Incorporating VALUE Rubrics into Assignment Design in a Professional Nursing Course

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Assignment Revision Cycle

1. **Identify gaps in the assignment rubric**
   - Have students identify gaps in the original assignment rubric
   - Use this feedback to revise the rubric

2. **Revise the assignment to reflect the VALUE rubric**
   - Make sure the revised assignment clearly asks students to explain the issues and incorporate context
   - Ensure that the assignment reflects the dimensions of the VALUE rubric

3. **Compare the VALUE rubric to the assignment rubric**
   - Compare the revised assignment to the VALUE rubric
   - Identify areas where the assignment does not meet the criteria of the VALUE rubric

4. **Monitor student demonstration of higher-level learning**
   - Observe how well students demonstrate higher-level learning goals
   - Use this observation to assess the effectiveness of the assignment

5. **Operationalizing critical thinking was more challenging than expected**
   - Critical thinking requires a deep understanding of the concepts involved
   - Develop strategies to help students apply critical thinking to their work

6. **Understand and translate VALUE rubric language into nursing language**
   - Translate the language of the VALUE rubric into terms relevant to nursing practice
   - Provide examples of how to apply the language in a nursing context

7. **For some changes we did not need to revisit the entire process**
   - Some changes may not require a complete revision of the assignment
   - Focus on specific areas where the changes are needed

8. **Nursing faculty should coordinate with other departments to address higher-level learning goals**
   - Work with other faculty members to ensure that students have the necessary support
   - Coordinate with other departments to ensure that students have the necessary resources

Discussion

Using the critical thinking VALUE rubric...

- **Emphasizes the importance of developing critical thinking and clinical decision-making skills among UW Flexible Option nursing students**
- **Enables the creation of more focused and explicit assignment prompts, providing students with a better opportunity to demonstrate higher-level learning outcomes**
- **Provides a concrete definition of critical thinking that gives faculty a focal point for continuous refinement and improvement**

Conclusion

While the nursing discipline has emphasized critical thinking as an essential nursing skill for more than 50 years (Benner, 2008), the VALUE rubric provides a practical scaffolding upon which to define and build those skills.

Critical Thinking and the Professional Nurse

- **The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) maintains separate but related definitions of critical thinking and clinical judgment**
- **These definitions are, in turn, related to the definition of critical thinking defined in the AAC&U VALUE rubrics**
- **AACN acknowledges the importance of a liberal education as defined by AAC&U**

Critical Thinking

- Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

Clinical Judgment

- The outcomes of critical thinking in nursing practice. Clinical judgments begin with an end in mind.
- Judgments are about evidence, meaning, and outcomes achieved.

Evolution of the Assignment Rubric

In this assignment, students evaluate a health-related website. During the revision process, the assignment rubric added dimensions and became more precisely defined based on the VALUE rubric.

Original Assignment Rubric Dimensions

- Identify and describe the website to be evaluated
- Recommendation for improvement
- Writing and APA format

VALUE Rubric Dimensions

- Explanation of issues
- Evidence
- Influence of context
- Student’s position
- Conclusions and related outcomes
- Writing and APA format

Revised Assignment Rubric Dimensions

- Introduction - Explanation of issues
- Description of health-related internet resource
- Evaluation of website
- Summary: strengths, limitations, implications, and conclusions
- Writing and APA format

Resources

- University of Wisconsin (UW) Flexible Option
  - http://flex.wisc.edu
  - Lumina Grant for the Study of the UW Flexible Option
  - http://ce.uwex.edu/the-case-study
  - National Research Center for Distance Education and Technological Advancements (DETA Center)
  - http://uwm.edu/deta
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing - Essentials for Baccalaureate Education
  - http://www.aacn.nche.edu/education-resources/essential-series
- AAC&U Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) Rubric Development Project
  - https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics

References