Orienting Nurse Educators towards Teaching Competencies through Internet

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Abstract: *Teaching in nursing is a dynamic, complex and an abstract concept. Teaching is a system of directed and deliberate action that is intended to induce learning through a series of directed activities. Within this process, the faculty is responsible for creating environments and experiences which encourages learners to discover and construct knowledge for them.*

Today nursing education is poised for bringing about sweeping changes. The driving forces for these changes are numerous and difficult to isolate. These include increasing multiculturalism of society; more financial resources in education and health care; expanding technology and the need for life-long learning; and the increasing public demand for accountability of educational outcomes. Some of the major forces and issues which nurse educators must consider as they discharge the responsibilities of their role are discussed in the paper. Utilization of internet for research materials by teachers and nurse practioner will enhance research implementation and enable the practice of evidence based nursing.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss and reveal possibilities of using online technology by nurse educators, especially computer-based communication tools, potentially permit greater flexibility for users.

Nurse Educators' Role: Historical Perspective

The role of the nurse educators in health care system has been changing rapidly over the years. In the history of nursing education, three phases of overlapping development have been discussed.

The **first phase** of development occurred during colonial times. Heavily influenced by the British tradition, the role of nursing educators in the colonial period was a singular one, that of teaching. The educational system was expected to educate and morally uplift the novice nurses. Nursing faculty was expected to provide service to the institution and teach new nurses on the existing lines. Nursing students were expected to learn while rendering assistance to staff of the hospital.

In the **mid-nineteenth century**, nursing education entered the university setting; nursing faculty began to uphold the same standards of research productivity as faculty in other, more traditionally academic based disciplines. Because of the prominence of practice in nursing, the integration of theoretical knowledge, practice and attitude were the required roles of the nursing faculty.

As the **twenty first century** approaches, rapidly changing environment and health care reforms are having a dramatic effect on the new roles of the nursing faculty. Changes in health care demand that the nursing faculties critically evaluate the competencies of their own as well as evaluate the curricula design. There is an increasing emphasis on the teaching role of nursing faculty with accompanying expectations that the outcomes of the educational process will be regularly assessed at the institutional level as well as at the programme level.

The new information technologies (IT) in the 21st century affect currently most spheres of life, including education at all levels. In the last few years dozens of conferences were devoted to examining various aspects of the new technologies' impact, and hundreds of scholarly articles and books were published on IT related themes. Unquestionably, the IT bears a tremendous potential to change and reshape conventional study environments.

Further, changes during the last ten years in nursing education include a revolution in teaching strategies. The faculty are now integrating the use of technology into their teaching and promoting the active involvement of learners in the teaching - learning process. ICT has assumed increasing importance in education.

Concept of Virtual Nursing

Virtual Nursing training methodology is a major innovation which has taken place at the end of last century and at the beginning of the present century. The nursing profession is recognizing and implementing the significant trends that are being fostered by technological advances. Nursing education has responded very well to the requirements of information age. Numerous training technologies and innovations have been developed and are being implemented all over the world.

The internet offers challenging educational opportunities for continuing education to an international audience. It is high time to introspect and bring about necessary changes in the approach to the profession to remain relevant.

The use of information technology does not mean merely the use of computers in learning; it is much more than that. It may be a necessary and first step. Nurses have much to gain by participating in the engineering of nursing information system that expedite information management and processing.

It has been found in earlier works that an effectively designed and managed computerized information system can augment and improve nursing education and nursing management system.

Good educational software is a synergism between the unique features of a computer and a learning design that integrates these features into a meaningful learning package. Jymehyshyn (1983) described that computer technological ingenuity far outreaches the ability of educators to integrate into lesson and used as continuing education for them.

It is indisputable that nurses preparing to meet the increased demands for data-based outcomes also acquire new opportunities for meeting the health needs of their clients. The rise in spread of internet between the end of 20th century and the beginning of 21st century is important. Major efforts were made to create information on infrastructures for those who use the internet. This represented 35% of the adult Americans who show an increase of 26% from the previous year.

Developing Internet Module on Teaching Competencies for Nurse Educators

India has accepted education as a highway to achieve its long cherished goals, which is a panacea to overcome its problems and is a crucial input in its development. It is necessary for transforming people as productive and useful human resources rather than leaving them to continue to be a liability. Maintenance of quality of education without the support of a good teacher is a misnomer. The changing world requires a change in teachers' roles as well. To keep pace with these changing trends, there is a need for a sound continuing education of nursing educators.

