Transforming Clinical Skills in Nurse Education and Assessment Utilising a Blended Teaching and Learning Approach

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Traditionally, interdisciplinary nursing skills have been taught and assessed face to face in the Department of Nursing and Health Care in the South East Technological University (SETU). However, the Covid-19 Pandemic created an opportunity to pivot how skills content had to be delivered and assessed. A blended format was adopted, predominantly on-line. Online student engagement was a priority for the teaching team as active engagement has been shown to enhance students' motivation to learn and increase students' satisfaction in achieving their educational goals. Furthermore, positive student engagement can reduce the sense of isolation and lend itself to improved students' performance through assessment. This poster aims to provide an overview of how the skills teaching team of a Technological University, in the Republic of Ireland, pivoted the delivery and assessment of clinical skills, through on-line delivery, using blended learning and novel assessment approaches.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- To highlight and address the challenges and barriers to traditional teaching and assessment of clinical skills and to bridge the theory practice gap.
- To apply Problem Based Learning (PBL) through the use of scenario-based portfolio for clinical skill assessment.
- Develop student centered assessment to enhance their engagement and learning through real world scenarios.

METHODS

- **PBL** underpinned with a philosophical framework based on **Critical Social Theory** (CST) principles was adopted (Figure 1).
- An acronym was devised; **RAPID** (Figure 2) to frame the teaching and assessment approach.
- For their assessment, students were supported to develop a **Portfolio of Clinical Scenarios**, to enhance their learning which empowered them to further develop their critical thinking skills.
- The overarching aim of the Portfolio of Clinical Scenarios was that the student nurse could follow a **sequential structure** to their thought process and decision making in the assessment and provision of care and apply this to all scenarios throughout each module.

The Principles of Problem Based Learning in Practice
1. The problem acts as a trigger for learning
2. Learning occurs in a small group setting
3. The lecturer acts as a facilitator to the learning process
4. Learning is student centred
5. Prior knowledge is activated
6. New knowledge is acquired and integrated
7. Students take responsibility for their own learning

Figure 1: (Price, 2003)

R What are the concerns and initial impressions in caring for this patient? **(RECOGNISE).**
A What **ASSESSMENT** will be undertaken for this patient? (A-E assessment: Act, Interpret & document).
P Identify from the A-E assessment the **PLAN** of care that will be undertaken.
I What nursing interventions are required in caring for this patient? **(IMPLEMENT)**
D How will the findings be communicated with the preceptor? (REPORT & **DISCUSS** using the ISBAR tool)
Figure 2: Adapted by Gooney et al (2021) from DOH 2020 (iNEWSv2)

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Educational assessments have a significant impact upon teaching, learning and student engagement as they commonly define what areas of learning will be formally given credit (Baird et al., 2017). Furthermore, assessment is one of the major influencers for students when selecting which areas to focus their studies on (Zwaal, 2019). Nursing faculty are challenged in relation to assessment for clinical skills modules, and even more significantly so when there are barriers in relation to conducting face to face assessments. There is also a responsibility on faculty to ensure graduate nurses attain the skillset and competence to safely perform clinical skills in practice (Sullivan et al., 2009). These increasing demands require module and curriculum designers to create opportunities for students to engage (including through assessment) in order to enhance students' competence in a particular area or skill (Lazinica and Calafate, 2009; Chian et al., 2019). To overcome these demands the authors suggest the use of PBL (Figure 3) as a philosophy and pedagogy that takes a learner centred approach to both teaching and assessment.

Problem Based Learning for Assessing Clinical Nursing Skills
- The assessment should enhance the process of contextual, collaborative and self-directed learning (Zwaal, 2019).
- The assessment should achieve alignment of the learning and teaching tasks, intended learning outcomes, indicative content and assessment tasks.
- The assessment process should guide students to collaboratively develop a higher level of understanding of the complex issues and clinical skills.
- Assessment design must be student-centered.
- For students to effectively learn, the assessment should not only measure students' performance, but it should also serve as a toll to support their learning (Pellegrino, 2018).
Figure 3

References & Contact