Preventing Nursing Faculty for the Industry Shift to Competency-Based Education

**BACKGROUND**

Hundreds of colleges and universities will be required to align their undergraduate and graduate nursing programs to new standards. This work involves a careful review of an institution's overall teaching approach, including instructional content and assessments, to mitigate gaps between curricula and the new competency-based education (CBE) standards.

**CHALLENGES**

- **Application**: Difficulty appreciating what competency-based education is and how to apply it
- **Confusion**: The Essentials competencies and sub-competencies were perceived by faculty to be overwhelming and unclear
- **Time**: Difficulty finding time to engage faculty in a deep curriculum review and analysis to aid the transition toward the new standards
- **Resources**: Curricular reviews represent tedious work

**University administrators** indicated they experienced the following challenges in aligning their programs to the new CBE standards:

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THE SOLUTIONS

The school of nursing needed a partner who could guide faculty to **transition their courses and programs to the new standards**. To support this need, the WGU Labs team began by reviewing course outcomes and instructional content across all undergraduate and graduate nursing courses. This review allowed the Labs team to determine alignment and gaps with the industry standards.

The Labs team then conducted a **six-part workshop series** with a steering committee consisting of **several administrators and faculty** over **seven months**. These workshops included curriculum mapping, assessment design, active learning strategies, and program evaluation.

THE RESULTS

The WGU Labs team helped the nursing program to:

- conduct a **program review of all courses and assessments**.
- provide opportunities for **faculty to engage in deep discussion about their courses** and adopt a wider perspective about the overall curriculum.
- prepare their **CBE taskforce** with **skills and resources** they can use to engage faculty in ongoing discussions about preparing their courses to align to the New Essentials.

“**This process forces faculty to reflect on their courses and find ways to improve their instructional content and assessments.”**

ABOUT THE CLIENT

The client represents a school of nursing at a large research university. The institution currently offers several undergraduate and graduate programs with just under 1,000 students enrolled.

WGU Labs examines, invents, builds, and enables innovative education solutions that multiply the effects of WGU's mission to have a transformative impact on higher education.