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THEME 1: Educating Nurses Across the Continuum

Students' Perceptions of Participation and Interaction in Online Nursing Computer-Conferencing Courses

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine baccalaureate nursing students' perception of themselves, and their peers' online participation using a researcher-developed instrument. Volunteer nursing students (N = 55) from three Canadian universities completed a web-based questionnaire mounted on the software program, SurveyMonkey®. The population in this study included BScN/BN students who had or were recently involved in a computer-conferencing (CC) nursing course. The researcher-designed instrument was derived from Bento and Schuster's (2003) Taxonomy of Participation in Online Courses. This taxonomy is underpinned by the works of Moore (1989) and Berge (1998) and represents the different types of interactions that occur in distance education. The taxonomy consists of four quadrants and describes the interaction between Interpersonal and Content interactions in online courses. Learner-Interface interactions were not originally included in Bento and Schuster's taxonomy and were added by the researcher.

Overall, students perceived their participation to be of high level with a reported mean of 3.94 (SD = .476) out of 5.00. Students' perceptions of their group members' participation were also reported as high level (M = 3.60, SD = .481). Significant correlations were found between the questionnaire subcomponents. Results of the study lend support for the use of Learner-Interface interactions to identify students who may not have the satisfactory computers skills required to participate effectively in CC. Suggestions for further development of Bento and Schuster's (2003) taxonomy are also shared along with implications for nursing education in informatics curriculum development.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Richard Booth is a registered nurse with St. Joseph's Health Care London, and currently works in mental health/psychiatry at Regional Mental Health Care in the Specialized Adult inpatient units. He has a BScN from McMaster University, and recently defended his Master of Science in Nursing thesis at the University of Western Ontario with a focus on distance education and eLearning. Richard continues to work as a research assistant at Western and is currently the Project Lead in the development the RAO eHealth Curriculum for nurses.

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