

Embracing AACN Essential 10: A Nursing Program's Strategy to Support Student Professional Development

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Abstract

Background/Introduction

Lifelong learning is a key aspect of professional nursing practice, and continuing education is a requirement for continued licensure in many states. As highlighted in the AACN Essentials: Domain 10, creating and implementing a meaningful plan for professional development (PD) that supports professional growth is a skill set that nursing students need to develop before entering professional practice.

Purpose

To describe the approach within one college of nursing prelicensure program to provide PD opportunities and a framework for students to use for their future professional growth.

Methods or Processes/Procedures

As part of a Professional Nursing Advisor role, one faculty member facilitated a PD opportunity once a month that was available for all 70 students in the cohort during the two-year prelicensure program. The PD opportunities include a variety of synchronous and asynchronous learning activities that vary monthly. Examples of some of the PD opportunities provided include Speaker Events with practicing nurses, journal clubs conducted by the associated medical center, and opportunities for students to explore their professional interests. Initial data captured includes the number and types of PD activities, alignment of each activity with the AACN Essentials, and the number of students from a single cohort engaging in each type of activity offered throughout the first year of the two-year nursing program.

Results

During the first year of the program, a total of eight PD opportunities were offered including three synchronous and five asynchronous. Student participation ranged from 22-58 per activity. Students then wrote reflections connecting each activity to relevant AACN domains and CNL competencies.

Limitations

The results are not generalizable due to small sample size.

Conclusions/Implications for Practice

Introducing students to different PD opportunities sets students up for future success to continue to develop their professional interests independently. Addressing multiple AACN domains supports students in considering the importance of developing a well-balanced professional development plan.

Biography

Amanda LaMonica-Weier, DNP, MAT, APRN, FNP-BC, CNL, is an Assistant Professor at Rush University College of Nursing in the Department of Adult Health and Gerontological Nursing where she teaches in the General Entry Master's (GEM) nursing program. Dr. LaMonica-Weier has nursing practice experience as a medical-surgical inpatient nurse, a research nurse, and a family nurse practitioner. Dr. LaMonica-Weier integrates her experiences as a nurse and an educator in her Professional Nursing Advisor (PNA) role. As a PNA, she facilitates professional development opportunities aligned with AACN's Essential 10. She has served as the PNA for four cohorts of students.

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