

Incorporating an Information Technology Teaching Assistant (IT-TA) Into an Undergraduate Nursing Curriculum

Nicholas Cress, BCSN; Mikheil Matcharadze BCSN; Teresa Villaran MSN, APRN-BC, CCRN.
Berea College

ABSTRACT

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) recognize informatics as an essential part of baccalaureate nursing education. According to the TIGER (Technology Informatics Guiding Education Reform) initiative, the nursing profession has been slow to include information technology into nursing education. Lack of informatics knowledge in healthcare can lead to increased staffing needs, patient care errors, and organizational and work flow disruption (Kulhanek, 2011). To help students and faculty in the Berea College Nursing Program keep abreast of technology use, we created a permanent labor position, Information Technology Teaching Assistant (IT-TA). The IT-TA role is intended to promote knowledge and skills of nursing students through the use of technology. The skills obtained in health informatics promote a strong, knowledgeable workforce that can provide the leadership needed for safe, exceptional care (Cipriano, 2011). This project was funded by the Work Colleges Consortium requiring the integration of education, work experience and service to others.

Project Significance

2009: The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act promoted the adoption and meaningful use of health information technology.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM): committed to technology led healthcare reform.

The TIGER initiative advocates using informatics tools, principles, theories and practices in nursing.

AACN and QSEN: Informatics are an essential part of baccalaureate nursing education.

Fall 2012: Berea College Nursing Program piloted an Academic Electronic Health Record (AEHR).

IT-TA Duties

➤ Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)

- Create learning modules for use of technology.
- Educate students in safe practices in the use of technology.
- Help students utilize computers and tablets for web based software.
- Assisting students with technology based assignments.

➤ Faculty Assistance

- Assistance with development of simulation programs of learning.
- Incorporating simulation and AEHR into coursework.

➤ Technical Support

- Upkeep of simulation equipment.
- Collaborate with campus Information Systems and Services.
- Exploring new applications to be used by students.

➤ Data Collection and Analysis

- Prepare reports as requested.
- Create technology evaluation questionnaire.
- Assist in inventory for the Clinical Skills Lab.

Benefits to Students & Faculty

➤ Students:

- Increase informatics proficiency.
- Explain importance of technology for safe and quality patient care.
- Navigate, document care and protect confidentiality in AEHR.
- Informal and formal peer support.
- Learn about emerging nursing and healthcare technologies.
- Enhance critical thinking and clinical reasoning.
- Easy transition to the work place.

➤ Faculty:

- IT-TA as liaison between students and faculty.
- Assist nursing faculty with technology use across the curriculum.
- Utilize IT-TA to keep the program abreast of current technology.
- Develop a simulation program of learning:
 - Enhances knowledge, skills and attitudes.
 - Promotes critical thinking and clinical reasoning.



Significance of Student as an IT-TA

Berea College Nursing Program is unique in utilizing a senior nursing student as an IT-TA to increase nursing students' informatics proficiency. No literature mentions students working as IT-TAs. This is where the integration of work and education come together, leading to the following opportunities for the graduate:

- Develop the role of Student Nurse Informaticist.
- Obtain CEUs in nursing informatics.
- Obtain hours toward a national certification in informatics.
- Attend nursing conference for current nursing technology trends.
- Participate in webinars related to nursing informatics.
- Strengthen technical skills and abilities.
- Appreciate need for technology skill development.



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