Engaging Students in the Fundamental Skill Lab: Scenario Based Simulations

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A New Approach to Teaching Basic Nursing Skills:

Unfolding case studies teach skills in context:
- Simulated patient stories develop over the semester
- Each patient has a chart complete with H&P, progress notes, nurses notes, orders and test results

Peer-mentored learning provides individual attention and teaches collaboration:
- One student role-plays the “nurse” and one student is the “coach”
- Roles are reversed for the next scenario
- Students follow scripts through two scenarios each lab session; icons prompt students for appropriate role and response

Aims

Students will:
- Be actively engaged in the basic nursing skills lab
- Develop critical nursing behaviors including:
  - Assessment/ Intervention/ Evaluation
  - Critical Thinking/ Clinical Decision Making
  - Direct Patient Care
  - Communication/ Collaboration
  - Professional Behaviors
- Remember more of what they learn through story-telling (patient cases) and role-playing

Background (Previous Approach)

- Lab instructors spent too much time in skills lab teaching content as opposed to hands-on learning by students (75%/25%)
- Students tuned out while the instructor demonstrated skills
- Students practiced skills without being mentally engaged in the nursing process

Critical nursing behaviors are applied:
After very brief demonstrations in lab, students:
- Discover, assess and determine appropriate interventions for patient problems
- Utilize SBAR in communication with providers
- Practice skills in the context of a scenario

Outcomes:
- From the moment lab starts, students are more engaged in lab than previous approach
- Students report feeling more responsibility to come prepared to lab
- Peer mentored learning increased — students more autonomous in open lab practice

Simulation Evaluation Tool
- Student self-evaluation
  - Rated high all areas
  - Increased over time
- Student vs. Instructor Ratings
  - Students rated selves higher than instructors did at mid-term
  - Student & instructor ratings similar at final

Lab Evaluations
- Improved after implementation of new approach

Conclusions:

- After implementation, students:
  - Are more aware of nursing behaviors and professional roles
  - Prepare more thoroughly for lab
  - View labs as a more realistic environment with consequences for actions

Implications:

- Critical nursing behaviors as well as psychomotor skills can be taught in lab
- Unfolding case studies engage nursing students in lab

Peer mentoring: Direct patient care, incentive spirometer

Students wear isolation gowns as they log roll a peer playing “Chuck” after his ATV accident. Chuck is on contact precautions for *c. difficile*.