Purpose of the Portfolio Program:

Portfolio assessment is an integral part of the nursing program because scoring the same student documents on a regular basis is an important exercise that promotes inter-rater reliability (Dennen & Henson, 2007).

Program Description:

The program is: Modeled after the nationally recognized Washington State University Portfolios Program (Cordon, 2001).

A one-point-in-time assessment of all student portfolios at the end of the junior year.

Conducted by trained faculty teams.

Portfolio Content and Student Responsibilities:

Portfolio content includes:

- A student cover letter, which is designed as a self-reflection document and "introduces" the portfolio to faculty reviewers.
- Three written assignments, which students consider to be best examples of their abilities in the three outcome areas.
- Students are encouraged to make changes recommended by the faculty reviewers before submitting it for portfolio review.
- Assignment guidelines, so that faculty reviewers are aware of required elements.

Faculty Collaboration:

Portfolio Preparatory Session:

- Faculty members assess the same two practice portfolios using the scoring rubric. (Practice portfolios are copies of previously reviewed and evaluated portfolios).
-Faculty share their scores and determine the means.
- The preparatory session is a critical component of the portfolio program because scoring the same student documents on a regular basis is an important exercise that promotes inter-rater reliability (Dennen & Henson, 2007).

The Portfolio Assessment Session:

- Review of Portfolios: The formal assessment of portfolios is scheduled for one to two weeks after the Portfolio Preparatory Session.
- Faculty participants begin this meeting by reviewing and scoring a practice portfolio to ensure inter-rater reliability.
- The formal assessment of student portfolios is then conducted by teams consisting of three to four faculty reviewers.
- Portfolios are divided among the teams.

-Portfolios are read quickly, about 10 minutes each. Faculty rate the three assignments as an entire body of work using a 4-item rubric that is measured on a 3-point scale (3=meets expectations; 2=meets expectations; 1=below expectations).
- A second faculty reviewer reads and rates the same portfolio.
- If the average ratings of a portfolio differ by more than one point, the portfolio is read and rated by a third faculty reviewer.
- The final score is the average of the reviewers' ratings for that portfolio.

The Portfolio Assessment Session:

- b. Discussion of Findings:
  - Immediately following the reading & scoring of portfolios, faculty reviewers participate in a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the portfolios.
  - Issues in the curriculum are identified and potential solutions are explored.
  - Discussion is recorded as qualitative evidence.
  - Faculty collectively identify discussion of portfolio findings as the most beneficial aspect of the assessment process.

Example of Closing the Assessment Feedback Loop

1. Assessment of Portfolios by Faculty Teams

2. Assessment Findings:

- Portfolio assessment scores & faculty discussion of findings indicated that students were strong in assessment, but weaker in intervention and evaluation aspects of the nursing process.

3. Action Taken:

- Portfolio Subcommittee recommended to Curriculum & Evaluation Committee to incorporate changes and developments into ongoing curriculum assessment.

4. Subsequent Portfolio Reviews:

- More student portfolios met or 'exceeded expectations' on the scoring rubric in the areas of intervention and evaluation.

Example of a Closing the Assessment Feedback Loop:

The Portfolio Subcommittee is responsible for:

- Developing and updating protocols.
- Managing the assessment sessions.
- Collecting evaluation data from faculty and students.
- Collecting and analyzing portfolio assessment data.
- Disseminating portfolio assessment findings to the faculty and the Curriculum and Evaluation Committee for follow-up.

Membership consists of:

- 2-4 volunteer faculty members, who have an interest in portfolio assessment.
- 1 elected member from the Curriculum and Evaluation Committee who serves as a liaison between the two committees.
- 2-4 students.
- 1 administration.
- 1 portfolio assessment consultant.
- 1 faculty consultant with experience in the nursing portfolio program.

Conclusion:

- Student portfolios have been described as a powerful program assessment tool to encourage best practices in teaching (Linzer et al., 2007; Walzem, Gstraunthaler, & Deck, 2001).
- Assessment experts indicate that frequent and ongoing discussion of assessment findings by faculty has a strong impact on improving curricula and classroom teaching (Ahrens, 2002; Braskamp & Schomberg, 2000; McCreary, 2007).
- Because of the collaborative efforts of faculty, the nursing program highlighted in this poster presentation has been successful in utilizing portfolio data to effect positive changes in the nursing program.
- Closing the assessment feedback loop is a compelling testament to the willingness of faculty to work together and collaborate to improve the curriculum and use assessment data to change their teaching practices.

More Information On This Portfolio Program Can Be Found In The Following Publications


College Composition and Communication, 59(2), 141-147.