



Promoting Patient Centered Care through the Practical Application of Informatics Concepts in a Baccalaureate Nursing Curriculum

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The rapid adoption of electronic health record (EHR) technology, meaningful use requirements, and web based resources in healthcare has produced significant changes in patient care delivery, coordination, and safety. Preparing nurses to incorporate this technology into daily practice is a challenge. Nursing programs that provide informatics education find it difficult to engage students in a practical way and struggle with how to successfully prepare students to function in a technology-enabled health care environment. Clinical sites may not allow students access to chart in the EHR or require lengthy training sessions, limiting exposure to this valuable tool for providing care. As the use of technology expands, the baccalaureate prepared nurse must have the knowledge and skills to use current technologies to deliver and coordinate care across multiple settings, communicate with interprofessional teams, and leverage resources to provide patient centered care. Numerous organizations, such as the America Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the National League for Nursing, the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) project, and the Technology Informatics Guiding Education Reform (TIGER), have prompted educators to incorporate informatics content in nursing curricula. Despite these mandates, informatics integration has been slow and difficult. Stand-alone informatics courses may be offered but not fully integrated with other nursing content in a way that is meaningful to the student or related to patient care. Educators who lack the informatics knowledge to interpret the requirements may choose which competencies to incorporate based on what is familiar rather than what is essential. Practical application and demonstration of EHR skills may be limited due to restraints in clinical sites or lack of funds to purchase simulation software. Unless informatics content is introduced early and reinforced and applied in subsequent courses, opportunities to explore informatics and technology at all levels of learning are lost. The purpose of this project was to examine current informatics concepts and competencies required for clinical practice and to integrate them throughout multiple courses in a BSN curriculum to promote patient-centered care in a safe, practical and meaningful way. A literature review explored best practice models, alternate pedagogies, competencies, and research related to integrating informatics content into baccalaureate nursing education. Student and faculty needs were considered related to knowledge, skills, and the process of team teaching. A conceptual diagram of key informatics concepts across courses and semesters in the new curriculum was developed. Then competency requirements from the BSN essentials, QSEN and TIGER were mapped to specific informatics content as support for inclusion in the courses. Content was reviewed by a panel of informatics experts and baccalaureate faculty to determine validity. The final product resulted in a blueprint for merging informatics competencies throughout multiple courses in the BSN curriculum that included objectives, detailed content outline, and innovative teaching strategies.