

Information Literacy: Creating a Basis for Evidence-Based Practice
Robin Fleschler, PhD, RN-C, CNS, rgflesch@utmb.edu
University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, TX

Problem: Nurses need to be proficient with the tools and skills necessary to obtain current evidence for their practice.

Evidence: The majority of nurses are not comfortable or do not know how to access the latest evidence regarding nursing practice. Competence in using information technology and information-seeking for locating research critical to patient care is a key educational skill.

Strategy: The curriculum requires students to use technology to find pertinent evidence as one of the preparation steps for patient care. Nursing faculty and librarians collaborate to design an effective program to equip students with essential skills.

Practice Change: Early in the educational program, BSN students are oriented to technology, information resources, and search strategies helpful for locating evidence for patient care. Sessions organized around clinical scenarios introduce students to a variety of tools including print resources, electronic book collections, CINAHL and Medline. In the senior year, students review searching skills and are introduced to other databases. Students conclude the experience by applying skills learned by searching for evidence on a clinical scenario.

Evaluation: Activities provided in these courses have honed students' information literacy skills in the quest for knowledge that places evidence as a standard part of their practice.

Results: Integrating information literacy into the curriculum has helped give students the appropriate skills at the time of need to optimize learning and to illustrate how evidence fits into nursing practice. Currently outcomes evaluation is underway to ascertain the impact of education regarding information literacy. One student's comment: "I wish I had known how to really use CINAHL and Medline before taking other classes. [Previously] we were only allowed to watch ...and not participate. I could not follow the steps, and it was wasted. I would highly suggest moving this particular lecture, done by the librarians IN the library WITH computers for everyone ...earlier."

Recommendations: Integrate this content in the beginning semesters of BSN education and elaborate and facilitate synthesis as the program progresses.