

Forging the Road to Quality and Safety in RN to BSN Education through integration of EBP Competencies



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Background

Preventable errors are a major issue in healthcare today⁴. In fact, in May 2016, the British Medical Journal identified medical errors as the third leading cause of death in the U.S.¹ This elevated the call for improved quality and safety throughout healthcare, which begins with quality and safety education. However, the key to success in quality and safety is identifying best practices to integrate from the start. A bad idea executed efficiently and effectively is still a bad idea.

Evidence-based practice (EBP) is a core competency of QSEN and all healthcare clinicians. It is the key to discovering those “best practices” to integrate^{2,3}. Integration of evidence-based practice competencies into an educational program helps students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that promote quality and safety.



Purpose

The purpose of this work is to describe how the EBP competencies were systematically integrated into an RN to BSN EBP course to build the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to empower students to become evidence-based practitioners committed to quality and safety.



Description of the Project

Melnyk, et al.'s EBP Competencies for Practicing Registered Professional Nurses (2014) were integrated into an RN to BSN EBP course and brought to life using project-based learning. Weekly objectives and learning activities were aligned with the EBP competencies. Real-world scenarios provided the foundation, and the EBP competencies framed students' work, which culminated in a deliverable group project presented using educational technology. Students were asked to address a quality and safety issue within healthcare through an evidence-based practice approach in order to understand the EBP competencies and make the connection between EBP, quality and safety. Through this project, students built knowledge, skills and attitudes around EBP as they synthesized the evidence to identify proposed practice changes and identified action steps for creating implementation and dissemination plans.

Comments from students at the end of the course included:

KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS: *“Throughout the course I have developed an appreciation and understanding of EBP. I have the desire to work with the new nurse educator at my facility to help implement EBP to guide the treatment of our patient’s primary and secondary diagnoses to improve patient outcomes. I feel the assignments and projects throughout this class has sparked this desire and has given me the skills and knowledge to help identify clinical inquiry, build a body of evidence, implement change, and to evaluate and disseminate the outcomes. –Teresa C.*

ATTITUDE: *“My beliefs and attitudes towards EBP have definitely changed from week one of this course. I had very limited exposure to EBP prior to this course and felt that it was somewhat of a trend or something that would fade over time. After taking this course however, I know realize that EBP is rightfully here to stay and should be at the foundation for every healthcare organization.—Kip S.*

IMPLEMENTATION: *“I’d like to know if you have any recommendations for education for my team of nurses here about EBP. Most of them have never used EBP before and the concept is brand new to them. There’s a project I’d like to get started on right away. —Tamara D*

(Student testimonials by permission)

Discussion

When the EBP Competencies were integrated into a course, student comments reflected raised awareness, enthusiasm and commitment to addressing quality and safety issues in their work environment. Most student comments reflected intention to integrate EBP into their current practice.

Feedback from students was so compelling that a research study is now being conducted to capture the impact integrating the EBP competencies has on student knowledge, skills and attitudes.



References

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