School of Nursing

Assessment representative: Sherry Rankin

The degree programs assessed this year: Associate of Science in Nursing and Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing

The following campus learning objectives were assessed for both programs:
1. An educated person should have achieved depth in some field of knowledge
2. An educated person should have conceptual ability
3. An educated person should be able to identify problems and to find efficient solutions to those problems to all areas of life.
4. An educated person should be able to express him/herself clearly, completely, and accurately
5. An educated person should develop the skills to understand, to accept, and relate to people of different backgrounds
6. An educated person should be able to relate computational skills to all fields so that he/she is able to think with numbers.
7. An educated person should be expected to have some understanding of and experience in thinking about moral and ethical problems.

Assessment Methods: The School of Nursing used a variety of methods to secure program assessment data. Exit surveys were given to all graduating students. Alumni surveys are sent on a rotating schedule every two years to graduates who have been out of school at least one year. Assessment Technologies, Inc. (ATI), total assessment package is being used by all students in the form of content mastery exams, RN-predictor exams for NCLEX success, and critical thinking assessments. Leveled self-appraisals are given to students at the end of each year to determine their perception of achievement of level outcomes and competencies. Nursing is also in the process of implementing a portfolio assessment process for the BSN program. Currently it is in the third year of a three year pilot. A sample of student portfolios is judged against level/program outcomes and competencies according to a faculty developed rubric. Until the portfolio process is completed implemented, faculty juries continue to evaluate a sample of student work for written and oral communication.

Use of Results: The nursing curriculum committee also has oversight for program assessment, and reports to the nursing faculty on a regular basis. Results from exit/alumni surveys, ATI critical thinking assessment exam data, communication assignments evaluating oral and writing competencies, ATI content-mastery exams, and leveled self-appraisals have been shared with the nursing faculty on a regular basis. Each semester, nursing has work days where assessment strengths and weaknesses have been discussed. Nursing assessment results are also discussed in regular faculty meetings as data becomes available. Results from ATI RN competency- predictor exams have also been shared with
faculty in spring semester. The Dean of Nursing also shares NCLEX pass rates with the faculty when available. Based on the results reported, faculty continue to develop/revise assignments in their courses to ensure that all program outcomes are addressed.

**Assessment Results and Associated Actions:**
The faculty in the School of Nursing have continued to address the following weaknesses:

- Lack of consistency in evaluating the political awareness program outcome
- NCLEX failures: BSN- 2, ASN-1, and 1 pending results from spring 2006 graduates
- Critical thinking
- Lack of students demonstrating an adequate knowledge base in pharmacology
- Lack of consistency in APA format with written papers in meeting writing criteria

**Political Awareness:** The nursing faculty had determined that the BSN program outcome political awareness had been difficult to measure consistently by the faculty. The faculty agreed that as a school, we needed to discuss ways the outcome could be measured, and to define what political awareness meant to faculty and students. BSN leveled self-appraisal results indicated that the students were undecided and/or agreed as to whether they met this outcome on a consistent basis. At the end of semester faculty meeting, the political awareness program outcome was discussed. As a result, the faculty

- Defined political awareness.
- Developed strategies for classroom and clinical implementation.
- Discussed examples including such topics as patient advocacy and empowerment, safety issues, standards of care, staffing regulations, Medicare and Medicaid, regulatory bodies, and use of appropriate web sites to search for current nursing issues.

At the fall semester work day, the faculty reported on strategies implemented through the year in their courses. Students:

- Are introduced to topics of professional organizations, Medicare and Medicaid, lobbying, online resources for nursing legislature issues, safety standards, and health care delivery. Have opportunities to participate in discussion forums on health care policy and political awareness.
- Write a paper on health care policy at the senior level.
- Have opportunities in clinical to discuss hospital policies pertinent to their patients.
- Have been encouraged to write letters to their legislators on topics such as smoking ban and prevention of medication errors.

Most courses are having the students evaluate this outcome after each clinical experience. The exposure has led to a positive outcome in that students are demonstrating meeting the political awareness outcome.
NCLEX-RN failures: There were 2 BSN NCLEX-RN failures and 1 ASN NCLEX-RN failures (with one ASN result pending).

