



Purpose

The Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) faculty supports the mission, values and goals of Rowan-Cabarrus Community College (RCCC) which seeks to provide excellence in education while promoting personal development, accountability and life-long learning. The ADN program is designed to prepare students for entry-level positions as registered nurses. Graduates of this program are eligible to apply to take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN), which is required for practice as a registered nurse.

Client

The faculty views clients across the lifespan as recipients of nursing care, whether as an individual, family, or community. The client is comprised of physiological, psychosocial, developmental, sociocultural, and spiritual needs, which are constantly changing within the environment. Clients attain or maintain health by adapting to environmental and developmental changes.

Society

The faculty believes that the client's larger environment is society, the total environment in which they function. Society is viewed as human beings living in groups who behave and function in ways that are unique to their community, ethnic, cultural, spiritual, socioeconomic, and psychosocial conditions.

Health

Health is a dynamic state that progresses from birth to death, and describes an individual's complete physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. Health is best perceived on a continuum, which encompasses high-level wellness on one end and extreme illness and/or death on the other end.

Nursing and Nursing Practice

Nursing is, as defined by the American Nurses' Association, "the diagnoses and treatment of human responses to actual or potential health problems". Nursing is both an art and a science. The art of nursing involves intuition, creativity, caring, and application of nursing therapeutics, communication skills, and compassionate interpersonal processes. The science of nursing involves principles derived from biological, social, and behavioral sciences through critical thinking and logical exploration. Contemporary nursing practice merges the art and science of nursing, and collaboration with the health care interdisciplinary team. The nurse, interdisciplinary team, and the client determine a client centered plan of care. The integration of research, clinical expertise, and client values promote optimal client care using evidence-based practices. Together the art and science of nursing provide insights for the nurse in the performance of caring behaviors contributing to health, recovery, or peaceful death.

Nursing practice involves both accountable and ethical professional behaviors as directed by the North Carolina Nurse Practice Act. The practice of nursing represents all the actions performed in the delivery of nursing care encompassing both direct and indirect client care. Indirect nursing practice involves registered nurses engaged in roles such as educators, administrators, researchers, consultants and journalists. Such roles facilitate and support nursing practice through the provision of services and advancement of nursing knowledge.

Nursing Process

The nursing process is a problem-solving and clinical decision making approach to the identification of client needs and the utilization of nursing interventions designed to promote, maintain, or restore health status. The desired outcome of the nursing process is client-centered competent care, which involves clients in decision-making and care management. A component of the nursing process involves critical thinking. Critical thinking challenges the registered nurse to interpret and evaluate information in order to derive judgments necessary for safe, effective nursing care. The major components of the nursing process are assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Practice of the Associate Degree Nurse

The associate degree nurse practices in a variety of health care settings where policies and procedures are specified and guidance is available. The associate degree nurse functions in three roles: provider of care, manager of care and member of the discipline.

Within these roles, the associate degree nurse plans and implements individualized care for clients from diverse and multicultural populations. The three roles of the associate degree nurse, nursing process, and client needs form the organizing framework for the nursing curriculum at RCCC.

The faculty has identified eight essential behaviors/competencies for contemporary nursing practice which reflect the Council of Associate Degree Nursing Competencies Task Force (2000) Educational Competencies for Graduates of Associate Degree Nursing Programs. The eight essential behaviors/competencies are: professional behaviors; communication; assessment/nursing process; clinical decision making; caring interventions; teaching and learning; collaboration; and managing care. The competencies are the integrating concepts of the curriculum and are performed within the roles of the associate degree nurse. The associate degree nurse demonstrates competencies, skills, ethical, and accountable behaviors to fulfill the needs of society.

Sub-concepts which add depth of meaning to the nursing courses are dispersed throughout the curriculum as applicable to course content. The identified curriculum sub-concepts included (but not limited to) are the following: community; health promotion; health care delivery systems; trends; therapeutic interventions; critical thinking; cultural awareness/competence; evidence based practice; ethics/values/ accountability; legal issues; standards of care; technology; informatics; quality improvement; interdisciplinary care; client-centered competent care; coordination of care; leadership, supervision and delegation of others; and life-long learning.

The associate degree nurse is a member of the interdisciplinary health care team, works within a democratic work environment, and participates in goal directed behaviors. As a member of the health care interdisciplinary team, the associate degree nurse provides leadership in coordination and management of continuous, client centered culturally competent client care through cooperation, communication, and collaboration.

The associate degree nurse supports quality improvement processes to measure client outcomes, identify hazards and errors, and develop changes in the processes of client care. Evidence base practices are used to promote optimal client care. Informatics is used to communicate, manage knowledge, mitigate error, and support decision- making.

Nursing Education

The faculty believes that nurses should be educated to deliver patient-centered care as members of an interdisciplinary team, emphasizing evidence-based practice, quality improvement approaches, and informatics. Nursing education is dynamic and responds to current and future needs of people in a changing health care delivery system. Nursing education consists of basic preparation and continuing education. Basic education prepares graduates who are eligible to take the national licensure examination for registered nurses. Continuing education enhances nurses' health related knowledge and skills.

Learning is a lifelong process enabling students to assimilate knowledge and develop values, skills, and competencies. The faculty recognizes that students enter the nursing program with a variety of educational and life experiences. The faculty believes that learning and teaching are interactive processes and expects the student to assume an active role. The faculty uses a variety of instructional strategies to facilitate critical thinking and problem solving. These skills enable the associate degree nurse to make decisions and take actions that are consistent with standards for nursing practice and licensing laws.

Differentiated Practice

The faculty believes that associate degree graduates possess a generalist foundation and are prepared to function in settings such as hospitals, extended care facilities, and some community settings such as physicians' offices. Depending upon continuing education experience, personal characteristics, and motivation, the associate degree nurse is capable of performing in the roles of provider of care, manager of care and member within the discipline of nursing. Levels of practice are determined by educational preparation. The baccalaureate level of nursing education prepares graduates to deliver nursing care in an unstructured environment to clients who have complex health problems or unpredictable outcomes. The associate degree graduates are prepared and encouraged to continue their nursing education at the baccalaureate level through the established Comprehensive Articulation Agreements with the North Carolina university system and various private colleges.

Conceptual Framework

The program's educational and program outcomes are derived from the philosophy. The conceptual framework for the curriculum flows from the educational outcomes to form an organizing framework consisting of three major concepts: the roles of the nurse; the nursing process; and client needs. Content incorporated within the concept of client needs includes life span, pharmacology and nutrition. Each nursing course is based on the three organizing concepts.

The program's integrating concepts are eight competencies essential to the contemporary practice of nursing and are included in each nursing course. They are: professional behaviors; communication; assessment/nursing process; clinical decision making; caring interventions; teaching and learning; collaboration; and managing care. The competencies are performed within the roles of the associate degree nurse. Course competencies, laboratory, and clinical competencies flow from the integrating concepts and are the basis for student performance and course evaluation. The program's educational outcomes are used for end of program evaluation of graduate competencies.

Sub-concepts, which add depth of meaning to the nursing courses, are dispersed throughout the curriculum as applicable to course content. The identified curriculum sub-concepts, included (but not limited to) are the following: community; health promotion; health care delivery; trends; therapeutic interventions; critical thinking; cultural awareness/competence; evidence based practice; ethics/values/accountability; legal issues; standards of care; technology; informatics; quality improvement; interdisciplinary care; client-centered competent care; coordination of care; leadership, and supervision and delegation of others; and lifelong learning.

The effectiveness of the curriculum design is evaluated based on the program outcomes.