

Returning Nursing Students Safely to the Nursing Learning Center Lab



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PROBLEM

After the closure of the campus in Mid-March 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic, the senior nursing students were not able to return to campus to practice their nursing skills.

In the interim when campus was closed, the senior students were able to participate in a live online 3-hour class taught by four nursing faculty to virtually review several skills needed by new nurses.

Students provided feedback that the virtual opportunity was helpful, but they continued to feel anxious related to not having the hands-on opportunities to actually practice the skills in the Nursing Learning Center Lab.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Process Improvement Project was to provide a safe environment to bring the students back into the Nursing Learning Center and to provide an opportunity to refine the skills they have learned throughout the nursing program.

PROJECT QUESTIONS

1. What are the requirements or recommendations for opening on-campus lab?
2. What are the PPE requirements required for the students and faculty?
3. What are the requirements for cleaning the materials used and lab spaces to be used for the weekly sessions?
4. How many students are allowed to be in the lab/designated space at one time?
5. What are the necessary screening requirements needed to be completed to come on campus and enter the buildings?

METHODS

Process Improvement Project

Over the summer the Nursing Department provided a faculty member to the University COVID-19 committee to represent our needs and ensure the safety of the students during the COVID-19 Pandemic. A COVID-19 Pandemic Workforce Member Entry Screening Standard Operating Procedure and a Nursing Learning Center Code of Conduct were developed and implemented by the University to allow the students to return to the lab under strict conditions.

After returning to the lab:

- Evaluated the safety of the students on campus and in the lab
- Explored the student's satisfaction related to
 - Skills reviewed virtually
 - Hands on skills practiced in the lab under the new protocols

NURSING LEARNING CENTER PROTOCOL

• Expectations

- a. Prior to entering the lab – complete campus required COVID-19 Screening process.
- b. University provided face masks must be worn at all times in NLC. Cloth masks are not acceptable.
- c. Eye protection, including a face shield or goggles, must be worn at all times in the NLC.
- d. NLC will provide students one face shield for recurrent usage.
- e. Isolation gowns are to be worn in the NLC, when patient care activities are performed.
- f. Maintain social distancing while in the lab and on campus.

RESULTS

After following the recommendations of the COVID-19 Pandemic Workforce Member Entry Screening Standard Operating Procedure and the Nursing Learning Center Code of Conduct Protocol, the students were able to safely return to the Nursing Learning Center and practice their skills. Students were asked to provide feedback on their experiences in both the online virtual skills review and the return to the lab with the restrictions as outlined in the new protocols. It was found that the students preferred being in the lab, stated they felt safe, and no COVID -19 cases were reported after participating in the skill practice sessions in the Nursing Learning Center Lab. The students expressed feeling an increase in their confidence in completing their skills in the clinical areas after having the hands-on time in the nursing lab. Additionally, the students expressed an increase in satisfaction regarding their final trimester after being provided the safe experience to practice their skills in the Nursing Learning Center.

CONCLUSION

The students were able to remain safe after returning to the lab and the restrictions and preventive measures continue to be strictly followed.