There has been a change in the reporting times from the Indiana State Board of Nursing and in the criterion used for the national pass rate. The reporting time is now for the calendar year from January through December. The criteria for the national pass rate used to be based upon first time test takers, including foreign born testers. Those who are foreign born are no longer included in the statistic which has resulted in higher national pass rates. Additionally, the standard for program approval in the State of Indiana used to require that all programs maintain a NCLEX-RN pass rate at or above the national average. Three years of failing to do so, resulted in potential program probation. The Indiana state standard is now based upon one standard deviation below the national average. For the ASN program, one standard deviation below the national NCLEX-RN average pass rate was 76.49%. The IUE ASN students average score was 86.36%. For the BSN program, one standard deviation below the national NCLEX-RN average pass rate was 76.49% and the IUE BSN students score was 85.71%. Students who do not pass NCLEX-RN the first time have access to campus resources (e.g. Lee Ann Adams) until they pass the test.

Nursing continues to use the student intervention plan with students who have been identified at risk in their nursing coursework. Students initiate the plan and develop interventions with their course faculty for remediation. Referrals to Tutorial Services have helped the students to become more knowledgeable and successful in test taking strategies. Students have also been referred to the Center of Health Promotion for counseling when appropriate.

All senior students from both programs are required to take the ATI comprehensive predictor assessment exam during spring semester of their senior year to identify risk of NCLEX-RN failure. The ATI RN comprehensive predictor exam is taken early in spring semester, so that students identified at risk, are encouraged to develop intervention plans to facilitate success. Senior level course faculty work with those identified students on an individual basis. Students are encouraged to use online remediation support from ATI. All students, through ATI, are evaluated on course content by taking proctored online comprehensive exams at the end of each semester to measure understanding of content. Students are taking approximately 3 content assessment exams per semester. By taking these tests, nursing hopes to identify weaknesses prior to the end of the program, and provide opportunities for remediation early in the program. Initially, faculty had set individual benchmarks at 60%. If the student failed to meet the benchmark, he or she would need to remediate for the specific content. The ATI company is recommending new norms; changing from benchmark percentages to proficiency levels for 2006-2007. The RN comprehensive predictor exam has been a good predictor for our programs to indicate success on the NCLEX-RN state board exam. When reviewing the results form the comprehensive predictor, the 3 students who failed the NCLEX-RN exam also received score less than 95%. The 2006 RN comprehensive predictor exam national percentile score for BSN was 98%, and the group percentile score was 99%. For the ASN program, the national percentile score was 98%, with a group percentile score of 96%. 

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Faculty discussed the RN comprehensive predictor results at the year end workshop. The content areas to strengthen coverage on were identified in both curriculums.

Senior level course faculty also requires their students from both programs to take practice NCLEX-RN questions on a weekly basis as part of a course requirement. In the A 290 course, the students take 50 questions a week, and use a NCLEX-RN preparation book for review. In the BSN S485 course, students take one half of each class period to study a different area of NCLEX-RN content. The model of critical thinking is used in the collective process. The students also take 50 questions a week with an expectation to get a 70% or better. In the S 483 capstone course, NCLEX-RN questions are also reviewed. Students are also encouraged to attend a NCLEX-RN review course before they take the NCLEX-RN exam. All nursing students also received ATI content review books, DVDs enhancers, and online support.

Critical Thinking: Results from the ATI exit critical thinking assessment exam were also a good predictor indicating which of our students were weak in their critical thinking abilities. Two students out of the three NCLEX-RN failures scored below the group composite score for their program.

For the BSN, the group percentile program score was 52%, with a group percentile national score of 70%. The group composite score was 73%. For the ASN, the group percentile program score was 81%, with a group percentile national score of 74%. When looking at individual scores, it was noted that students may not have taken this exam seriously.

Faculty noted with the fall 2005 sophomores the results from their critical thinking entrance exam were weak in critical thinking abilities. This weakness was also demonstrated in their fundamentals content mastery exam results in summer 2006. Faculty discussed that as juniors in fall 2006, these students needed assistance with reading and study skills, and test taking strategies to enhance their critical thinking skills. Piloting in fall 2005, LeeAnn Adams from Tutorial Services, began attending each class session of the BSN medical-surgical H 353 course. She has held study sessions twice a week, held a test taking workshop, and assisted students with reading skills. She has also met with nursing students on one-on-one assistance that were identified by student intervention plans. Students have indicated that LeeAnn’s interventions have been helpful. LeeAnn has also offered study skill and test taking strategy workshops in Jumpstart sessions at the beginning of each semester.

