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New Skills for Nurses: How do we meet the needs of RN specialty education in times of HHR challenges?

CACCN Dynamics of Critical Care 2008

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National Context

- Average age of RNs in Canada is **45** years²
- More than **1/5** of the workforce are **55** years or older & will retire at \approx **60** years old^{2,6}
- **20%** of critical care nurses eligible to retire in **3** years¹
- Lose up to **30%** of new nurses in first **3** years of practice (CFNU, Unpublished data)
- Nurses in rural & remote areas have difficulty accessing training and skills upgrading



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Cape Breton Context

- CBDHA has an older nursing workforce – average age in specialties is **48** years (CBDHA, unpublished data)
- **55%** will be eligible to retire at ages **55-57** years (CBDHA, unpublished data)
- Severe shortage in critical care & emergency – 20 vacancies in ICU/CCU/ER
- Frequent bed closures in ICU & CCU



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WSI Project Background

- Workplace Skills Initiative (WSI) - an HRSDC project
- 2 year time line – Jan 2007 to Dec 2008
- Goals:
 - ✓ develop new skills & competencies
 - ✓ workplace-based i.e. bringing training into the workplace
 - ✓ increase retention
 - ✓ foster collaborative partnerships between employer & union



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Cape Breton Project Objectives

1. To provide opportunities for RNs working in Cape Breton to benefit from professional development opportunities.
2. To design a program to meet the needs & realities of a rural community.
3. To utilize a new way to deliver full-time critical care & emergency nursing programs onsite to RNs working in Cape Breton, using face-to-face interaction with distance learning methodologies and increased use of technology.



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Cape Breton Project Objectives

4. To provide two courses each in critical care & emergency, with 6 RNs in each course.
5. Preceptor development – increased numbers, competency levels, capacity & skills.
6. To develop a long-term plan for work-placed based specialty nursing education based on 5-year projections of Cape Breton's human resource requirements.



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Cape Breton Project

- A blended delivery model was developed, adapting a full-time study option with distance learning methodologies.
- Critical care & emergency clinical sites in both CBDHA & CDHA
- Prior Learning Assessment for Recognition (PLAR) incorporated into the programs.



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Cape Breton Project

- Two Critical care (CCNP) & two Emergency (ENP) Nursing Programs, with 6 RNs accepted into each
- Total graduated – 12 from ENP; 7 from CCNP
- Preceptor Development – total of 14 RNs from ICU & ER participated
 - ☑ Continuing education sessions developed for year 2 of project.



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Web-based technologies

- All learners provided with memory sticks (handouts, power point)
- Google groups implemented
- NurseOne portal – IT e-tutorial “HITS”
- Utilization of Telehealth



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Challenges: Faculty

- Limited faculty to deliver multiple programs simultaneously
- Faculty traveled to deliver face-to-face CCNP & ENP
- Limited resources for the development of site instructors/clinical facilitators



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Challenges: Program

- Telehealth not conducive to long classroom/tutorial sessions
- Staggered start dates of fall programs problematic
- No permanent space for classrooms & labs in CBDHA
- Provision of print-based examinations (security, implementation, logistics)



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Challenges: Learner selection

- HHR shortages limited applicant pool
- Experience level of applicants varied ++
- Prerequisite knowledge, skill & performance varied ++
- Short turn-around time between programs → less time to screen applicants



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Challenges: Web-based technologies

- Financial resources for establishment of web-based technologies
- Time commitment for content experts
- Learner access to computer
- Computer literacy of learner
- Faculty experience of online teaching
- No Internet access at the classroom site



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Required changes for sustainability

- Establishment of adjunct faculty positions in Cape Breton
- Development of interactive online CCNP & ENP with online testing
- Simultaneous program start dates allowing for RN-PDC faculty to facilitate in synchronous web-based programs
- Permanent classroom &/or lab facilities in CBDHA with internet capabilities
- Preceptor development & continuing education



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Solutions: Adjunct Faculty

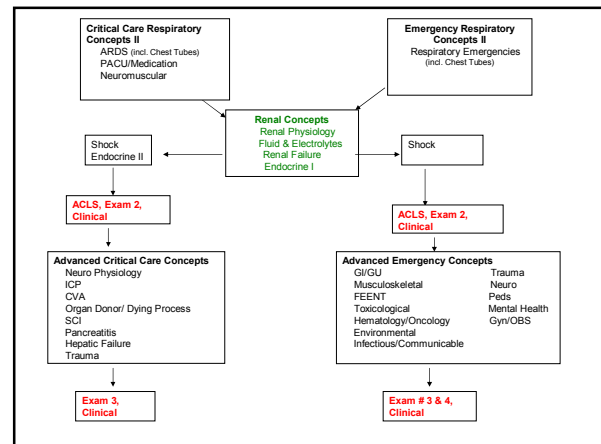
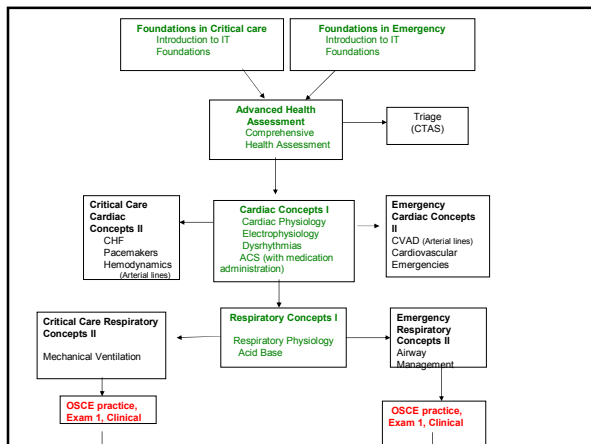
- Different models for adjunct faculty roles explored
- Adjunct agreement developed & signed by both the educational provider (RN-PDC) & the employer (CBDHA)



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Solutions: Web-based technologies

- Development of both CCNP & ENP as online courses currently underway
- Instructional Designer assigned to “project” & works with content experts (faculty)





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Project Success!

- CBDHA continuing with onsite CCNP & ENP education utilizing adjunct faculty in collaboration with RN-PDC faculty
- Interest from other Atlantic provinces for similar education initiatives
- Creation of online CCNP & ENP



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QUESTIONS

