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REFLECTION AS TOOL FOR THE FACILITATION OF CRITICAL THINKING

Barbara Yolinda Uys

Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, South Africa

Introduction: Reflection is a meta-cognitive process where a person consciously thinks about his/her own thinking. It is of crucial importance during the learning process. The use of reflection as a teaching strategy can be utilized as an innovative tool to enhance student's ability to think critically. Thinking processes are developed and problem-solving skills established through reflection. Reflection must be used during class and in the clinical field. Reflective journals consist of memory, indicating opinions, perceptions, patterns and trends.

Methods: Reflection as learning tool was introduced to students in the beginning of the academic year. The students were asked to write their reflection in a journal on a daily basis. It was posted on Blackboard. Blackboard is an internet assisted educational programme and can be utilized by students in a safe environment. Timely feedback on a regular basis is made possible. Reflective journals were the data collection tools. Census sampling provided 33 students who gave consent to participate.

Results: Qualitative data from reflective journals were analyzed with Tesch's method. Results proofed significant positive results regarding the students learning experiences and group learning. The interaction with peers proofed positive and motivating.

Conclusion: Reflection is of high importance for all health care professionals and facilitates thinking about clinical experiences. Reflection must be reinforced by clinical accompaniment. If reflection is used in the clinical field, the lecturer can facilitate the link between theory and the sickness processes of the patient and in doing so develop critical thinking of students. Facilitation of the reflective cycle with clear instructions is imperative from the first year of study.

yolinda.uys@smu.ac.za