

Column: Current Literature Review

Carrie Meyer, EdD, ATC

Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO

Our charge is to monitor education-related journals (i.e., *Journal of Nursing Education*, *Journal of Higher Education*, etc.) and identify articles which are the most applicable to our readers. We will provide brief synopses of the articles plus potential applications to AT education. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions, comments, or suggestions for this recurring feature or if you would like to review an article that you feel is particularly applicable to athletic training educators. I would also like to hear about implementations you have made from the concepts we present in this feature.

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Van Horn, R., Freed, S. Journaling and Dialogue Pairs to Promote Reflection in Clinical Nursing Education. *Nursing Education Perspectives*. 2008; 29(4): 220-225. Reviewed by Carrie Meyer, Fort Lewis College

Journaling has been shown to increase students' learning and retention especially during clinical or other hands-on experiences. However, it can be a challenge to actively engage students in these learning experiences. The authors contend that by pairing students in the reflection and problem solving process via journaling, they will increase their reflective practices because they will be challenged by their paired student. This study had two groups; group one completed the 'normal' individual journaling assignment following their clinical rotation. Group two students were paired and required to complete one collaborative journaling assignment following their clinical assignment. All students were provided the same journaling assignment regardless of their group. All journal assignments were coded for themes and a rubric was used to identify reflective action. Students in the paired groups showed a significant increase in reflective actions over the 9-week session.



Carrie Meyer is the Director of the ATEP at Fort Lewis College and has been in AT education for over 8 years.
meyer_c@fortlewis.edu

Athletic Training Educators are always striving to increase the student's learning opportunities during their clinical rotations. It can be difficult to help the students connect the clinical learning to the academic concepts they are learning in class. These authors present a new way to increase a student's reflections on their clinical experiences. They provide excellent references for why reflection and guided journal writing are important in the overall learning of students.

Noble, L, Richardson, J. Communication Skills Teaching- Current Needs. *The Clinical Teacher*.

2006: 3(1), 23-28. Reviewed by Courtney Burken, University of Mary-Hardin Baylor

This article identifies communication skills as a critical medical professionalism component, citing research evidence and national policies. Communication is designed to handle circumstances fairly rather than "being nice." Enhancing effective communication requires continuing research, resolution of outstanding topics, and teaching and evaluating communication skills. Effective teaching requires practice with feedback and reflection including thoughtful discussions about communication, appropriate role modeling, effective skills toward everyone, a positive attitude about communication, and reflection and acknowledgment of ineffective communication after the event. Important communication skills and key tips in teaching them are outlined.

Barrington, K., MUDD Mapping: An Interactive Teaching- Learning Strategy. *Nurse Educator*.

2008 33(4): 159-163. Reviewed by Michele Monaco, Ursinus College.

As the paradigm shift to a learning centered classroom continues, new and innovative strategies to engage students in creating the learning environment have emerged. The MUDD strategy, developed by a nurse educator has successfully integrated dialog and debate to comprehend a specific objective, or My Understanding through Dialogue and Debate (MUDD). The acronym MUDD has specific meaning in the development of the learning centered environment. M: "My" refers to ownership of learning. The student must take responsibility to engage in the course and its discussions. U: "Understanding" signifies higher

order thinking in Bloom's taxonomy, a level up from remote memorization. Understanding denotes drawing conclusions from experiences and others' knowledge. D: "Dialogue" represents the expression of understanding an idea. Dialog provides a rich opportunity for others to share experiences, concepts, and discover new information and perspectives. D: "Debate" brings dialog to a higher level of discussion. It provides the opportunity for the learner to demonstrate their well-resourced knowledge in their position on a topic or concept.

The ideas of dialog and debate work well for developing higher order thinking in classrooms that have already established a base of knowledge. Basic rules of dialog and debate engagement are established such as reading the required material prior to participation, and commitment to verbalized thought. Athletic training education courses that involve higher order critical thinking such as evaluation, therapeutic exercise, therapeutic modalities, and ethical administration could benefit from utilizing the MUDD method. By active engagement and dialog students gain a higher understanding of the material and the potential interpretation of others. This method can transform the course(s) into a more meaningful outcome for the student.

Kulik G., Wright R. The impact of grading on a curve: a simulation analysis. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*. 2008; 2(2).

<http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ijstl/current.htm>. Reviewed by David Diers, Governor's State University

This article discusses the concepts of different grading methods on examinations and the inherent limitations in them. This article employs simulation models to determine the accuracy of each type of grading strategy in relation to each student's ability. The focus was on the strategy of "grading on a curve." The simulation completed by the authors found that during this type of grading luck was the greatest determinant for which grade the student received. The luck factor included the ability of the other students, the personalities of the other students, the level of detail of the questions on the examination and many others. An interesting discovery during the simulations was the determinant for grades in a class with all excellent students. Again, the greatest determinant was luck, which was due to the material covered on the examination. In a class of all excellent students, the instructor tends to make the examinations very difficult and detailed because the examination cannot contain all of the information given in the course. With this detail, the questions may focus on obscure ideas. In most cases, the students cannot master all of the obscure ideas in all of their courses. The students who mastered the obscure details that the instructor decided to include on the examination are the ones who will get the good scores.

The article refuted the idea that "grading on a curve" is an effective way to determine the level of ability for the students. In

fact, it could have a detrimental effect on some students. Students who are very competitive but do not do well on these examinations, possibly due to luck or lack thereof, may drop out of competitive programs. Research also shows that females exhibit this behavior more than males. Thus, these examinations may "weed out" a personality instead of academic ability. The article also brought into question how examinations are constructed for classroom with all students of high ability. This article provides excellent information for examination and grading design and is a "must read" for faculty who want to best prepare students.