

**The Curriculum Audit: Defining What It Means to Integrate Evidence-Based Practice**  
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**Background:** Evidence-based practice (EBP) is incorporated into typical program outcomes for nursing curricula, but the process of integrating EBP concepts into the curriculum is ill-defined. The course syllabi, course instructions, course calendars, assignments, and reference lists of courses in a baccalaureate program in nursing were examined in a curriculum audit to determine the extent to which EBP assignments were integrated into the curriculum.

**Level of Educational Program:** The level of educational program for the curriculum was the baccalaureate of science in nursing

**Target Learning Outcomes:** The program outcome addressed in this project was the adoption of evidence-based interventions in nursing practice. One objective in each course relates to this terminal objective.

**Teaching-Learning Strategies:** The ACE-Star model (Stevens, 2005) served as the framework for the curriculum audit. An instrument was developed to record the number and types of assignments related to each point on the ACE-Star model (discovery, summary, translation, integration, and evaluation) in the total curriculum. Several exemplar assignments were used, such as appraisals of original research, searches for evidence summaries, examination of practice guidelines, written nursing care plans based on practice guidelines, and participation in evidence-based quality improvement activities. Results of the curriculum audit demonstrated that faculty in most courses required students to find and discuss original research reports. However, few incorporated evidence summaries or practice guidelines as part of their courses and, with the exception of the nursing research course, none required a formal critique of an original research article. Other assignments displaying or incorporating EBP were rare.

**Evaluation:** The EBP curriculum audit will be updated each semester as part of program evaluation. Data will be analyzed to examine trends in application of EBP. Given the importance of meeting program outcomes related to evidence-based practice, the curriculum audit is a useful means to document whether EBP is incorporated into the nursing curriculum.

Stevens, K.R. (2005). *Essential competencies for evidence-based practice in nursing*. San Antonio: Academic Center for Evidence-Based Practice, The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.