International Commission of UNESCO (2001), on education for the twenty first century reported that formal education system tends to emphasize the acquisition of sustainable skills. But it is vital now to conceive education in a more encompassing fashion. Such a vision should inform and guide future educational reforms and policy in relation to contents and of knowledge methods. The progress of the new information and communication technologies should lead to a general deliberation of an access to knowledge in the world of tomorrow.

It is worthwhile to mention here that in India during the past five years there has been very fast developments in use of the internet. It facilitates the connectivity of the country in government and non-government organizations. Public access to internet is often in the form of an "Internet Cafe". This is an effective, easily accessible, time saving and cost-effective method of communication and a source of information. In an advanced country like America," American Nurses Association" has started developing Continuing Nursing Education Programme which are based on clinical nursing practice namely, "Low back Pain", "HIV in Primary Care" and "Aspect of Minor Oral Surgery" on the Internet. Development of a learning programme on the Internet includes considerable planning, multidisciplinary involvement and critical evaluation of the programme. Instead of the traditional face-to-face involvement, without attending the regular courses, the learners can participate in their own setting through the electronic media.

Nursing is a dynamic process which always changes with the advancement of medical technology. This needs unceasing Continuing Nursing Education for nurse educators. Nurse educators need to develop specific teaching competency and clinical skills to demonstrate new technological changes in medical science while dealing with the students. Nurse educators need a periodical reinforcement with a media that would be easily accessible, time saving and economically viable. Internet Modular Material on teaching competency would be answer to this problem.

Designing the Internet Modular Material on teaching competency helps to keep nurses abreast of new teaching technology and maintaining minimum teaching skills.

Internet Modular Materials on Teaching Competency for nurse educators is developed by author of this article, for detail login:
http ://www.bhojvirtualuniversity.com/phd

The steps followed in development of Internet Modular Material is shown in Figure-1

Constant Feed Back and Review of Internet Modular Material

Context
Need assessment to develop Internet Modular Materials on teaching competency of nurse educators in terms of CNE and use of internet media fore CNE

Output
- Internet Modular Materials on teaching competency viewed as good quality of CNE tool.
- High acceptance of Internet Modular Materials on teaching competency by nurse educators

Input
- Designing Internet Modular Materials on teaching competency of nurse educators.
- Availability of Internet Modular Materials on CDs and printed text.

Process-III
- Collection of opinion to assess the acceptance and utility of Internet Modular Materials on teaching competency by the nurse educators as a method of continuing nursing education.

Process-I
- Content validity of newly devised Internet Modular Materials on teaching competency of nurse educators by the nursing experts.

Process-II
- Assessment of Internet Modular Materials on teaching competency by nurse educators by the experts from the field of website programmer.
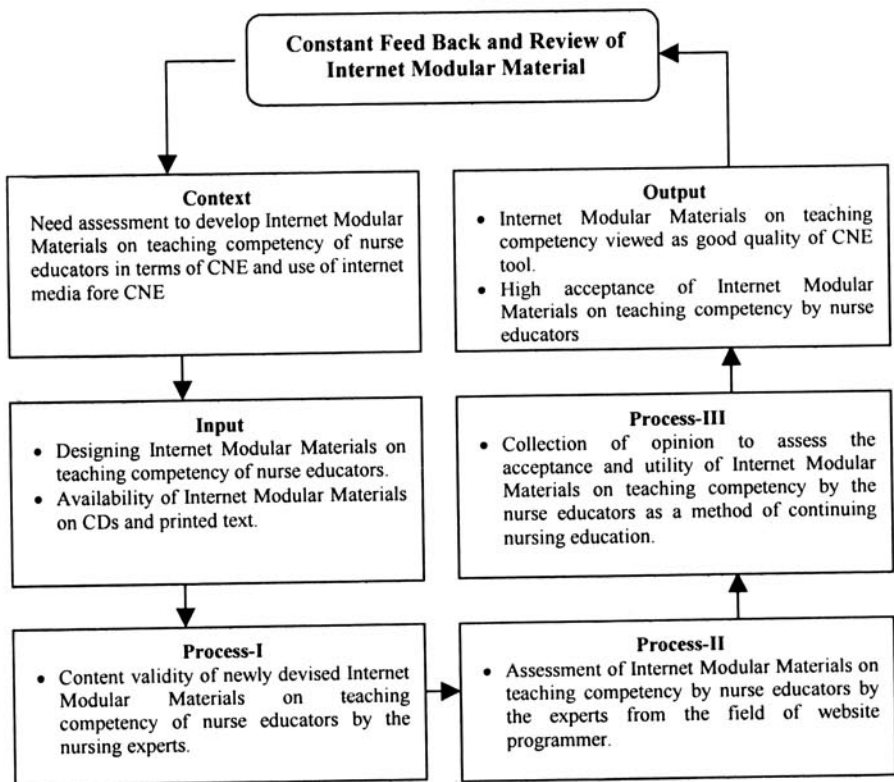
Figure-1

