

Nurses and Information Communication Technology Use

Student nurses studying for a professional qualification and qualified nurses in clinical practice have a responsibility to update their knowledge and skills and ensure that their practice is based on the best evidence available (NMC 2004). Today, in our role as pre or post registration students we are encouraged to study by utilizing the library and the resources within the environment available to us for professional development.

Information Communication Technology (ICT), distinctly e-learning, is a form of study whereby students and clinical nurses can learn through communication technology and computers.

The Internet is an invaluable tool in aiding you to find information effectively and quickly, be it used for clinical practice or part of a formal education and training programme. Having the ability to search the internet and utilise E learning is imperative if the nursing profession is to succeed in moving nursing into the 21st century and contribute to realising the Government's vision of modernising the National Health Service (NHS) (Wanless Report 2002, Welsh Assembly Government 2004)). The Internet does not hold every answer but can save you hours on the time taken to search indexes and text books manually. The Internet holds useful Government and research reports, clinical guidelines, journals and books that are being published electronically. One major benefit is also the use of email. For example, the Internet can provide a two way interaction between the educational establishment that you are studying with, your personal tutor and your colleagues through the use of emailing.

When I was a student nurse, word processing my assignments not only gives me an opportunity to alter my text/draft when I felt it was necessary to make changes to the structure and contents, but it is also legible to the person reading it. As students, we are responsible for managing our learning. We also enter into a partnership with our personal tutor, therefore have the option of emailing work as attachments to our tutors should our personal or clinical placement schedules interfere with face to face contact. So by taking advantage of the email system this method is completed in seconds and reaches the mail recipient almost immediately. Should an appointment be needed to discuss the piece of

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work, this could be set up via email. If an appointment is not needed then any changes, ideas or additions fed back can be put into place easily.

With more mature students entering nurse education, they arrive with family commitments and information communication technology gives them control and flexibility in the way they study, where they study and how they study. Modern technology has blessed us with a wealth of knowledge at our fingertips. Hence to be computer literate is crucial if we are to use information communication technology properly to assist us in the way we make decisions and carry out our nursing activities. If nurses are not willing to take advantage of these opportunities, they will lose out on the benefits that can be reaped from the use of computers and the Internet. The standard of care can be improved if nurses have the knowledge and skills to use information communication technology to assist them in the care of their patients.

Reference:

NMC (2004) *The NMC Code of professional conduct: standards for conduct, performance and ethics*. NMC, London

Wanless D (2002) *Securing good health for the whole population: Final report*; London: HMSO

Welsh Assembly Government (2004) *Making The Connections: Delivering Better Services For Wales*, WAG

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