



KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY

Essentials Evolution: Revolutionizing Nursing Education Through AACN 2021 Essentials Adoption



KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY

Miranda Hawks, PhD, RN, CNL

WellStar College of Health & Human Services, WellStar School of Nursing, Kennesaw, GA

Introduction

Background

- Kennesaw State University developed the Essentials Evolution that is a comprehensive process to revolutionize nursing education through the adoption of the AACN 2021 Essentials.
- This transformative process follows the Ottawa Model for Curriculum Renewal that includes the preparatory, active, and evaluation phases over approximately three years.

Purpose

The Essentials Evolution aims to transform nursing education by revising curriculum, developing mental models, and refining academic structures and processes to align with the AACN 2021 Essentials.

Methods

1. Preparatory Phase (2022-2023)

- Fostered faculty and administrative interest through task force and domain team development.
- Collected stakeholder feedback from practice partners in community.
- Conducted faculty development workshops and focus groups on AACN Essentials.
- Implemented community-based curriculum mapping for undergraduate and graduate nursing programs.

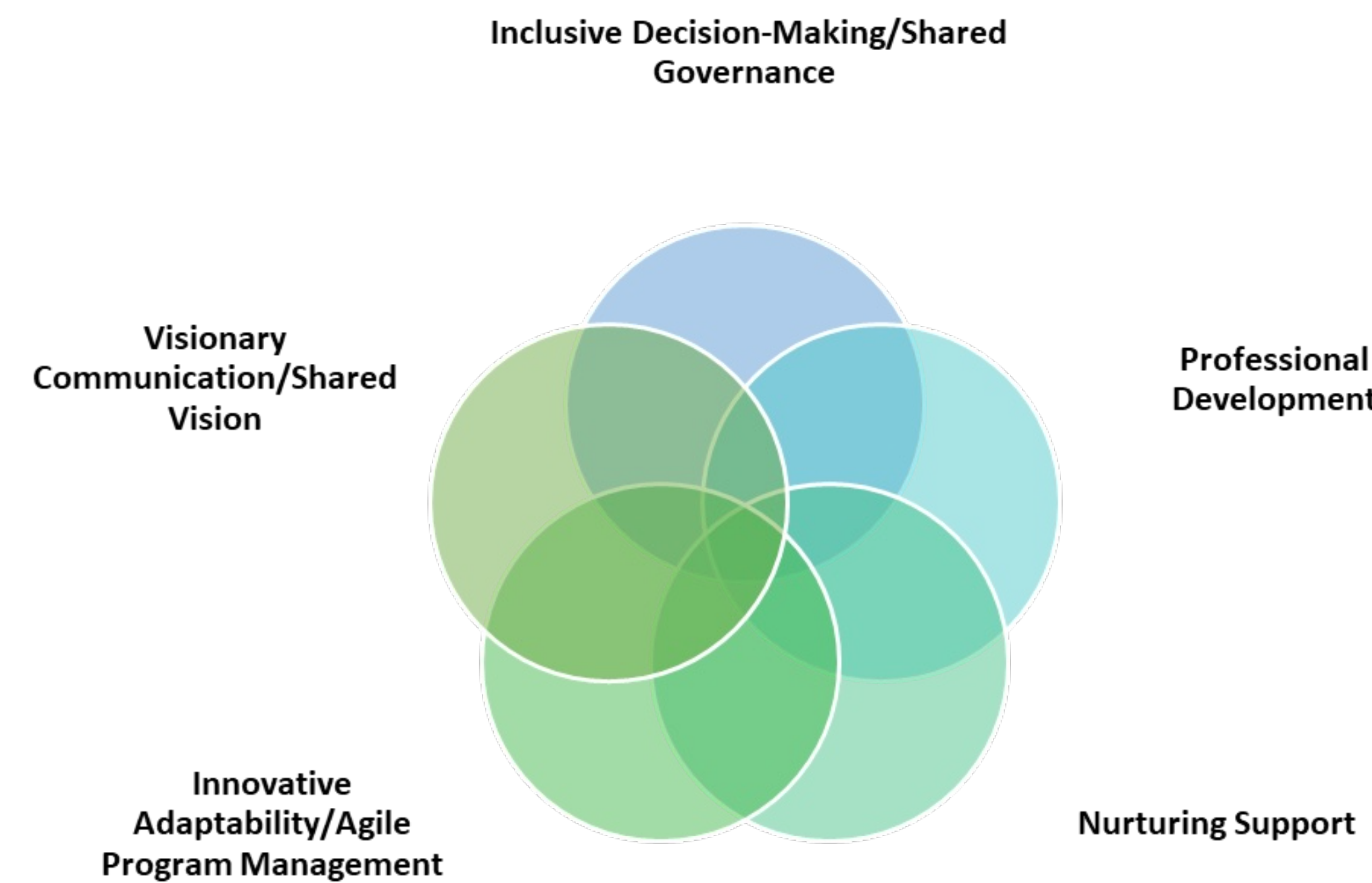
2. Active Phase (2023-2024)

