

**Designing the future of nursing with
judgment, integrity, and innovation.**

AI • Education • Innovation



The Digital Stethoscope Newsletter

August 2026

Building an AI-Ready Culture Before the Semester Begins

Preparing faculty, empowering students, and creating a shared vision for responsible AI in nursing education.

Welcome to the August issue of *The Digital Stethoscope*.

As another academic year begins, many of us are doing what nurse educators always do this time of year, reviewing syllabi, updating course materials, refining simulations, checking technology, and wondering how the summer managed to go by so quickly. The start of a new semester is filled with anticipation, fresh opportunities, and perhaps just a little uncertainty about what lies ahead.

This year, that preparation also includes something that wasn't on our to-do lists just a few years ago: deciding how we will thoughtfully integrate artificial intelligence into our teaching. AI is no longer something waiting on the horizon, it has become part of the educational landscape. Our students are using it, our colleagues are talking about it, and healthcare organizations are increasingly adopting it in clinical practice. The conversation has shifted from *if* AI belongs in nursing education to *how* we prepare future nurses to use it responsibly, ethically, and effectively.

One of the biggest misconceptions I continue to hear is that becoming "AI-ready" means every faculty member needs to become an AI expert or completely redesign every course. Fortunately, that's simply not the case. Creating an AI-ready nursing program isn't about mastering every new tool or chasing the latest technology. It's about building a culture where faculty and students

share common expectations, where critical thinking remains at the center of learning, and where AI is viewed as a tool to support, not replace, clinical judgment, professional reasoning, and human connection.

The beginning of the semester offers a unique opportunity to establish that culture. The conversations we have during the first week, the expectations we communicate in our syllabi, the examples we model in class, and the questions we encourage students to ask all help shape how AI will be used throughout the program. Small, intentional actions taken early often have a much greater impact than major changes introduced later.

Throughout this month's newsletter, we'll explore practical ways to create an AI-ready learning environment without adding unnecessary complexity to an already busy semester. You'll find ideas for establishing clear expectations with students, simple resources you can implement immediately, and strategies for helping learners develop the critical thinking and professional judgment that will remain essential regardless of how quickly technology evolves.

As always, my goal is to provide practical ideas that you can adapt to your own teaching practice. Whether you're taking your first steps with AI or expanding initiatives already underway in your program, I hope you'll find something in this issue that sparks a new idea, starts an important conversation, or simply reminds you that meaningful innovation often begins with one small change.

Thank you for being part of this growing community of nurse educators who are committed to preparing graduates not just for today's healthcare environment, but for the one they will help shape tomorrow.

Here's to a successful semester ahead!

 Susan

Faculty Corner



Practical ideas, leadership strategies, and real-world guidance for nurse educators navigating AI in higher education.

If I Could Add One Item to Every Faculty Meeting Agenda...

As nurse educators prepare for the start of another academic year, faculty meeting agendas are likely already full. There are curriculum updates to review, accreditation requirements to discuss, NCLEX results to analyze, schedules to finalize, committees to organize, and the countless details that accompany a new semester.

If I could add just one more item to that agenda, it wouldn't be a discussion about ChatGPT or the latest AI tool. It would be a conversation about culture.

Technology will continue to evolve. New AI platforms will emerge, existing tools will become more sophisticated, and healthcare organizations will continue integrating AI into clinical practice. What will have the greatest impact on our students, however, isn't which AI tool we introduce, it's the culture we create around its use.

The conversations faculty have before students ever walk into the classroom set the tone for the entire academic year. They shape expectations, establish consistency across courses, and reinforce the values we want our graduates to carry into practice. An AI-ready culture isn't built by adopting technology; it's built by faculty who share a vision for preparing nurses to think critically, act ethically, and use AI responsibly.

Creating that culture doesn't require having all the answers. It begins by asking the right questions.

If your faculty is meeting before classes begin, here are seven questions I encourage you to discuss.

1. What does an AI-ready graduate look like?

Before discussing technology, define the outcome. What knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional behaviors should graduates demonstrate regarding AI when they enter clinical practice? This conversation shifts the focus from tools to competencies.

2. Are we sending students a consistent message?

Students often receive mixed messages about AI from course to course. Discuss whether your faculty have shared expectations regarding appropriate AI use, disclosure of AI assistance, academic integrity, and responsible decision-making.

3. Where does AI naturally support learning?

Rather than asking where AI should be added, ask where it can strengthen what you already do well. AI can enhance case studies, simulation preparation, patient education activities, formative feedback, and clinical reasoning exercises without changing the heart of your curriculum.

4. How will we preserve clinical judgment?

Perhaps the most important conversation is recognizing what AI cannot do. Discuss how faculty will teach students to verify AI-generated information, recognize bias, evaluate evidence, and apply sound clinical judgment before accepting AI recommendations.

5. Are faculty prepared and supported?

An AI-ready culture begins with confident faculty. Create opportunities to share successes, discuss challenges, ask questions, and learn from one another. Faculty do not need to become AI experts overnight.

6. How will we model ethical AI use?

Students watch what we do as much as they listen to what we say. Discuss patient privacy, confidentiality, transparency, copyright, and responsible AI use so that faculty consistently model the professional behaviors expected in practice.

7. What is one goal we can accomplish this semester?

Meaningful change begins with manageable steps. Identify one realistic goal your faculty can accomplish before the end of the semester. Small successes build momentum and create a foundation for long-term innovation.

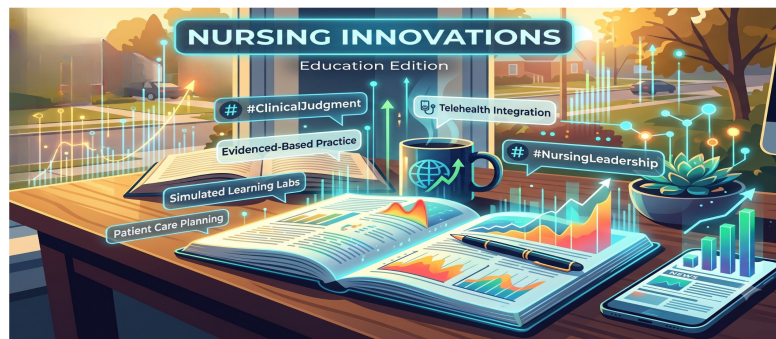
One Final Thought

Building an AI-ready culture doesn't begin with students, it begins with faculty. The conversations you have before the first day of class may be the most important AI conversations

of the entire academic year because they establish the expectations, values, and vision that students will experience throughout your program.

Practical Insights

“Five Things Every Nursing Program Should Have Before Classes Begin ”



“Building an AI-ready culture doesn't happen by chance. It happens through thoughtful planning, consistent communication, and clear expectations. Before students log into the learning management system or walk into the classroom, consider whether these foundational pieces are already in place. None of them require a major curriculum overhaul, but together they can create a more consistent and supportive learning environment for both faculty and students.

1. A Clear AI Syllabus Statement

Students should understand your expectations from the very beginning of the course. Rather than simply stating whether AI is "allowed" or "not allowed," explain when AI may be used, when it should not be used, and why those expectations exist. Transparency helps students develop professional judgment rather than simply following rules.

2. A Student AI Disclosure Process

If students use AI to brainstorm ideas, improve writing, or assist with learning activities, how should they acknowledge that assistance? A simple disclosure statement encourages honesty, supports academic integrity, and provides an opportunity to discuss the ethical use of AI in higher education.

3. Shared Faculty Expectations

One of the quickest ways to confuse students is for every course to have different AI expectations. While every assignment doesn't need the same policy, faculty should strive for consistent messaging regarding academic integrity, ethical AI use, and professional accountability across the curriculum.

4. Opportunities to Teach AI Literacy

Students need more than permission to use AI, they need guidance on how to use it responsibly. Consider incorporating activities that require students to evaluate AI-generated responses, verify information using credible evidence, recognize bias, and reflect on when AI supports learning and when independent thinking is essential.

5. Introduce the AI Safety Pause™

Building an AI-ready culture isn't just about teaching students how to use AI, it's about teaching them how to think before they trust AI.

One of the simplest ways to foster responsible AI use is to introduce students to the **AI Safety Pause™** early in the semester. Originally developed as a framework to guide nurses in the safe use of AI at the point of care, the same principles apply in nursing education. Whether students are using AI to brainstorm ideas, summarize research, develop patient education materials, or receive feedback on their writing, they should develop the habit of pausing before relying on AI-generated content.

Encourage students to ask three essential questions before using or submitting AI-generated work:

1. Is it accurate?
 - Has the information been verified using credible, evidence-based sources?
 - Does it align with current nursing standards and best practices?
2. Is it appropriate?
 - Does this use of AI support the intended learning outcomes?
 - Does it align with course expectations and institutional policies?
 - Will it promote critical thinking and clinical judgment?
3. Is it accountable?
 - Has AI use been disclosed appropriately?
 - Are privacy, confidentiality, and copyright protected?
 - Can I confidently stand behind this work as an educator or student?

Teaching students to pause, verify, and reflect before accepting AI-generated information reinforces the same professional behaviors we expect in clinical practice. The technology may

continue to evolve, but critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and accountability remain timeless nursing competencies.

Final Thought

An AI-ready nursing program is not measured by how many AI tools it adopts. It is measured by how intentionally it prepares students to think critically, act ethically, and use technology responsibly. These five foundational practices provide a strong starting point for every program, regardless of where you are on your AI journey.

Trending Topics



What Nurse Educators Should Be Watching This Month

Artificial intelligence continues to evolve at an incredible pace, making it challenging to keep up with every new announcement, product update, and policy discussion. Rather than trying to follow every headline, I've selected a few developments that I believe are most relevant to nurse educators as we begin a new academic year.

1. AI Competencies Continue to Take Center Stage

The conversation has shifted from *Should we use AI?* to *What competencies do graduates need to use AI safely and effectively?* Recent publications continue to emphasize that AI literacy alone is no longer enough. Nurse educators are increasingly being called upon to prepare graduates who can critically evaluate AI-generated information, recognize bias, apply sound clinical judgment, and use AI responsibly in practice. This shift reinforces the need to intentionally incorporate AI competencies throughout the curriculum rather than treating AI as a standalone topic.

2. Faculty Development Is Becoming a Strategic Priority

Across higher education, institutions are recognizing that successful AI integration depends as much on faculty confidence as it does on the technology itself. Professional organizations, colleges and universities, healthcare systems, and educational conferences are expanding opportunities for faculty development focused on AI, reflecting the growing need to support educators as they navigate this rapidly evolving landscape.

3. Healthcare Is Accelerating AI Adoption

Healthcare organizations continue to integrate AI into clinical workflows, patient education, and decision support. Recent developments, including new AI-powered health features from major technology companies, underscore why nursing graduates must be prepared not only to use AI but also to evaluate its outputs critically and understand its limitations. Preparing students for an AI-enabled healthcare environment has become an essential component of practice readiness.

4. Competency-Based Education and AI Are Converging

As nursing programs continue implementing the AACN Essentials, AI presents new opportunities to support competency-based education. Thoughtfully designed AI activities can help students practice clinical reasoning, communication, reflection, and patient education while still requiring faculty guidance and assessment. The emphasis remains on developing competent nurses, not simply proficient AI users.

From My Desk



One of the biggest changes I've noticed over the past year is that the conversation around AI has matured. We're no longer asking whether AI belongs in nursing education, we're asking how to prepare students to use it responsibly, ethically, and with sound clinical judgment.

As educators, it's easy to feel like we need to keep up with every new AI tool or feature. The reality is that our greatest impact isn't determined by how many tools we know. It's determined by how well we teach students to think critically, ask thoughtful questions, verify information, and remain accountable for the decisions they make.

As you begin this academic year, my encouragement is simple: don't chase every new development. Instead, focus on creating a learning environment where curiosity is encouraged, critical thinking is expected, and professional judgment always comes first. If we can do that, we'll prepare graduates who are ready not only for today's healthcare environment, but for the innovations that haven't even been developed yet.

Educator's Toolbox



“Introducing the Digital Stethoscope Resource Library”

I'm excited to introduce the **Digital Stethoscope Resource Library**. The library is a growing collection of practical, ready-to-use tools designed to help nurse educators confidently integrate AI into teaching, learning, leadership, and curriculum development.

Whether you're updating your syllabus, preparing for a faculty meeting, or introducing AI expectations to students, these resources are designed to save you time while supporting thoughtful and responsible AI integration.

This Month's Featured Resources

- **Faculty Meeting AI Discussion Guide**
Seven conversation starters to help your faculty begin building an AI-ready culture.
- **Faculty AI Semester Kickoff Checklist**
A one-page checklist to help you prepare your course before the semester begins.
- **Sample AI Syllabus Statements**
Adaptable language for establishing clear expectations around AI use in your courses.
- **Student AI Disclosure Template**
A simple template students can use to transparently acknowledge appropriate AI use in their coursework.

- **AI Safety Pause™ for Nurse Educators**

A one-page guide introducing the AI Safety Pause™ as a framework for promoting responsible, ethical, and accountable AI use in nursing education.

I hope you'll download these resources, adapt them to fit your own teaching and leadership style, and share them with your colleagues. New tools and practical resources will be added regularly as the Digital Stethoscope Resource Library continues to grow.

Download This Month's Resources

Visit the **Digital Stethoscope Resource Library** to access these free tools and explore additional resources for nurse educators.

["Visit the Resource Library"](#)



Closing Notes

As we begin a new academic year, I'm excited to introduce a few new features to *The Digital Stethoscope*. From the new **Faculty Corner**, where I'll share practical leadership strategies and reflections, to **From My Desk**, offering my perspective on emerging trends, and the launch of the **Digital Stethoscope Resource Library**, my goal is simple: to provide practical ideas, actionable resources, and meaningful conversations that support your work as a nurse educator.

AI will continue to evolve, but our role as educators remains constant. We are preparing future nurses to think critically, make sound clinical decisions, and lead with professionalism, compassion, and integrity. Technology can support that work, but it will never replace the human judgment that defines our profession.

Thank you for being part of the *Digital Stethoscope* community. I appreciate the work you do every day to educate the next generation of nurses, and I look forward to continuing this journey with you each month.

Until next month,

 **Susan**