



Skyscape

Nursing User Profile



Recently, the Central Maine Medical Center School of Nursing made the strategic decision to require all students to purchase PDAs as part of their curriculum.

The director, Sharon Kuhrt, noticed when she asked students a question and they did not know the answer it would take minutes for them to look it up in a book, not acceptable when on rounds. Additionally, a problem existed in that drug information changes so frequently that books often had out of date information. The students were also leaving their backpacks of large and heavy books in and around the nursing station, oftentimes in the way.

Kuhrt had several goals with deploying the technology: the students will use the reference information made available, they will quickly get answers to questions, they will get used to a new way to look things up and it will give them more exposure to technology, which Kuhrt expects will rapidly develop in the healthcare industry in the next 20-30 years. She also believes “PDAs are more helpful when preparing for clinical rotations than a textbook”.

About the Central Maine Medical Center School of Nursing & Sharon Kuhrt

The school is a hospital-affiliated program offering a two year nursing degree. Students are described as “non-traditional” with an average age of 34. An average of fifteen percent of each graduating class of 64 is male.

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“When clinicians are at a patient’s bedside, they will benefit from having immediate access to reference materials and quick reference guide books as well as laboratory results and any clinical data we have in-house.”

- Alex Khayat, Manager at Children’s Hospital Boston

Kuhrt looked for the best references and the ones powered by Skyscape stood out. The students received three titles: Taber’s Medical Directory, the Practical Guide to Health Assessment and the Davis Drug Guide, which remains the most frequently-used. Skyscape provides the same trusted references the school already uses and its titles link together to help students jump from diagnosis to dosing information with just a tap of the stylus.

According to Kuhrt, the students found this to be an easy transition and now have “a great way to have their references in their pockets”. When she asks the students a question and they do not have the answer, they can quickly look it up, which is critical when dealing with patients in nursing care.

PDA conversion did not stop at a student level. The faculty is also fully integrated. For Kuhrt, the technology especially comes in handy for teaching, demonstrations and answering questions. To advance the program even further, she plans on adding more memory capabilities as well as new applications this year.