

Teaching Evidence-Based Practice

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PROBLEM:

Evidence-based practice, the current pinnacle of professional nursing practice, was not in the curriculum framework. The “scientific rationale” component of the nursing care plan is often viewed by the student as the reason for performing the nursing intervention but not necessarily associated with research based evidence. Students have difficulty applying research findings during clinical practice experiences that occur prior to completing the nursing research course. Early incorporation of evidence based practice as part of the research continuum will become the gold standard for this baccalaureate pedagogy.

EVIDENCE:

Hospitals in this metropolitan area emphasize evidence-based practice as essential to contemporary nursing practice due to legal concerns, nursing and client outcomes, policy formation, and cost containment.

STRATEGY:

Introduce evidence-based practice into the Senior Clinical Internship rotation to serve as a bridge between formal nursing education and professional practice. The target group included thirty-four seniors enrolled in a 5-week clinical internship course. The students practiced in four major teaching hospitals and two community hospitals. A clinical worksheet designed for data decision-making was used to evoke clinical inquiry of evidence-based practice. Nursing interventions for evidence-based practice were derived from the students own practice, or those utilized by experienced nurses. Students engaged in reflective practice as a means of examining identified nursing interventions. The students were asked to review relevant research; evaluate the research using Levels of Evidence Rating Scale; consider client and nursing care outcomes; as well as, current policies and procedures.

PRACTICE CHANGE:

Utilize clinical inquiry as the basis for incorporating evidence-based practice into nursing care.

EVALUATION:

This pilot has generated student enthusiasm for applied research in the clinical arena.

RESULTS:

The Senior Clinical Internship is the ideal clinical experience in which to incorporate evidence-based practice into the curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Incorporate evidence-based practice as a research thread throughout this baccalaureate pedagogy.

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