- Domain teams held biweekly meetings to identify gaps and collaborative solutions.
- Emphasized collaboration towards innovation using cross migration of domain teams.
- Finalized curriculum schemas, program, and course proposals.
- Established assessment and evaluation criteria for revised courses and programs.

3. Evaluation Phase (Starting Fall 2025)

- Will implement comprehensive evaluation processes of revised programs.
- Three years of data collection to assess outcomes and competency achievement.

Guiding Principles



Essentials Evolution Overview

Preparatory Phase (2022-2023)	Active Phase (2023-2024)	Evaluation Phase (Fall 2025-2028)
Collect Faculty & Administrative Interest & Feedback	Domain Teams Identify Gaps Using Curriculum Mapping and “Gapping Report Form” (Includes Ideas for Filling Gaps from AACN Teaching Resource Database & Scholarly Education)	Data Collection: Gather data on student performance, faculty feedback, and patient outcomes. Administer surveys to students, faculty, and stakeholders. Conduct focus groups or interviews.
Workshops & Focus Groups on Seminal Documents	Domain Teams Showcase Innovation Ideas for Filling Gaps in Curriculum	Assessment of learning outcomes: Evaluate the effectiveness of the new curriculum schemas, program, and course proposals in assessing the AACN Essentials competencies and sub-competencies and revise CCNE accreditation criteria.
Themed Community-Based Mapping Undergraduate & Graduate Mapping Using Domain Team	Series of 3 “Mini-Competency-Based Education” Training Workshops at Faculty Meetings	Continuous Improvement Planning: Develop plans based on evaluation findings. Identify areas for adjustment and ongoing enhancement.
Rollout Domain Team Structure for Workflow	Program outcome development, course revision, syllabi construction, and finalization of new curriculum using cross migration between domain teams.	Long term planning: Consider sustainability and develop plans for ongoing monitoring beyond the initial three-year period

Results

- The preparatory phase of the Essentials Evolution was successfully implemented during the 2022-2023 academic year.
- The active phase commenced during the 2023-2024 academic year.
- The primary limitation of this process is that the success of the Essentials' Evolution depends on the active engagement and commitment of all faculty beyond their regular workload.

Conclusions

The Essentials Evolution Process presents a promising approach to transforming nursing education to enhance academic nursing and improve patient care by generating practice ready nurses. The successful implementation of this process serves as a model for other institutions seeking to innovate and reimagine the future of nursing education.

Acknowledgments

We extend our deepest appreciation to the entire WellStar School of Nursing administrative, faculty, and staff team for their unwavering support and commitment to excellence has been pivotal to the success of the Essentials Evolution process. Special thanks are extended to the AACN for their invaluable support and mentorship that guides us in reshaping nursing education. This collaborative effort underscores the dedication of our WellStar colleagues and the AACN, and we express heartfelt gratitude for their collective contributions in advancing nursing education and innovation.

References

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2021). The Essentials: Core competencies for professional nursing education. Accessible online at <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/0/PDFs/Publications/Essentials-2021.pdf>

Jager, F., Vandyk, A., Jacob, J. D., Meilleur, D., Vanderspank-Wright, B., LeBlanc, B., ... & Phillips, J. C. (2020). The Ottawa model for nursing curriculum renewal: An integrative review. *Nurse Education Today*, 87, 104344.