

Evidence-Based Quality Improvement in Curriculum
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Problem: Declining NCLEX-RN pass rates at West Suburban College of Nursing (WSCN) led some faculty to suspect missing curriculum content. The College, which is owned by a 10-hospital system, serves a vital function by educating and supplying nurses to the poorest and most needy neighborhoods in the Chicago area.

Evidence: The WSCN Curriculum Committee (CC) initiated steps to identify the ideal curriculum for WSCN by gathering data from the (a) WSCN Annual Report profiling characteristics of our students, (b) NCLEX-RN Test Plan, (c) Comprehensive Assessment and Review RN Faculty Guide, (d) Illinois Nurse Practice Act, (e) Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing, (f) 2008 National Patient Safety Goals, Hospitals (JCAHO), (g) a literature review on current curriculum strategies, and (h) course prospecti.

Strategy: The CC developed an instrument representing the ideal curriculum content constructed from the evidence, and then conducted evaluation research using the instrument to evaluate curriculum content and course prospecti in a gap analysis format.

Practice Change: The curriculum content was aligned with current professional standards.

Evaluation: A short-term outcome was the identification of curriculum gaps as measured by comparison of curriculum content to the ideal curriculum content instrument. A long-term outcome was an increase NCLEX-RN pass rates to predefined levels.

Results: Results included findings of missing content in the curriculum, and faculty use of previous course syllabi to update syllabi instead of the course prospectus.

Recommendations:

1. Revise course content to include the missing content.
2. Write a business practice instructing faculty to use course prospecti when updating syllabi.
3. Update the ideal curriculum content instrument as professional standards are updated.
4. Conduct curriculum reviews at predefined intervals.
5. Monitor how course prospecti are interpreted by faculty.
6. Monitor NCLEX-RN pass rates.

References

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