Breaking free from tradition: An expansion of simulation-based learning in an undergraduate nursing program

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What is simulation-based learning (SBL)?

According to Gabale, "simulation is a technique, not a technology, to replace or amplify real experiences with guided experiences, often immersives in nature, that evoke or replicate substantial aspects of the real world in a fully interactive fashion".

Considered a signature pedagogy of the profession of nursing, SBL in nursing has gained prominence in the past 20 years and has challenged the traditional ways nurses approached teaching and learning.

Benefits of SBL

Sullivan et al. found that students spent more time in the higher level of competence of Miller’s pyramid (i.e., students spent more time applying their knowledge as opposed to fact gathering) in SBL experiences compared to traditional clinical. This study supported a 2:1 clinical to SBL ratio (that is, every hour spent in SBL equates to 2 hours of practice in clinical).

Hayden et al. suggested that up to 50% of traditional clinical practice can be replaced by high-quality SBL.

Purpose of the Project

The aim of this project is twofold.

- First, to explore students’ experience of the effectiveness of simulation as a learning tool.
- Second, to explore faculty’s experiences of using simulation as a teaching tool and their perceived faculty development needs.

SBL in the School of Nursing

In September 2022, SBL was integrated into the undergraduate nursing curriculum and replaced 15-25% of traditional clinical practice time. We called these experiences ‘Standardized Simulation Learning’ or SSL.

The Learning Day

Each SBL experience is structured to include preparatory work to be completed prior to the simulation day. Each SBL day unfolds in the following manner:

- Presbrief: ‘An activity immediately preceding the start of a simulation activity where the participants receive essential information about the simulation scenario, such as background information, vital signs, instructions, or guidelines’
- Unfolding the Clinical Scenario
- Debriefing: ‘An activity that follows a simulation experience and is led by a facilitator’

What did the participants say about their SBL experience? (Preliminary Findings)

Using the Simulation Effectiveness Tool – Modified (SET-M), a 19-item, three-point Likert scale tool, the participants rated whether they agreed that the pre-briefing, clinical scenario, and debriefing had a positive effect on their learning. In addition, participant responses also highlighted aspects of the SSL that supported or inhibited their learning.

References


What’s on the horizon?

As we enter the second year of the project, we will be engaging in focus group interviews of both students and facilitators. We will also be addressing the importance of ongoing professional development for simulation facilitators.

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