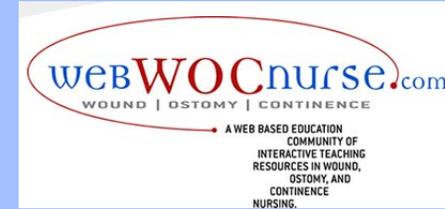


A Descriptive Study of Performance Outcomes for Graduates of an Online WOC Nursing Education Program



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PURPOSE

This descriptive study reports the initial results of the **webWOC Nursing Education Program**, an online WOC Nursing Education Program accredited by the Wound, Ostomy, Continence Nurses Society (WOCN), is beginning its 3rd year.

Background

Educational Problem

Historically, significant obstacles to the growth of Wound Ostomy Continence (WOC/ET) nursing have included:

- Method of content delivery which required temporary relocation from family for 4-9 weeks,
- Inability to work during course,
- Isolation of studying alone, if in distance learning program,
- Absence of reimbursement for services.

Each of these issues presents financial and/or personal hurdles that often curtail enrollment of interested nurses. This problem is required innovative strategies in view of the severe nursing shortage.

Strategic Educational Solutions

The webWOC Nursing Education program began with the purposes of developing educational strategies to eliminate the problems addressed above. The Program provides:

ACCESS to educational content that eliminates lengthy residencies by offering the Program on the Internet.

ABILITY FOR STUDENTS TO WORK while in school,

INTERACTIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES with the class and faculty. Some experiences are LIVE, while others are completed based upon the student's schedule.

GRADUATE CREDITS are awarded in order to advance the nurse's career development toward Advanced Practice and the attainment of reimbursement.

Background

Distance Education via the Internet

For over 20 years, the Internet has been utilized for distance learning. Students are able to gain access to classrooms and attain career advancement wherever an Internet connection and computer are available.

In 1995, over 700,000 students in the United States were participating in distance learning on the Internet.

Is there a difference in student performance between Distance Education via the Internet and the traditional classroom? Thomas Russell (1999) published a meta-compilation of 355 studies and reports addressing this question that reported:

"No significant difference" in student performance between these educational delivery methods.

Measuring Quality of Online Education

The focus of the webWOC Nursing Education Program is on "intentions and learner-based outcomes". The Program utilizes categories for effectiveness assessment recommended by the National Center for Education Statistics:

- CORE CONTENT
- SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT
- ECONOMIC IMPACT

Methodology utilized to measure mastery of Core Content include results on the WOCN Certification Exam and Graduate Program Evaluation. Social and cultural impact as well as economic impact are anecdotal for the purposes of this poster.

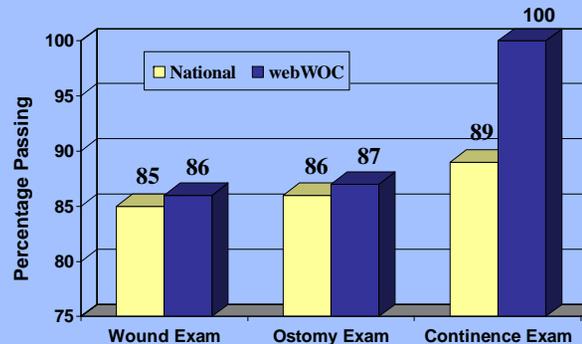


Results

Demographics of Graduates

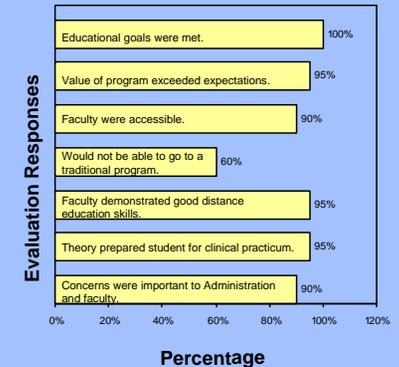
- 33 % are Master's prepared
- 5 have Baccalaureate in non-nursing field
- 25 different states and 1 Canadian province
- 37 Graduates as of March 2003
- 1 dropped for personal reasons

Graduation Rate: 97% (37/38)



2002 Board Certification Exam
webWOC Nursing Graduate Pass Rates

Graduate Program Evaluation (N=20)



Anecdotal Comments from Graduates

of the webWOC Nursing Education Program

"The knowledgeable faculty and their personalities are a strength of the program in that they were very supportive and tried to make sure that we all understood everything. They didn't give up on us!"

"It was great to be able to stay at home, use the Internet to do research, having the accessibility to our module and not having to wait for them in the mail."

"Can go to class anywhere...if out of town, at the hospital or home!"

"The biggest advantage of learning online for me was I got to stay home - it was hard on my family, but not nearly like it would have been if I was completely gone for several weeks."

"I was able to attend class in my pajamas and not leave the house!"

"Convenience was wonderful!"

"It was great to turn in homework via email!"

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