



Chapter VI

Teaching and Learning in a Laptop Nursing Program: Institutional and Pedagogical Issues

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Abstract

Increasingly, nurses work in practice settings that employ the latest information and communication technology (ICT) to research, administer, and deliver healthcare to clients. Thus, it is critical that BNSc program graduates be competent with the technology that is embedded in their nursing environments. This chapter explicates the findings of a study designed to assess and prioritize the capacities of nursing faculty in the use of ICT for teaching and learning. Data was gathered over a two-year period through in-depth interviews, questionnaires, learning journals, and document review and synthesis. The authors hope that findings will

contribute to the development of core competencies in the use of ICT for teaching and learning. Further, outcomes will inform decision-makers and funding agencies of the needs and gaps related to faculty ICT preparedness in Canadian schools of nursing. Recommendations address key success factors including faculty development and institutional support.

Introduction

In this chapter, the experiences of a nursing faculty are situated within a technology-enhanced teaching and learning environment. In 2003, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) in Oshawa, Ontario formulated a campus-wide strategic vision for the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Concurrently, UOIT constructed a ubiquitous ICT infrastructure while implementing a customized faculty development plan to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

The goal of this study was to provide an overview of the capacities of the UOIT nursing faculty in the use of ICT for teaching and learning. Specifically, the objectives of the two-year study were the following:

- Assess the current needs and gaps of nursing faculty in the use of ICT for teaching and learning.
- Elucidate trends in the early adoption of ICT for teaching and learning to enhance ongoing training and faculty development at UOIT.
- Support the nursing faculty in helping to identify and develop personal research agendas in the application of ICT to nursing education and practice.

UOIT Laptop Program

A unique feature of UOIT is its designation as the second “laptop university” in Canada. The laptop program provides faculty members with a computer free of charge and ubiquitous access to the Internet through the development of a wired and wireless infrastructure. Students are issued a standard IBM laptop computer featuring multimedia capabilities, extensive memory, and the capacity to support complex software required by professional faculties. All software required by both students and faculty is preloaded onto the laptop and refreshed on an annual

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