

Novice Teacher Leads Students to Nursing Assistant Certification Exam Success with HealthCenter21 Online



Washington Network for Innovative Careers, WaNIC

SCHOOL TYPE:

Regional Skills Center

COURSE TITLES:

Certified Nursing Assistant Program

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Do you remember your first year teaching? There are the typical concerns of a new teacher, such as the fear of not having enough material and students staring blankly at you with nothing to do. As if that is not stressful enough, there are many other hurdles for teachers, new and experienced. Joni Brand faced just about every one of those hurdles this past year. But in looking back, and looking at her students' exam scores so far, Brand and her students had a stellar year!

Situation

Joni Brand was starting from scratch last fall. Although a 30-year veteran R.N., Brand is a self-described "novice" in regards to teaching. But Brand hit the ground running last fall with HealthCenter21 online to teach and prepare her students for their Nursing Assistant Certification Exam for the National Nurse Aide Assessment Program. Wow!

Brand teaches a nursing assistant program at Washington Network for Innovative Careers, or WaNIC. Some of the hurdles facing Brand included the newness of her curriculum tool, HealthCenter21, her students ranging from 16 to 20 years of age, and the challenge of several ESL students.

Solution

When Brand took on the responsibility of teaching this course, the curriculum tool HealthCenter21 online had already been selected for her and her students. And for Brand, that was an answer to one of the many challenges she faced as a new instructor. In Brand's opinion, HealthCenter21 was "absolutely perfect" for her students.

In regards to preparing them for their Health Assistant Certification Exam, Brand quickly noticed that the assessment questions provided in the program would perfectly prime her students for the types of

questions asked on the exam. She describes how some of the multiple choice questions found in HealthCenter21 are "tricky" in a positive way. "You have to read all four answers and narrow it down. You have to think about which answer is the best. The exam questions are just like that," Brand explains.

Additionally, Brand praises HealthCenter21 for allowing students to work at their own paces. For some students, that meant repeating the information several times. For others, it simply meant going through the content at a slower pace than others. Brand was flexible in allowing the students to work through the content until they knew it.

Results

So, new teacher, variety of students...how did they do? Well, Brand is already working on her plans for the fall, keeping some things the same, changing many things, but going in with a solid understanding of the strengths and best uses for HealthCenter21 and how to incorporate it most effectively into her course.

For example, when looking to the future, Brand enjoyed sharing that she will definitely utilize the Class Activities included with the HealthCenter21 program. She described how students "fought her tooth and nail about doing presentations." She explained to them, "When you're a nurse, you are part of a team, working with doctors and other professionals, which can be intimidating. You are not even a nurse, yet, but a nurse assistant. You need to learn how to have your voice heard. And part of that is going to be knowing the material well and knowing what questions to ask and what you need to tell someone." She stressed that doing the Class Activities presentation work would give them good experience. At the end of the course, she surveyed students and in

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their feedback they shared how much the presentations had helped them and that they should have done it more!

Brand also recommends having students work in teams to encourage some positive competitiveness and for advanced students to have the opportunity to help peers that are struggling.

And her students? At the time that Brand was interviewed, none of her students had completed the Nursing Assistant Certification Exam for the National Nurse Aide Assessment Program. But since then, Brand has shared some exciting news via email: “So far, about fifty percent of the class has taken the exam and been successful. Only one that I am aware of will need to take one section again. My phone has their text messages of excitement when they find they have passed!”

To Be Continued...

Brand has graciously agreed to an interview at the end of next school year, so that she can share how she has implemented changes to how she approaches her class and uses HealthCenter21 in her second year. Look for a continuation of Brand's story in Spring 2013.



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