Pharmacology: Another area of weakness identified was lack of knowledge in pharmacology. Students have consistently, through the results of the exit surveys, that they believe they are weak in pharmacology and would like to see a separate pharmacology course in the curriculum. Faculty have continued to emphasize the importance of integrating the pharmacological concepts within each course where applicable. Students have been given ATI pharmacology books, DVDs, and have online support.
enhancers assessments made available to them. Students have indicated that they use these resources. Faculty reinforce pharmacology principles with medication administration in the clinical setting. We have offered an on-line pharmacology elective course and have cancelled it twice for low enrollment. The Nursing Jumpstart program has also offered sessions on pharmacology which are also poorly attended. In the spring semester of the senior year, students in both programs took the ATI RN pharmacology content mastery exam. Spring 2006 was the first time this exam was given, since the ATI program was initiated in fall 2005 at IU East. Students did well on this exam. For the BSN seniors, the group percentile rank national score was 95, and the percentile rank program score was 99%. For the ASN seniors, the group percentile rank national score was 91% with a group percentile rank program score of 83%. Faculty were not satisfied to just let the numbers stand, they decided to examine the results for any areas of weakness. It appears that even though students have perceived that their pharmacology knowledge base has been lacking or weak, their ATI pharmacology scores indicated that their knowledge is above average. The School of Nursing curriculum committee, which involves representation from all the campuses, has discussed whether to have a separate pharmacology course included in the curriculum. School of Nursing campuses reported that their ATI RN pharmacology exams scores also indicated students’ pharmacology knowledge was above average. Faculty decided in the SON curriculum committee that the evidence did not indicate the need to have a separate pharmacology course in the BSN curriculum. Faculty discussed the importance to continue integrating pharmacology concepts with a change to increase the focus in all nursing courses.

**Writing Competencies and APA format:** The use of APA format is a requirement in all written papers in the nursing curriculum. Although students are improving on the use of APA format, grammar, and sentence structure, these continue to be identified as weaknesses in written assignments. During our nursing Jumpstart in the spring 2006, students were offered the opportunity to attend an APA format workshop, or go to the writing lab in Tutorial Services. Dr. Clark has offered to hold an APA Jumpstart workshop in the fall 2006 for all students. The faculty have identified courses in each semester that have required written assignments across the curriculum and during the 2005-2006 academic year were updated on changes in the APA format for consistency of use. Faculty have also referred students to web resources for APA assistance.

**Additional information:** Nursing continues to explore the use of portfolios to showcase student work, as well as for program assessment. During the past year, the faculty have gained a better understanding of the portfolio use. Several discussions have taken place in faculty meetings to identify areas where portfolio development can be improved and explained to students more effectively. Faculty verbalized that they had to understand the use of the portfolio and the criteria for assignments before they could inform the students. It has been a learning process for the faculty, the curriculum committee, and the students. In the fall 2005, portfolios from the students who had completed the sophomore level were evaluated using the developed rubric. Faculty on the curriculum committee had difficulty in evaluating the assignments in the portfolios involving all the 9 outcomes.
Assignments placed in the portfolio did not demonstrate student self reflections of leveled competencies, appropriate matching of the assignment to the assigned outcome, or no there was no assignment to evaluate in the portfolio folder. The expectation from the evaluation rubric was a score of “achievement” of the outcomes. The rubric key was graded as follow: 1= insufficient achievement, 2= achievement, 3= excellence. In cooperation with the campus data specialist, scores were tabulated. The total average scores for each of the nine outcomes evaluated did not score at achievement level. Result were discussed with the faculty. The question we are now struggling with is “are the results indicative of poor outcome/competency achievement or are they more a result of our process?” Strategies were discussed on how to make sure that course assignments reflect the expected outcomes and competencies of the student level (sophomore, junior, senior). Faculty also discussed the importance of building the foundation for portfolio development at the sophomore level. The importance of self reflection was emphasized and strategies were developed to help students understand how to do a self reflection. Faculty did identify that this development and evaluation process is ongoing. Working on the rubric refinement based upon the use is ongoing.