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Integrating healthcare informatics into academia through application of the systems life cycle model

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Routine reliance upon Information Technology (IT) and Informatics is now an essential standard for safe professional clinical practice. A challenge educators face is to incorporate the tenets of Informatics into the curriculum. To be prepared, the student clinician must not only understand the system but also the relationships between the technology, the information, and the processes and its impact on effective clinical practice. Over the past two years a 15 week graduate course was transformed to focus learning through a relevant team project from a health care system problem in an actual healthcare organization. The project stair-steps through the Systems Life Cycle model and is applied to healthcare systems and informatics in a clinical setting. Outcomes demonstrate that students successfully analyze the impact of data, information, and knowledge within the context of a model and learn to critically evaluate how information resources, if properly deployed, can address the challenges defined in an IT health care system problem. The real time System Life Cycle projects culminate in an executive summary with measured outcomes and is presented to the selected health care organization where the system issue was defined.

Biography

Maureen Lucy Schafer received her PhD in Health Care Systems and Informatics from the University of Arizona. An enterprise level clinical informaticist, Family Nurse Practitioner and military veteran, she possesses a comprehensive background in advanced clinical care, health care systems, teaching and expert application of the Systems Life Cycle model. This training and accountability is derived from 25 years of experience in the United States Army, consulting, teachingand informatics work within and across academia and multiple health care organizations.Presently, she is a Professor leading the growth of a robust Nursing informatics program at George Mason University within the College of Health & Human Services.

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