

Education Transformation Learning Collaborative

Early Findings

Four Models Showing Promise for Educational Transformation

I. RN-to-BSN Degree Awarded from a Community College

This model offers nurses an opportunity to continue their education in a community college setting and receive a baccalaureate in nursing (BSN) degree. This model is especially beneficial for nurses who are place-bound with limited access to other options in their area.

- The community college awards the BSN degree.
- Associate degree in nursing (ADN) nurses with an RN advance directly to a BSN.
- This model may be more affordable than others.
- The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) supports awarding a BSN degree at a community college provided the Baccalaureate Essentials are utilized and the program is accredited.
- This model includes an ADN followed by an RN to BSN, awarded by the community college.
- It is nationally accredited, transferrable and prepares students for graduate studies.
- This model does not include a four-year BSN offered entirely at the community college.

Advantages & strengths

- Seamless academic progression
- Higher volume: potential major BSN producer
- Offers wider geographic reach
- Moderate costs
- Diverse student bodies
- Large infrastructure
- AD nurses can work while pursuing BSN

Revisions & clarifications

- Fully accredited nationally
- Often needs state legislative approval
- Sometimes requires community college to transition to become a state college
- RN to BSN degree on Community College campuses, not four year BSN

II. State or Regionally Shared Competency or Outcomes-Based Curriculum

In this model, the partners, who generally represent different educational approaches and backgrounds, develop a shared understanding, a common goal and framework. The scope of the curriculum reaches beyond core competencies and across the entire profession, focusing on knowledge, attitudes and skills. The curriculum is not standardized, but the model aims to reach standardized outcomes.

- The partners universally agree on the outcomes.
- Agreed upon skills competencies are an example, but it is not the only example of this model.
- A substantial number of students in the state or region need to be served, including students from rural areas.
- Successful models are based on strong partnerships between community colleges and four-year schools of nursing using agreed upon outcomes or competencies to provide seamless, streamlined programs.

Advantages & strengths

- Consensus is reached by relevant Schools of Nursing on a unified set of competencies for the nurse of the future
- Needs thoughtful & inclusive definitions!
- Competencies may be incorporated into shared curriculum but shared curriculum is not required

Revisions & clarifications

- Skills competencies are an important component of this model, but do not represent the entire model
- Linking to existing competencies desirable

III. Accelerated Options: RN to MSN.

This model offers a shorter timeline to completion than traditional BSN or MSN programs, providing an additional pathway to streamlined education progression. The RN-to-MSN popularity is driven by more ADN graduates returning to school with the intention of obtaining an MSN without a BSN.

- It is an accelerated model that values the practice experience of AD nurses and meets BSN criteria.
- It is a seamless, university-based program.
- It emphasizes practice components.
- A major challenge of this model is meeting the needs of students with varying clinical expertise.

Advantages & strengths

- Enables AD students to move efficiently into leadership, teaching, advanced practice & research roles
- Values the practice experience of AD nurses
- Often includes substantial online component

- Improved efficiency & flexibility for students: reduces duplication of coursework & speeds progression
- Facilitates inclusion into nursing of students with more varied backgrounds

Revisions & clarifications

- All programs must include BSN “Essentials”
 - May or may not have step out option or award baccalaureate
- Definition broadened to include other accelerated models
 - Nurses with baccalaureate in another field
 - Pre-licensure (direct entry) MSN
- Advanced degrees may offer a variety of concentrations

IV. Shared Statewide or Regional Curriculum

These educational collaboratives between universities and community colleges enable students to transition automatically and seamlessly from an AD to a BSN program, with all schools sharing curriculum, simulation facilities and faculty. Faculty workload is reduced, and the schools make greater use of resources. Its implementation requires formal articulation agreements between community colleges and universities, adjustment of prerequisite and nursing curricula, and buy-in from legislative bodies and institutions. Successful implementation of this model provides students with streamlined academic progression. The state or regional common nursing curriculum is one example of this model.

- Examples of shared components are pre-requisites, AD portion, BSN portion and graduation requirements.
- This model includes a strong partnership between community colleges and four-year schools of nursing sharing as many components as possible such as courses, requirements, enrollment and admission standards.
- A substantial number of students in the state or region need to be served, including students from rural areas.
- Although sharing all components of the nursing curriculum between community colleges and four-year schools of nursing in a state or region is an example of this model, it is not the only way to successfully implement this model.
- Successful models are seamless, student-centered and streamlined.

Advantages & strengths

- Facilitates seamless academic progression
- Creates an educational collaborative between academic institutions
- Schools may share entire or partial curriculum, as well as faculty, simulation facilities
- Reduced faculty workload: better use of resources
- Reduction in duplicative coursework for students
- Simplifies advising

Revisions & clarifications

- Can focus on pre-licensure or licensed RNs
- Needs consideration of pre-requisites, general education and graduation requirements
- Successful models are seamless, student centered and streamlined
- Sharing all components between CC & BSN programs is *one example* but not the only way to implement: others include standardizing AD programs only, or pre-requisites

Additional Findings

Through face to face meetings and webinars, the action coalition leaders contribute to the national dialogue and understanding of education transformation by identifying the needs assessment, implementation, and evaluation strategies to successfully implement these models. The essential next steps will be identified in determining which strategy is appropriate in their state and region. The result is accelerated progress in achieving our goal to increase the number of baccalaureate prepared nurses to 80 percent by 2020.