

Drexel University uses HP technology to educate nursing students

HP iPAQ Pocket PC helps nurses improve the quality and safety of patient care



“Clinical education with the HP iPAQ Pocket PC as a primary tool is setting us apart, not just as a technologically oriented college but also as one that teaches the importance of quick access to vital patient care information.”

– Leland J. Rockstraw, PhD, RN, director, Center for Clinical & Electronic Learning Resources, Drexel College of Nursing and Health Professions

HP customer case study:

Nursing program uses HP Pocket PCs to educate its students

Industry: Education

Objective:

Use portable handheld devices to teach future nurses how to access critical information at the point of care (bedside), thus improving patient care and safety.

Approach:

Drexel University’s College of Nursing and Health Professions equipped students with HP iPAQ Pocket PCs loaded with health and medical information applications.

IT improvements:

- Standardized platform – exclusive use of HP handhelds streamlines education and support.

Business benefits:

- Access to the latest, most accurate information means better treatment of patients.
- Quick access to information and evidence gives students confidence and reinforces learning.
- Education with handheld devices helps Drexel stand out among nursing programs.
- Capture of student information on handhelds gives faculty a teaching advantage.

Drexel University’s College of Nursing and Health Professions has turned to the HP iPAQ Pocket PC to help its students learn to handle today’s high patient caseloads with the help of portable technology. The college’s administrators recognized the importance of technology in helping to keep nurses abreast of changes in patients’ status or treatment.

“The current health care environment is fast paced,” says Fran Cornelius, PhD, RN, the college’s coordinator of informatics. “And we all need to be extra careful so that while running with the pace, we are also preventing errors and adverse patient events.”

To encourage accurate treatment, Drexel integrated 1,200 HP iPAQ Pocket PCs into its nursing education programs so that students would have on-the-spot access to the latest information about patients’ conditions and treatments.

Easy to use

Drexel chose the HP Pocket PC because of its portability, affordability, functionality, quality and support, says Leland J. Rockstraw, director of the college’s Center for Clinical & Electronic Learning Resources.

“It’s very user friendly, functional and dependable,” he explains.

In the first trial with handheld devices in 2001, the college allowed students to buy any brand, Rockstraw recalls, but the experience showed that one brand – HP – was much easier to integrate and support.

Today, one of the first things that Drexel’s nursing students learn about patient care is to “pull out their Pocket PC and look up the condition and associated diagnostics, treatments and nursing interventions,”

Customer at a glance

About Drexel University

Drexel, a private, nonsectarian coeducational institution founded in 1891, calls itself "Philadelphia's technological university." Its College of Nursing and Health Professions prepares students for careers as nurses, physician assistants, physical therapists, radiologic technologists and mental health practitioners.

For more information, visit <http://www.drexel.edu/>.

Contact the HP Customer Reference Program, 281-514-5755, for more information.

Rockstraw says. "It allows them to access the information immediately."

Using technology during clinical training prepares them to use advanced tools in the health care world and encourages them to avoid risky guesswork, he explains. "When you don't know, don't guess; look it up and get the right answer."

"Training with the HP iPAQ gives our students a distinct advantage because they learn the importance of quick access to vital information while caring for patients," he says.

Making a difference

All undergraduate students (including those taking courses online) and faculty members at the nursing college use the HP iPAQ Pocket PC.

"The students feel more confident and professional when they have to look up something in front of a patient using a handheld PC rather than a textbook," says Cornelius, who is responsible for the technology side of the program.

"Getting in the habit of looking things up to learn something new or just to double-check has a positive outcome for patients. It helps reduce errors, avoid drug interactions, improve documentation and review illness states," she says.

All course and reference materials, including entire books, are stored on the pocket-sized device. The contents are updated each time the device is synchronized with the student's desktop computer. Printed information, on the other hand, can become outdated without warning.

Student nurses also learn to take notes at bedside directly on the HP iPAQ Pocket PC, where it remains stored for future reference.

Tool for teachers

Faculty members use their handhelds to store their classroom presentations and to make detailed notes on each student's clinical performance. Weeks later the notes can be copied easily into each student's evaluation, Cornelius says, to show specific examples related to patient safety or that "he or she did a really fine job in this situation for these reasons."



Cornelius says the information on the HP Pocket PC display is easy on the eyes for reading books or journal articles. "If I'm standing in line or waiting in a waiting room or on the train, I can just pull out my iPAQ and do some reading."

As for the college's administrators, electronic recordkeeping makes it easier to provide student performance reports required by licensing and accreditation boards. Overall, the HP iPAQ Pocket PC has fit so well into the nursing college's undergraduate programs that the college is considering HP iPAQ phone products for its nursing doctorate program.

The Pocket PC is "taking off like wildfire" in nursing and other health care related fields, according to Cornelius. More and more schools are considering using an HP Pocket PC as a crucial tool to improve learning and patient care, she says.

"We fully believe in it. We know it's helping to produce a safer, more confident practitioner."

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