NLN PRACTICAL/VOCATIONAL NURSING CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Guiding Principles

1. **The NCSBN Practice Analysis for PN Programs and corresponding NCLEX-PN test blueprint** provide direction for core content and percentage distribution of knowledge, skills and abilities for the newly licensed LPN/LVN. Additionally many states have developed practical/vocational nursing core curricula to guide faculty when developing program of learning documents to meet state requirements. The intent of this framework is not to offer an alternative to those thoughtful and well researched documents. Rather, the framework offers a prototype to assist faculty, based on the NLN Outcomes and Competencies Model (2010) to plan a futuristic curriculum that accounts for emerging evidence-based practice and can be accomplished in settings that align with current workforce trends.

2. **The framework** is based on the NLN publication: *Outcomes and Competencies for Graduates of Practical/Vocational, Diploma, Associate Degree, Baccalaureate, Master's, Practice Doctorate, and Research Doctorate Programs in Nursing* (NLN, 2010). The original model has been revised and updated based on emerging evidence and changes in LPN/LVN workforce trends.

3. **Program Outcomes** developed by the NLN in the four categories of spirit of inquiry, professional identity, nursing judgment and human flourishing are provided. These program outcomes are identified in the NLN publication (NLN, 2010) but have been updated from original descriptions provided in the 2010 publication. Program outcomes are the expected culmination of all learning experiences occurring during the program of learning.

4. Only **the four core values of the NLN** (caring, integrity, diversity and excellence) are included in this framework.(The original publication (NLN, 2010) had three additional values--ethics, holism, and patient-centeredness. This allows the PN program faculty to decide if theywant to add additional core values (as suggested in the original publication) that are specific to their programs. Each nursing program must be grounded in core values that direct the program of learning and guide faculty and student practice. The four core values of the NLN are described in detail in the NLN publication (NLN, 2010) and on the NLN website.

5. **Competencies:** Each NLN Program Outcome in the four areas of spirit of inquiry, professional identity, nursing judgment, and human flourishing is followed by role-specific competency statements according to six integrating concepts. The original integrating concepts (safety/quality, relationship/centered care, teamwork, context and environment, knowledge and science, and personal/professional development), as identified in the NLN publication (2010), have been modified to accommodate changes in the health care environment and nursing practice. Safety and quality are described separately in the new framework and the concept of context/environment has been broadened to be inclusive of system-based care. Additionally, knowledge and science is assumed under each concept.

The six updated integrating concepts are:

> ➢ Safety: Safety is the foundation upon which all other aspects of quality care are built (NLN, 2010, p. 25). A nurse, who practices safely, minimizes risk of harm to patients and providers through both system effectiveness and individual performance (Cronenwett et al., 2007). Safe practice includes the individual's purposeful use of knowledge to provide safe care in a deliberate, skillful and informed way.

> ➢ Quality: The Institute of Medicine defines quality as the degree to which health services to individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes and

are consistent with current professional knowledge (IOM, 2001). Quality is operationalized from an individual, unit and systems perspective (NLN, 2010).

➤ Team/collaboration: To function effectively within nursing and the interprofessional team is critical to effective and safe nursing practice. Team/collaboration refers to fostering open communication, mutual respect, and shared decision-making to achieve quality patient care (NLN, 2010).

➤ Relationship-Centered Care: Core to nursing practice, relationship-centered care includes caring; (therapeutic relationships with patients, families and communities; and professional relationships with members of the itnerprofessional team (NLN, 2010). It integrates and reflects respect for the dignity and uniqueness of others, valuing diversity, integrity, mutual trust, civility, self-determination, and regard for personal preferences and desires.

➤ Systems-Based Care: Nurses practice in systems of care to achieve health care goals. Nurses must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger context and system of health care and the ability to effectively call on system resources to provide care that is of optimal value.

➤ Personal/Professional Development: This refers to the individual's formation within a set of recognized responsibilities. It includes the notion of good practice, boundaries of practice, and professional identity formation (NLN, 2010). It also includes knowledge and attitudes derived from self-understanding and empathy, ethical questions and choices that are gleaned from a situation, awareness of patient needs, and other contextual knowing.

The NLN believes that these core concepts are critical to a transformed curriculum that is closely aligned with current workforce trends. The framework acknowledges these six integrating concepts as equally important. In the past, it has been suggested that the PN/VN curriculum focused heavily on skill performance, with less emphasis on the use of evidence-based practice and a systems-based approach to make decisions at the point of care, and provide strong identify formation.

6. **Suggested Course Learner Outcomes**: Course learner outcomes follow the role specific competencies within each program outcome category. These are not required; rather they are provided as suggestions for faculty to develop similar course objectives that fit specific course requirements and unique program blueprints and design.

7. **Suggested Learning Activities**: Opportunities for students to more fully integrate the program outcomes/integrating concepts are provided under each outcome. These suggestions direct faculty to consider methods and strategies to accomplish the outcomes in new ways Listed learning activities will spark faculty to consider new clinical alternatives to meet NCLEX-PN requirements and reframe current content presentations to account for evolving knowledge and skills and emerging LPN/LVN workforce trends. Additionally, a list of teaching resources, currently available from the NLN and health care websites, are provided so that faculty can align learning experiences with NLN outcomes and integrating concepts in a wide variety of practice settings (hospital, long-term care, clinics, and homecare).

8. **Suggested Evaluation Methods:** Evaluation is an important part of nursing and nursing education. In nursing education, assessment of student progress to determine achievement of objectives for an assignment, a course, and program outcomes is a critical component of a curriculum framework. Suggested questions to determine graduate competency are provided for each program outcome. The list is not inclusive of all evaluation strategies; it is a guide to be used for dialogue and consideration by faculty of evaluation methods unique to each program that fit with state and voluntary accreditation standards.

Cronenwett, L., Sherwood, F., Barnsteiner, J., Disch, J., Johnson, J., Mitchell, P., et.al. (2007). Quality and safety education for nurses. *Nursing Outlook*, 55(3), 122-131.

National League for Nursing. (2010). *Outcomes and Competencies for Graduates of Practical/Vocational, Diploma, Associate Degree, Baccalaureate, Master's, Practice Doctorate, and Research Doctorate Programs in Nursing.* New York: Author.

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