Radiant Thinking and the use of the Mind Map® in Nurse Practitioner Education

Nurse practitioner faculty continuously strive to provide students with engaging and relevant learning experiences to enhance their academic achievement and for the continuation of knowledge acquisition throughout their future endeavors. Standard teaching and learning processes depend on a linear method, the use of outlines and traditional note taking. Although these techniques are useful, the methods lack engagement, associations and creativity. The concept of radiant thinking promotes all aspects of the brain working in synergy, a natural process, with thought beginning from a central point. The purpose of this poster is to illustrate an enriching and novel learning experience, based upon the concept of radiant thinking, through the use of a mind map®, to facilitate nurse practitioner student engagement and retention of knowledge.

The concept of radiant thinking led to the development of the mind map®, a graphical technique to improve creative thinking and knowledge attainment. A mind map® contains four essential characteristics: the subject as central image, main themes radiate from subject, branches off the main theme, and a connected structure. The map utilizes colors, images, codes and dimensions to amplify and enhance key ideas. This technique augments the visualization of relationships and links between concepts, which aids in information acquisition, data retention and overall comprehension. Mind mapping has proven successes in a variety of settings, from multinational businesses to Olympic athletes.

The use of mind maps® are applicable to nurse practitioner education. Faculty can promote student’s utilization of the technique for brainstorming, organizing ideas, taking notes, learning collaboratively, presenting and studying. These applications can be used in problem-based learning for understanding case studies, developing plans of care, evaluating health promotion activities, synthesizing disease processes, and forming differential diagnosis.

In our family nurse practitioner program, we utilize mind mapping as a cooperative activity, as group and class activities. In one didactic session, students were divided into groups to display the health promotion requirements of a patient as presented in a case study. Once the map was developed, the students presented the map to their classmates. In another session, a didactic lecture was completed on topics related to the older adult patients, the students mapped conditions related to the lecture,and again presented to the other students.

Mind mapping techniques are feasible for replication in a variety of settings. We have instituted this teaching modality in both the classroom and the on-line environment. Mind mapping is a useful adjunct to traditional teaching methods for the nurse practitioner student.

References: