Three nursing campuses at Vermont Technical College were utilized to conduct a year long simulation project.

The purpose of this project was to determine if simulation use in nursing education, using a repeated measures, would improve students clinical performance over time.

The project question was, “Does simulation have the ability to help close the practice gap that has been identified in the literature, as well as help provide the students with the entry level skills to proficiently care for patients in the acute care setting?”

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The framework for this project was based on Patricia Benner’s (1984) novice to expert model. Benner’s model of acquisition is based on ascending levels of expertise. Benner’s model describes five different levels of proficiency: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient and expert. Nurses will move through each stage as they build on their skill attainment. The more exposure to a skill, the more proficient the nurse will become. Nurses will develop practical knowledge as they move forward in their practice. Knowledge that cannot be explained in terms of just theory and actions, but a holistic approach to a situation that is more in tune with the present state, and all its components, rather than a state of just knowing that.

Students were selected based on their campus faculty who volunteered to conduct simulated scenario during scheduled simulation days.

Quicker start (cont.)

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Changes in need are in nursing curriculum to prepare students for entry level into practice.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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The project indicates an overall growth in knowledge of 29.4% using simulation over the course of three campuses at Vermont Technical College. This indicates a positive correlation between simulation and nursing clinical outcomes.

Simulation use is a beneficial practice that should be implemented to improve students’ clinical performance, especially when clinical space is limited and nursing programs are capped due to this limitation.

The purpose of this project was to show that simulation can improve clinical outcomes of students, as well as help students prepare for their role in nursing practice. With supporting data, simulation could be used as an additional clinical rotation in nursing programs to decrease the conglomeration of clinical sites, increase enrollment, as well as expose students to varying degrees of simulated experiences not feasible in the clinical settings.

Based on Benner’s Novice to Expert model, students should be exposed to different scenarios, multiple times, to build experiential knowledge, learn through transformational learning, as well as help develop clinical reasoning. This in turn, will improve clinical outcomes of students. Help increase student engagement, and improve the transition to practice providing employers with graduates who are prepared for the demands of today’s nursing profession.

FUTURE DIRECTION

This project focused upon the knowledge gained as a whole at all three campuses; however, the data results provide another angle to simulation use and its benefit in rural campus settings for future projects. With the increase use of simulation in nursing programs, greater knowledge can also be gained on the benefits in rural campuses.

REFERENCES


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