WHAT ARE PEER-ASSISTED STUDY SESSIONS (PASS) AND HOW CAN THEY INCREASE NURSING STUDENTS' STUDY SKILLS AND IMPROVE GRADES WHILE DECREASING ATTRITION RATES?

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Nursing education programs strive to increase the rates of retention and graduation. The term retention is defined by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), as the total number of nursing students who have met the necessary requirements of their educational program that are within the 150% of the length of the program (ACEN, 2013). When nursing students encounter a challenging course, to be successful and achieve passing grades there needs to be resources that can assist them in enhancing learning in a comprehensive manner. Several international universities around the globe and in the United States have implemented Supplemental Instruction (SI) or as it is otherwise known, Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL) or Peer-Assisted Study Sessions (PASS). This resource was developed to assist students enrolled in higher levels of academia to gather with their peers to collaborate once or twice a week and learn the course content along with sharing test-taking and study skills as they are led by an SI Student Leader with a Faculty member as facilitator. The benefits of SI or PASS sessions enable students to take full responsibility of their learning while increasing their self-confidence as they engage with their peers in an informal, learning environment (Rhodes & Swedlow, 1983). The goal of PASS is to incorporate "how" to learn and then utilize what was learned in a way that allows further intellectual growth to be successful on exams and projects (Spaniol-Matthews, Letourneau, & Rice, 2016, p. 20). In addition, there is observed increasing retention and decreasing attrition rates of nursing schools. Furthermore, when academic assistance is made available to nursing students, they may develop self-confidence and feel better equipped with the enhanced skills to provide quality care.