



Preparing Nursing Faculty for the AACN Shift to Competency-Based Education

WGU LABS PROVIDED A GAP ANALYSIS AND TASKFORCE TRAINING TO EMPOWER STANDARDS ALIGNMENT



Alignment with CBE Essentials

BACKGROUND

Hundreds of colleges and universities will be required to align their undergraduate and graduate nursing programs to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's (AACN) Essentials by 2026. This work involves a careful review of an institution's overall teaching approach, including instructional content and assessments, **to mitigate gaps between curricula and the new competency-based education (CBE) standards.**



CHALLENGES

University administrators indicated they experienced the following challenges in aligning their programs to the New Essentials CBE standards:



APPLICATION

Difficulty appreciating what competency-based education is and how to apply it



CONFUSION

The Essentials competencies and sub-competencies were perceived by faculty to be overwhelming and unclear



TIME

Difficulty finding time to engage faculty in a deep curriculum review and analysis to aid the transition toward the new standards



RESOURCES

Curricular reviews represent tedious work



Learn more at <https://wgulabs.org/CBEnursing/>

THE SOLUTIONS

The school of nursing needed a partner who could guide faculty to **transition their courses and programs to the new standards**. To support this need, the WGU Labs team began by reviewing course outcomes and instructional content across all undergraduate and graduate nursing courses. This review allowed the Labs team to determine alignment and gaps with the AACN Essentials.

The Labs team then conducted a **six-part workshop series** with a steering committee consisting of **several administrators and faculty over seven months**. These workshops included curriculum mapping, assessment design, active learning strategies, and program evaluation.

THE RESULTS

The WGU Labs team helped the nursing program to:

- conduct a **program review of all courses and assessments**.
- provide opportunities for **faculty to engage in deep discussion about their courses** and adopt a wider perspective about the overall curriculum.
- **prepare their CBE taskforce with skills and resources** they can use to engage faculty in ongoing discussions about preparing their courses to align to the New Essentials.

SIX-PART WORKSHOP SERIES

- Faculty & administrator engagement
- Active learning strategies
- Curriculum & assessment reviews
- Program evaluation & gap analysis for AACN alignment

“This process forces faculty to reflect on their courses and find ways to improve their instructional content and assessments.”

ABOUT THE CLIENT

The client represents a school of nursing at a large research university. The institution currently offers several undergraduate and graduate programs with just under 1,000 students enrolled. ©

WGU Labs examines, invents, builds, and enables innovative education solutions that multiply the effects of WGU’s mission to have a transformative impact on higher education.



Learn more at
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