An Academic–Practice Partnership: A Collaboration To Improve Staff and Student Competencies Using Simulation

Elizabeth Wykpisz, RN, MSN, MBA, NEA–BC
Chief Nursing Officer
Maureen Esteves, PH.D, R.N.
Associate Dean

Date: January 25, 2013
High fidelity simulation education is a standard teaching strategy for undergraduate nursing students at the College of Nursing,

St. Peters University Hospital had a desire to use emerging technologies in their Progressive Care Course.

Hospital nurse educators had the expertise in the knowledge and skills required by nurses in the care of the patient with a rapidly changing condition.
The project draws upon the expertise and resources of both academic/practice partners.

The commitment level was demonstrated via:

- Time
- Resources
- Staff/Faculty
The Project–A Collaborative Model

- Developed case scenarios to improve competence and confidence of both senior nursing students and staff nurses in assessment skills, recognizing rapid changes in the patient condition and providing safe evidence-based care to the patient.

- Additional competencies included leadership, evidence-based practice, teamwork, and collaboration.
Goals of the Project

- To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of continuing competence education for nursing staff using simulation in their Progressive Care Course.

- To improve the ability of new graduates to practice competently and safely using simulation.

- To advance a culture of life-long learning and provide intra-professional continuing education.

- To increase faculty capacity.
Challenges of the Project

- The hospital wants to ensure competence and effectiveness of current staff nurses who are being expected to care for patients with multiple morbidities and rapidly changing conditions in a Progressive Care unit environment.

- They are experiencing constraints and challenges with traditional approaches to develop or maintain clinical competencies for staff nurses:
  - Time
  - Cost
  - Limited opportunities for active learning
The College wants to improve the confidence and competence of new graduates to ensure safe entry into practice.

Constraints and challenges with traditional approaches to develop or maintain clinical competencies for student nurses:

- Limited clinical experiences
- Need to move from task based competencies to a higher level integrated skill set
- Complexity of the patient and health care setting
Barriers – “Why Change?”

- We have always done it this way...
- We, the products of traditional teaching methods, are OK...
Approaches Used in the Project

- Jeffries **STEP** Model was used to guide the preparation of scenarios and training of nurse educators
  
  **S** Standardized Materials  
  **T** Train the Trainer  
  **E** Encourage development of simulation design team  
  **P** Plan to coordinate simulation activities
Approaches Used in the Project

The **LOGIC** Model for Program Evaluation

**Situation**
- Proposition taken for granted

**Assumptions**
- Proposition taken for granted

**Inputs**
- What we invest!
  - Time
  - Money
  - Partners
  - Equipment
  - Facilities

**Outputs**
- What we do!
  - Workshops
  - Publications
  - Field days
  - Equipment

**Outcomes**
- Results of program: Change in:
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
  - Practices

**Impact**
- Change in Situation

External Influences, Environmental, Related Programs
Challenges During the Project

- In our evaluation of the implementation of the model, the most significant challenges identified were related to:
  - the scheduling of the staff nurses
  - the flow of communication between nurse educators, faculty and the simulation coordinator
  - the scheduling of students
The Impact of using a shared simulation model for student and staff learning:

- Enhances intra-professional collaboration
- Increases knowledge and competency, which results in safe, quality patient care
- Increases confidence and satisfaction
The Outcomes

- This model significantly reduced the cost of competency testing traditionally provided by the nurse educators and enhanced the effectiveness of their educational program.

- **Staff nurses** reported an increase in competence and an enhanced skill set and requested that this model be used for further competency testing.

- Overall, the nurse educators reported that the staff who worked with the high fidelity simulator were more satisfied with the teaching–learning strategy and reported greater confidence in their ability to care for a patient with a rapidly changing condition.
Students reported an increase in satisfaction and effectiveness working together with the staff nurses as they learned the responsibilities of the registered nurses in the scenario and how to function as a team member.

Students who participated in the collaborative scenario with the staff nurses also reported that this experience provided them with more realism and more feedback resulting in increased confidence and satisfaction.
Compelling reasons for duplicating this model

- Provides a safe environment where students and staff nurses can practice.

- Provides the student and staff nurse with an opportunity to rehearse low frequency, high-risk clinical experiences they might have limited experience and exposure to.

- Ensures that every staff nurse has the knowledge and skills to care for patients with commonly occurring health care problems.

- Promotes a collaboration experience with other nurses, focusing on leadership and delegation skills.

- Demonstrates that staff nurses and nursing students who are immersed in an active learning situation greatly facilitates their learning.
What we have learned

- The use of simulation significantly decreases the costs of the hospital’s education/competency testing in the Progressive Care Course.

  Two hours of simulated learning versus four hours of highly variable clinical experience.

- In the future a joint appointment of a nurse educator between the College and their practice partner might be considered.
What we have learned

- This collaborative model helps to identify potential clinical faculty

- Educators noted an increase in staff helping each other thus enhancing collaboration and teamwork between staff as well as between the staff and students

- Nurse educators reported satisfaction with the effectiveness and outcomes of this partnership.
The future is an exciting one as we look at continuing our partnership as it relates to enhancing this collaborative model and looking at new initiatives.

Providing our experience and expertise to others who might be interested in developing the same models with their own practice partners.
Next steps

- The potential to utilize this model with other practice partner learning experiences, including both clinical and non-clinical (i.e. communication) scenarios.

- Plans to increase student access to this experience with future collaborations.
Questions

- Maureen Esteves, Ph.D., R.N. 
  Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education 
  Rutgers College of Nursing 
  973.353.3692 or 732.932.7700 
  esteves@rutgers.edu

- Elizabeth Wykpisz, RN, MSN, MBA, NEA–BC 
  Chief Nursing Officer 
  St. Peter's University Hospital 
  New Brunswick, NJ 08901 
  732–339–7626 
  ewykpisz@saintpetersuh.com