Online WOC Nursing Education: Benchmarking Best Practice

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Introduction/Background

For over 20 years, the Internet has been used for learning.   The unique needs of student and faculty in web based and online education have been well described in the literature, yet there is little research documenting quality management activities, such as benchmarking and outcomes measurement. Assessment and evaluation plans that include student outcomes and educational processes are fundamental in academic programs. Through a variety of means, education programs measure the effectiveness and value of their programs. However, the use of standardized benchmarks in online learning provides an opportunity to initiate a quality improvement process that is needed to build and measure evidence of effectiveness in online learning. This poster describes a benchmarking framework and its application in the online webWOC Nursing Education Program.

Objectives

1. **Define benchmarking in online education and the value of benchmarking.**
2. **Introduce a framework for benchmarking outcomes in online education.**
3. **Report outcomes of specific benchmarks for an online Wound, Ostomy, Continence (WOC) Nursing Education Program.**

What is Benchmarking?

A process that provides a means of identifying an outcome goal or target against which to compare performance.[8]

Why Benchmark?

To…

➢ **establish a process for outcomes evaluation and quality improvement,**

➢ **identify areas in need of improvement and**

➢ **provide the consumer/payers with valuable information needed to make choices.**

Example of Benchmarking in Wound Care…

***Pressure Ulcer Incidence Rate* is a benchmark. It is measured by most facilities using a standardized procedure which yields data that can be compared among similar facilities.**

Review of the Literature

From a nursing education perspective, Billings [2,4] proposes 5 benchmark categories for online nursing education programs: Technology, Faculty Support, Educational Practices, Student Support and Outcomes. From their meta-analysis of 28 research articles in the general online distance education literature, Sunal and Sunal[3] identified 4 benchmark categories for online education: Technology Support, Faculty-Student Interactions, Learning Environment and Student Behaviors. Only the Billings model includes performance outcomes; Sunal and Sunal recommendations emphasize process. The webWOC Nursing Education Program has been monitoring outcomes since 2001. The benchmark most frequently used is student results on the WOCN certification examinations. [1,7]

Benchmarking:

Technology Support
(Orientation to online learning & technology, ongoing technical support)

Learning Environment
(access, networking, collaborative, interactive, student centered)

Student Behaviors
(active learning, interactive, participation in discussions)

Education Practices
(educational materials & design, faculty preparation, feedback)

 "Orientation to online learning was clear and readings appropriate."

"This Program demonstrated solid student centeredness in teaching and support for me as a learner."

"Availability of content 24/7 was essential to me."

"The value of this Program exceeded my expectations."

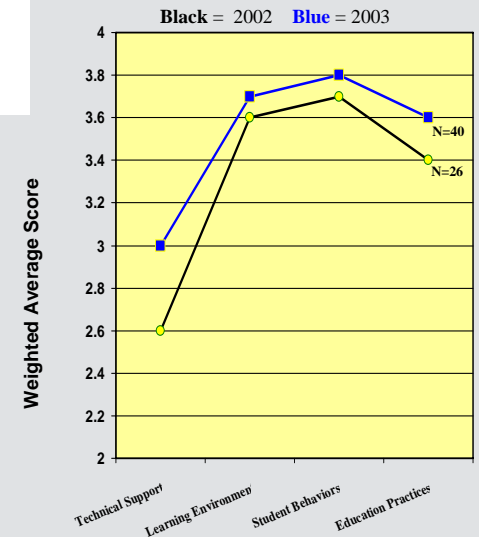## Benchmark: WOCNCB Certification Examination Pass Rates

2002-2003

- □ webWOC graduates
- ■ National Average
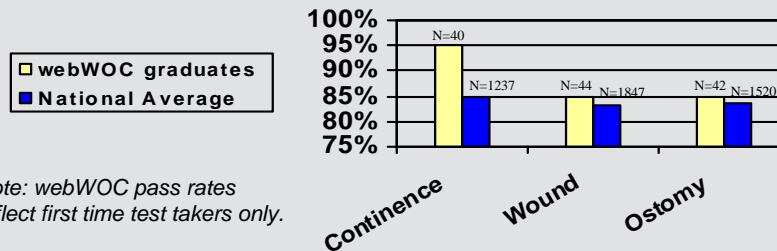
Note: webWOC pass rates reflect first time test takers only.

Other Benchmark Data

Black = 2002   **Blue** = 2003

Conclusions

1. Quality management is a critical part of any education program.
2. Benchmarks provide a means that assists students and payers to be critical consumers of online education.
3. Standardized tools should be explored for outcome measurement so that results can be compared. (Allen's Attitude Toward Computer Assisted Instruction[5]; SUMMA[6] and COIL[3]
4. Evaluation forms need to be refined so the resulting data aligns better with the benchmark categories reported in the literature.

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