

A CASE STUDY: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO ENHANCE A NURSING CURRICULUM

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To accommodate the rapid changes occurring in health care, technology and web-based instruction is increasingly utilized in mainstream higher education. This case study describes the implementation of a prototype knowledge management system developed by PETTT, a research group at the University of Washington aiming to apply the sciences of learning to develop technology-based educational approaches. Collaborating with the UW School of Nursing, PETTT investigated this educational tool in the context of a nursing curriculum. The knowledge management system aims to enhance student learning by: acting as a scaffold for reflection, providing an opportunity to create content, teaching effective patient education, reaching learners-at-large on the Web and participation in a knowledge building community.

In this particular application of the knowledge management system, students divided into small groups to create on-line patient education materials addressing either Diabetes or Alzheimer's using a dynamic template. Questions within the template elicited students to not only consider their nursing knowledge and theory, but incorporate other disciplines' perspectives to create patient education materials that are holistic in nature. PETTT research staff observed students' uses and perceptions of the knowledge management system and administered a survey at the completion of the course.

We conclude that the knowledge management system enhanced students' ability to approach patient education holistically, and facilitated student's to consider their language and word choice when educating patients. Students also articulated an appreciation for clear instruction on how to use the tool and described effective instructional methods for faculty to implement. Finally, we evaluated the usability of the system and are using this feedback to continue the iterative process of developing the knowledge management system.