2000).

Adult education strategies for nurse educators have been developed by the Institute for Nurse Educators©. The program includes 6 modules that can be used individually, in groups, or concurrently. The modules focus on adult growth and development, understanding the adult learner, adult education theories/philosophies, principles of teaching/learning, timely approaches to adult learning, and faculty role.

Concern

To date, the literature has documented there is little orientation or academic preparation provided to nurses who choose the role of a nurse educator. In fact, novice and experienced educators may only receive the course objectives and a class roster, while floundering through a tremendous amount of nursing content. As a result, nurse educators are frequently not prepared to use timely teaching strategies and may resort to teaching nursing students the way they were taught - using methods such as lecture, memorization, quizzes, and examinations. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2008) and the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice (NACNEP) (2002), nurse educators should be teaching with more interactive, student-centered, adult methods. Even though the literature provides strategies to implement adult education methods, many nurse educators still do not have any knowledge of these methods or the skills to effectively implement these techniques. Thus, there has been little change in the teaching strategies used by nurse educators.

Based on the findings, it was determined that a practical solution for preparing nurse educators to teach was needed. Adult learners expect to be treated as adults and generally want to take an active part in their learning. In fact, one study, in particular, found that nursing students prefer to learn from academically prepared nurse educators (Williams, 2000).
Andragogy and Nursing Education

The use of andragogical methods in the teaching of adults has been documented by several adult education theorists and philosophers. Nursing is recognized as a caring, nurturing profession. The same attributes can be applied to andragogy (andragogy is the art and science of helping adults learn). Humanism in the classroom can be a significant benefit to the student. The development of the Institute for Nurse Educators© (IFNE©) is based on the theoretical framework of andragogy. The IFNE© employs adult teaching theories and strategies to assist nurse educators in educating nursing students. Thus bridging the gap between theory and practice while providing nurse educators tools needed to be effective in the educational environment. Currently, adult education strategies for nurse educators have been developed by the Institute for Nurse Educators© (IFNE©). The IFNE© strategies are appropriate for use with nursing students and experienced nurse educators. The IFNE© program includes student-centered and interactive teaching strategies that are based on adult education theories and philosophies. The IFNE© program is designed to: a) equip novice (and experienced) nurse educators with effective adult education teaching strategies; b) provide nurse educators with the skills to provide essential and recommended methods of teaching strategies; and c) to give the nurse educator insight into the definition and description of the adult learner. The IFNE© program includes 6 modules that can be used individually, in groups, or concurrently. The modules focus on adult growth and development, understanding the adult learner, adult education theories and philosophies, principles of teaching/learning, timely approaches to adult learning, and assuming the faculty role. The IFNE© program can be presented to nursing faculty in a college setting, or it can be presented as a 2 day workshop for nurse educators. The information and methodologies included in the IFNE© are also appropriate for other professions than nursing.

Module One:
The Faculty Role & Responsibilities

Teaching
The interactive nature of teaching and learning
Scholarship
Boyer’s scholarship of discovery, integration, application, and teaching.
Research and trends influencing nursing education.
Service
To College and community
Committees and membership
(Any information pertinent to the specific College)

Module 1 Objectives:
Upon completion of this module, the learner will be able to:
1. Recognize the interactive nature of teaching and learning.
2. Discuss the various applications of scholarship.
3. Explain the concept of service to the institution and the community.
4. Apply the process of innovation and change to a selected educational milieu.
5. Understand diversity in students with regard to age, gender, culture, ethnicity, and generation.
Module Two:
Understand the Adult Learner

Adult Development (psychological as well as cognitive)
The Social Context of Adult Learners
(Generational Differences)
Principles of Adult Learning (Tough, Houle, Knowles, etc.)
Research and trends influencing nursing education

Module 2 Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the learner will have developed:
1) Knowledge * of the characteristics of adult learners, including an overview of physical needs, developmental states, and current research related to adult learning.
2) Understanding* of the implications of these characteristics and theories on research, programming, curriculum development, ethics, and praxis.
3) Skill* in recognizing the needs of adult learners and the appropriateness and effectiveness of ways the adult is engaged in the learning process.
4) A positive attitude* toward adult learners in general and in their ability to learn.
5) Values* consistent with respect for diverse adult learners and for the experiences they bring to the learning situation.
6) Interest* in learning more about adults in the field in which they work, their needs, interests, abilities, and how to improve their learning experience.

* These terms create the mnemonic “KUSAVI”, which is from Knowles’ (1986) theory regarding the adult learner and his belief about the necessary components of a competency.

Module Three (a):
Principles of Teaching and Learning

The Science of Nursing Education
Tailoring the Teaching
Instructional methods/strategies
Reflection in Diverse Groups
Classroom Management Strategies

Module Three (b):
Principles of T/L continued

Development of syllabi, class schedules, calendars, course objectives, assignments
Assessment and Evaluation Techniques
Theory and clinical
Nursing Education and Technology
Specific to distance learning
AACN/NLN and Nursing Education (accreditation)
The Clinical Setting and Nursing Education

Module 3 Objectives:

Upon completion of this module, the learner will be able to:
1) Integrate nursing and educational theories of learning, teaching, motivation, and critical and creative thinking into practice.
2) Discuss the nature and extent of learning variations among diverse individuals and groups, incorporating effective teaching strategies and styles to accommodate all learners.
3) Incorporate evidence-based research into education practices.
4) Identify methods and instruments for assessment of education outcomes.

**Module Four:**
Adult Education Theories, Philosophies, and Models

- Education Theories
  - Andragogy
  - Self-Directed Learning
  - The Learning Contract
  - Perspective Transformation
  - Critical Reflectivity
- Educational Philosophies
- Nursing and educational theories
- Development of personal philosophy of teaching/learning

**Module 4 Objectives:**
Upon completion of this module, the learner will be able to:
1) Compare and contrast adult education philosophies, theories, and models.
2) Develop strategies to incorporate these philosophies, theories, and models in their teaching methods.
3) Describe their dominant teaching philosophy.

**Module Five:**
Newer Approaches to Adult Learning

- Active learning (participative methods)
- Service Learning
- Enhancing learning communities in cyberspace (online teaching/learning)

**Module 5 Objectives:**
Upon completion of this module, the learner will be able to:
1) Discuss advantages and disadvantages when implementing various active learning methods.
2) Apply the cardinal components to integrate service learning into the curriculum and community setting.
3) Describe the responsibilities of the instructor and the student in an asynchronous class.
4) Identify best practices for designing, implementing, and evaluating online courses/programs of education.

**Module Six:**
Summary Discussions in Practical Application of IFNE©.

**Module 6 Objectives:**
Upon completion of this module, the learner will be able to:
1) Discuss student-centered, interactive adult teaching/learning strategies.
2) Analyze and evaluate effectiveness of teaching applications.
3) Determine and discuss personal philosophy of teaching.
Conclusion

The aim of the IFNE© is to prepare nurse educators to teach students in an adult manner while recognizing the characteristics of adult learners. The Institute will introduce humanist, andragogical strategies to nurse educators. It is believed that using these methods will encourage nurse educators to engage students in interactive, participatory learning.

While this event focuses on nursing education, the IFNE© can be adapted for use with other professions that include the teaching of adults. Modules can be presented as a whole, in groups, or individually – based on situational needs.

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References


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