

QEP Executive Summary

Learning to Learn: Improving Nursing Student Success

Lurleen B. Wallace Community College

The Quality Enhancement Plan addresses the need to increase student learning in first-semester practical nursing courses identified as barriers to student success. Through the college's institutional effectiveness process, NUR 102 Fundamentals of Nursing, NUR103 Health Assessment, and NUR104 Introduction to Pharmacology were identified as having the college's highest failure and withdrawal rates. Certain modules within these courses were identified by students and faculty as the most difficult to learn. Research revealed several factors which negatively impacted student learning: (1) faculty used lecture as the major teaching method; (2) the Practical Nursing Program employed five new instructors with no previous teaching experience within a two-year period; and (3) changes in the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-PN) required a higher degree of course knowledge and critical thinking.

The plan is focused on providing practical nursing students with strategies to be successful learners in barrier nursing courses by educating instructors in effective pedagogy and infusing nursing courses with active learning techniques. Goals of the QEP are:

- 1) Increase the retention rate of nursing students in the first semester by 2 percent each year beginning in 2008 using a benchmark of 55 percent; and
- 2) Increase the graduation rate of nursing students by 28 percent by the end of the fourth year of the QEP project using a baseline of 22 percent.

Objectives provide specific outcomes to evaluate success of the plan. To achieve outcomes, strategies include the assessment of students' learning styles and incorporation of active learning techniques accommodating these styles. Activities also include tutoring in specific modules; use of the Tegrity program available through the college's web site to provide on-demand video, audio, and written techniques explaining difficult concepts; and utilization of computer assessment tools to provide additional feedback to students.

Strategies to improve instructional techniques include professional development activities for nursing faculty at the local and national level. Through workshops, seminars, and weekly nursing faculty meetings, instructors will learn to use technology and teaching strategies which incorporate active learning components in barrier nursing courses.

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