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Incorporate Certification/Licensure Exam Requirements in Assessments

Andrea Jackson, EdD; Instructional Coach; Center for Faculty Development; Fayetteville Technical Community College [00:00:15] My advice to faculty to assisting students in achieving success on high-stakes certification tests and things of that nature that we have here at the community college is to keep in mind that all of your assignments, all of your tasks, all of your objectives and learning outcomes should in some way shape or form include the objectives of that state certification. I often suggest for faculty members to verbally remind that this is to achieve this outcome, or this will help you on your final exam, so that there's always some sort of relationship. There's some sort of attachment. And they have a place to file that information and keep it intact until they take that exam.

Juanita Williams; Instructor; Cosmetology Services Education Center (CSEC); Fayetteville Technical Community College [00:00:58] So how I make sure that they continuously practice all of their state board techniques, as well as certain performances that they have to do. The performances are for me as an instructor. The state board techniques are so that they can prepare to go to the boards. So how I make sure that they do that again at the beginning, it's part of the curriculum. That's part of their rubric. That's part of their assignments. What I would do is give them a mock state board sheet package, certain tasks and techniques that they have to do for state board. I list them all on that sheet and they have to complete them. I usually have to watch them to make sure that they are following those procedures exactly how state board wants them to do it. And they have to get that checked off. So at the beginning of the semester, you have 100 of them to do, by mid-semester you have to have 50 of them completed.

Candice L Freeman, PhD; Department Chair; Medical Laboratory Technology Program; Fayetteville Technical Community College [00:01:49] We practice this assess— this certification exam at the end of every academic semester. Traditional programs wait until the end, and that's what I used to do in a previous program. And when I started this one, I said, Why don't we just do it after every semester? Granted, the first semester in the second semester, they're not going to have all of the information, but you tailor that exam to that semester. So again, going back to scaffolding, the first semester is the least complex. The third semester is the most complex. So by the end of the third semester, they should have enough knowledge to take a full mock certification exam. Each certification exam is 100 questions. It's timed exactly to the minute of the regular cert—, the real certification exam. I don't time my regular tests, but for the mock exam, I do time that because we don't have any control over what the certification board does. They require it to be timed. But it is good for them to have that experience because that is experiential learning. They are learning how to take a certification exam by experiencing a simulation.

Zanita; Student; Fayetteville Technical Community College [00:02:58] She does go ahead and make sure that we do the exact same time that she knows our national certification team is gonna do. So that way, we're used to... feeling the pressure of knowing that we don't have, you know, 15 hours to take this exam and to not kind of second guess ourselves. But it's important to know because, you know, whenever you— Sometimes when you do get used to spending five, ten minutes on a test, on an exam, and you, and you get two or three hours and, it's, you know, 150 questions, that's just not gonna add up for you. So it's definitely important that, you know, she does do that because it does help us understand what's coming.

Juanita Williams [00:03:31] We have a testing booklet that the state uses to incorporate a test for each board applicant. And so they'll, we'll get that off the website, so we'll know exactly what's being evaluated. And then we create a rubric based on that. So the rubric will say you're being evaluated on safety and sanitation, you're being evaluated on the use of the instruments properly, you're also being evaluated on disposing the things in the right content, and all those things that it says in it. And we make a rubric based on that.



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Andrea Jackson, EdD [00:04:01] Rubrics are one important way to keep that information in the forefront while students are working. If there is an element or elements that are measurable and are included in that state certification, if that is included in the rubric, then student is aware from the beginning this is part of your expectation. It is something that they hear during lecture or during class time, it's something that they hear when they are reviewing an assignment. And it's also something that they see on their feedback.

Candice L Freeman, PhD [00:04:26] Now, the mock exam for certification is not graded. They have to take it, but they don't get a formal grade for it. And that takes a little bit of pressure off of them. So what happens is after they finish their mock test, I go through and I look at their answers. So they each get an assessment or an evaluation of their performance on the mock exam. And I tell them what areas of the program they need to really focus on more. And I even go as far as telling them, don't study this because you've mastered it. Don't waste your time on this content. Yeah, it feels good to say "I know this" and that builds your confidence, but that's not gonna help you with the content that you haven't mastered yet.

Juanita Williams [00:05:07] The benefit for practicing the exam at the very beginning, like I said before, is to get familiar with how the test is supposed to go. And so they won't be so nervous, they have had several chances to mix it up, or mess it up, or change it, or fix it. So by the time they have done it, maybe seven, eight, nine, ten times, they're pretty familiar with it and they can pretty much do it without missing a beat.