The competencies available on Internet are given in the form of self appraisal with 3 points scale. The competencies are describe in brief later in the paper.

Significance of Teaching Competencies for Nurse Educators

Teaching in the nursing profession is a complex activity which integrates both the art and science of theory and of clinical practice. Specifically, **teaching involves, a set of skills or competencies** that are essential to facilitate learners' outcome. These competencies can be developed through internet based training on competencies,

orientation programme of the trainers and by providing career advancement opportunities using new information communication technologies. These are most recent methods to develop competencies in a short time span.

Basic assumptions for teaching competencies are:

* Competencies require knowledge, skill and judgment.
* Competencies shall be demonstrated by all nurse educators at higher level of achievement.
* Competencies shall be directed towards well defined learning goals.
* Competencies shall be performed within the context of conceptual model of teaching competencies.
* Competencies shall be focused on individual learner.

Competency In Teaching Domains Required For Nurse Educators

Competency 1: Proficiency With Curriculum

This assists nurse educators in determining a sound knowledge of core curriculum standards which a nurse educator is supposed to demonstrate. These are :

* Possess Clarity of Presentation.
* Display extensive context knowledge.
* Use strategies to motivate ability.
* Demonstrate professional ability.
* Promote learner understanding.
* Demonstrate effective closure of lesson with provision of challenges to learners.

Competency 2: Evaluating Learners Growth

This competency assists nurse educators to observe instructional practices which promote learners academic achievement. These are :

* Techniques aiding comprehension.
* Monitoring activities of learners.
* Using goal-setting strategies.
* Empowering learners to succeed.
* Employing current strategies to evaluate learners.

Competency 3: Preparation and Readiness

This quality assists the nurse educators in determining the impact of the quality on planning and the degree of organization in lesson. This competency also includes practice related to professional performance.

Competency 4: Instructional Performance

Competency in instructional performance assists the nurse educators in assessing the quality of instructional delivery witnessed during the observed lesson. These practices are also viewed in terms of their positive effect on learners.

Competency 5: Educational Climate

This competency assists the nurse educators in determining and promoting conducive climate to learners and in promotion of positive self esteem in learners.

Competency Profile of Nurse Educators in Clinical Domains

Competency 1: Interpersonal / Assisting Role
Competency 2: Educators Role For Client
Competency 3: Therapeutic Interventions
Competency 4: Management of Changing Situations
Competency 5: Quality Assurance in Care
Competency 6: Leadership Role at Clinical Setting
Competency 7: Professional Development

The new information technologies exhibit a wide range of qualities and abilities in different domains of educational practices. The media through which distance education had been operating through the centuries was quite simple. When Apostle Paul, for instance, sent letters to early Christian communities in the Mediterranean, his disciples wrote his words on a papyrus, which is a tough and flexible medium that can survive long and difficult journeys.

The invention of print, the advent of postal services and the development of professional publishing houses have stimulated the use of written text for correspondence education purposes. Radio has been added as a distance education medium at the beginning of the twentieth century and television has been incorporated by several distance teaching universities since the late 1960's. All these media have clear-cut and transparent characteristics that have been utilized by distance educators for mainly delivering study materials to learners at a distance. The new IT opened up possibilities to design new study environments that have not been feasible beforehand for both on-campus and off-campus learners.

Conclusion

Nurse educators' expertise is the single most important determinant of student nurse' achievement Education reformers over many years have reminded us to improve student nurses' achievement, as it is required to improve the nurse educators performance and quality. It is believed that through Internet nurse educators can appraise themselves for self existing teaching qualities. The newly developed Internet Modular Materials on Teaching **Competency for Nurse Educators** will surely enhance the competency level of nurse educators in classroom teaching as well as at the clinical setting. Author also believes that the nurse educators will enjoy the self assessment through Internet at their own place within the convenient time.

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