A Targeted Needs Assessment for Simulation Instructor Courses

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The Need for and Challenges to an Instructor Course

Needs:
- The increasing use of simulation across institutions
- A lack of formal simulation training for many nursing professional development (NPD) specialists
- Variance in the ways simulations are delivered

Challenges:
- Busy professionals with multiple demands
- Variance in level of experience within department
  - New NPD specialists
  - NPD specialists with minimal simulation experiences
- Different interests within simulation (location, type, objectives of simulation)
- Expense of traditional comprehensive training

Objectives

1. The learner will discuss challenges in providing comprehensive simulation instructor training to NPD specialists.

2. The learner will identify the benefits and methods of conducting a needs assessment prior to simulation instructor training.

3. The learner will identify key sources of simulation instructor course content for nursing professional development (NPD) specialists.

4. The learner will describe key considerations when adapting simulation instructor course content for NPD specialists.

Needs Assessments

  a. Alignment of resources with educational strategy
  b. Motivation of learners and increased buy-in
  c. Clarification of problems or opportunities
  d. Identification of goals for future action
  e. Provision of data for decision making

Methods:
  a. Literature review and query of simulation centers
  b. Needs Assessment developed using literature and prioritizing information (Kern et. al, 2009)
     a. Previous and already planned training and experiences
     b. Expectations regarding the scope of knowledge and skills needed
     c. Existing proficiencies
     d. Perceived deficiencies and needs
     e. Reasons for past poor performance
     f. Learner’s capacities and motivations to improve performance
     g. Attitudes about the curricular topic
Survey Results

Of 20 possible participants, 15 completed the survey.

Previous Training/Experience

- 62.6% of participants had 5 years or more experience as nurse educators or clinical nurse specialists
- 100% had exposure to simulation in the past, 22.2% had experience leading a simulation project.

Expectations

Proficiencies, Deficiencies, and Needs: Respondents were most confident designing patient-care scenarios (M = 2.53, SD = 0.83) and were least confident choosing simulation tools to meet learning objectives, specifically utilization of high-fidelity manikins (M = 1.87, SD = 0.83), standardized patients (M = 1.80, SD = 1.01), and computer programs (M = 1.79, SD = 0.80). Most (80%) reported low confidence developing tools to evaluate trainee performance.

Elements of simulation participants wanted hands-on practice with:

- Debriefing with multiple facilitators,
- Using mannequins and equipment,
- Developing and implementing new scenarios, and
- Adapting scenarios to different learners.

Motivations to Improve Performance/Attitude

Regarding chief concerns and barriers to implementing a simulation project in an open-ended question, participants brought up issues of:

- Time,
- Role development (new to NPD specialist role),
- Competing work demands/obligations,
- Need for additional training in simulation,
- Coordination of facilities,
- Staff attendance, and
- Need for additional educator support

80% of participants identified ways simulation could be used in their work

When asked if interested in developing and implementing a simulation project of their own if additional training was provided, 53.3% responded yes, and 26.7% responded possibly. When asked “if other than yes, why?” participants reported needing:

- Support
- Resources
- Time
Key Sources

It is important that sources beyond the learner needs assessment are considered.

- Participants’ perceptions of their performance may not be accurate
- Participants may not have accurate knowledge
- Organizational resources and priorities need to be considered

Evaluation of multiple sources for simulation instructor content may include:

- Departmental priorities,
- Facilitator identified needs,
- Learner identified needs (needs assessment findings),
- Simulation center priorities and projects, and
- Simulation and education literature

Key Considerations

Considerations for prioritizing course content and choosing course design

- Barriers to participation identified (clarification of problems, increased buy-in)
- Identification of areas which could benefit from simulation (opportunities, future directions)
- Most immediate participant needs identified (motivation of learners)
- Resources available (align resources with strategy)

Course Agenda

Day 1
8 hours, computer lab, didactic and hands-on

Defining and differentiating simulations
Components of a simulation
Choosing the best form of simulation for learning objectives
Simulation scenarios: critiquing, designing, and debriefing
Scenario implementation
Learning activity evaluation
Available resources

Day 2
4 hours, Simulation Center, hands on

Your role during simulations
Debriefing
Putting it all together (pilot of participant scenarios)
Rationale for Choices

- Balance between learner expressed needs and instructor observations/literature
- Focus on barriers
  - Supporting through simulation design and practice implementation
  - Organization-specific resources as well as websites, books, and handouts flashdrive with “PDF portfolio”
  - Built in time to develop something for a current project (no double-work)
  - Helped to collect supplies for scenarios
- Focus on departmental needs - current activities, nurse residency program
- Focus on resources available (encouraged scenario development consistent with organizational simulation materials and departmental budget)

Course Evaluations

- Overwhelmingly positive
- Learning objectives were rated as “met to a great extent 4/4” for most objectives
- Appreciated the time to develop scenarios and practice them
- New appreciation for the amount of planning which goes into a simulation learning activity
- One learner reported feeling “a little overwhelmed” and would need help to implement on own

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References and Resources


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