



Strategies for Transformative Change

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP

Transformative Change Initiative Overview

The Transformative Change Initiative (TCI) is dedicated to assisting community colleges to scale-up innovations that improve student outcomes and program, organization, and system performance.

Transformative Change Definition

Raising the individual, organizational and system performance of community colleges to unprecedented levels without sacrificing their historic commitment to access and equity.

TRANSFORMING NURSING PROGRAMS TO REDUCE TIME TO COMPLETION

The Path to Accelerated Completion and Employment (PACE) initiative was undertaken by a consortium of all 22 community and technical colleges in Arkansas, led by NorthWest Arkansas Community College (NWACC). Funding was provided to the PACE consortium through a Round One U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant to focus on improving retention, increasing achievement rates and reducing time to completion. The consortium aimed its efforts at the manufacturing industry sectors and healthcare fields with three strategies:

1. Transform developmental education.
2. Streamline certificate and degree pathways.
3. Enhance student support technology and advisement systems.

STRATEGY DEFINITION

This brief focuses on the efforts of the nursing programs at Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas (PCCUA) to reduce time to completion, increase achievement, and enhance student support. To accomplish these goals, PCCUA involved healthcare providers, faculty, students, college curriculum committees, the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, and the Arkansas State Board of Nursing.

Path to Accelerated Completion and Employment (PACE)

<http://www.nwacc.edu/web/pace>

Major Factors that Influenced the Implementation of Streamlined Pathways/Curricula

- Statewide momentum. Streamlining certificate and degree pathways aligned with a movement within the state of Arkansas to establish 60-hour associate degree programs in nursing (ADN).
- Consortium leadership. Early in the grant period, NWACC invited program directors and faculty from all 22 community colleges to attend three workshops. Here the faculty met Dr. Linda Caputi, a nursing education curriculum and program design expert, who subsequently worked on the PCCUA campus with the program director and faculty to develop a new contemporary ADN curriculum that maintained quality instruction and learning and reduced the program from six to five semesters.
- Respect for value of program. The respect and understanding of the mission of the ADN program were key factors in motivating the team to work together to achieve programmatic efficiencies. The ADN faculty and program director received support from PACE and PCCUA administrators to make curricular changes. The PACE consortium members at PCCUA approached this strategy with buy-in from industry partners, education administration, nursing faculty, and program directors. All of their expertise was important in achieving program goals.
- Building on success. The redesign of the ADN program resulted in the buy-in of the Practical Nursing (PN) program faculty and director, who redesigned the PN curriculum with the help and guidance of the curriculum expert.

Redesign of Curricula in an Era of Increasing Complexity in Healthcare

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

The team worked together to revise the framework for the ADN program that included a new mission statement, program philosophy, along with course descriptions with learning outcomes and associated competencies. The faculty also agreed to use cognitive and adult learning educational theories to provide the foundation for the learning environment and Benner's Novice to Expert Theory to teach clinical judgment. Courses were sequenced to represent higher cognitive levels, a different patient population, and increasingly complex nursing knowledge and skills.

CURRICULUM REDESIGN

Through a deliberative process, the curriculum expert, ADN faculty, and the program director established what nurses must know to pass the licensure exam and enter the workforce. The team examined all courses and collaborated in the development of a new curricular pattern.

Two general education courses, Microbiology and Sociology, were deleted from the program, and the remaining general education requirements were redistributed across four semesters. No general education courses are required in the fifth semester to enable students to concentrate on clinical experiences. Two Nursing courses, Nutrition and Concepts of Client Care Management, were eliminated as separate classes. The concepts previously taught in these general education and nursing courses pertaining to: (1) microbial safety, (2) nutrition, (3) nursing management, and (4) sociology were integrated into nursing courses across the curriculum.

After reviewing the current National Council for Licensure Examination (NCLEX) test plan as well as current practice standards and guidelines, the faculty selected curricular content. Nursing content was divided into four courses with each having a theoretical and a clinical component. The number of lecture and clinical hours required for each course per week are depicted in the table below.

Four Nursing Courses

Concepts of Nursing Care for Patients with:	Credit Hours	Lecture	Clinical
Chronic, Stable Conditions	7	6	3
Acute, Stable Conditions	9	6	9
Acute and Chronic, Unstable Conditions	12	7	15
Complex Conditions	12	7	15

More information on the nursing courses may be found on page 64 of the 2015-16 Course Catalog, which can be found at: http://www.pccua.edu/images/uploads/content_files/15-16_Catalog-11-03-15.pdf

CURRICULUM APPROVAL

Approval of the new curriculum was sought sequentially from the following PCCUA entities: (1) the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee; (2) the Instruction and Curriculum Committee; (3) and the Board of Visitors; and then from the entities of: (4) the University of Arkansas System; (5) the Arkansas Department of Higher Education; and (6) the Arkansas State Board of Nursing Education Committee. After approval, the old curriculum was gradually phased out, and the new curriculum implemented in the fall of 2014.

A substantive curriculum change report was submitted in April of 2014 to the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) for review. After review, ACEN conducted a Focus Visit in the fall of 2015 to discuss the curriculum with the ADN faculty and students. Based on the report submitted and Focus Visit findings, the program's accreditation status was reaffirmed with the next scheduled review in 2017.

ADAPTING THE CURRICULUM REVISION TO ANOTHER PROGRAM

The success in revising the ADN program spurred the team to enlist the assistance of the curriculum expert to develop a new curriculum for the Practical Nursing (PN) program.

Congruency between the PN and ADN curricula provides licensed PN graduates with an opportunity to obtain advanced placement in the PCCUA ADN program. There are three ways a licensed practical nurse may seek advanced placement in this program, which is consistent with the statewide progression model which can be found at: <http://www.arsbn.arkansas.gov/forms/Documents/Education%20Progression%20Model11.2014.pdf>

SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING

PCCUA also worked to enhance the students' learning environment. Nursing computer labs were updated to give students access to: (1) web-enhanced nursing courses; (2) web-based Assessment Technology Institute (ATI) real life scenarios; (3) computerized practice and final ATI assessment exams; and (4) computerized course unit and final exams that mirror delivery of the NCLEX-RN licensure exam.

In addition to updating computer labs, PCCUA purchased simulation equipment for the nursing skills lab and library resources to ensure that all students would have access to textbooks and opportunities to learn through simulation.

Curricular changes now allow students to begin allied health careers at different entry points. Pathways can begin with entry into the nursing assistant program and progress through the PN program into an ADN program and on to a baccalaureate, master, and doctoral degree programs. For those students who are unsuccessful in the ADN program, advance placement can be sought in the PN program rather than dropping out. Students that successfully complete the PN program, pass the licensure exam, and meet prerequisite requirements, may then seek advanced placement in the ADN program. Finally, an AAS Health Science degree is also available for students that fail to complete the last semester of the ADN program. These students can now complete a two-year college degree and may elect to continue their education at four-year universities.

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