

Toward EBP: Designing Clinically Relevant Student Projects
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Problem: Undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students must be prepared to step up as tomorrow's nursing leaders. Traditionally taught the basics of nursing research, today's students will be expected to participate in transforming practice through EBP. Toward that end, faculty ought to influence this transition by developing clinically relevant learning projects.

Evidence: A select group of articles pertinent to a specific clinical problem were chosen from peer-reviewed literature.

Strategy: Students were assigned to work in groups to explore literature on oral care in the intensive care unit (ICU), summarize its content, develop a step-by-step protocol based upon best evidence reflected in the literature, practice the proposed protocol on a laboratory mannequin and develop a plan for presenting the practice modification to staff, critique the protocol and specifically identify problem areas, and finally, propose suggested revisions if necessary.

Practice Change: While the project addressed a timely clinical need with clear implications for improving patient care, the primary purpose of the assignment was to familiarize students with the process of establishing EBP. In addition to developing and proposing a protocol based upon best evidence available, students were required to plan for staff development related to the proposed modification in practice.

Evaluation: Student success with the project was judged based upon adherence to procedural objectives and evidence of constructive critique in planning and design, including creative development of staff in-service materials.

Recommendations: Nurse educators are well-positioned to facilitate improvement in patient care by supporting the process of transformation from knowledge acquisition through modification in clinical practice. For well over a decade, this faculty member has noted that, when the bar is raised, students tend to aim for—and achieve, the goal. Plans for the future include collaboration with peers at health care institutions to identify clinically useful projects in which students might participate.

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