Nursing and Emergency Preparedness Education in a Pandemic: Challenges in Response to COVID-19

OLC Session Summary

This session on September 24, 2021, led by Bob Smith (APUS) and Jackie Ricords (LearningMate) focuses on the unique needs and concerns of nursing and emergency preparedness educators and students in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing from firsthand experience, we consider some of the early lessons as we face this health crisis, discussing the concerns that have been shared by students and solutions that have worked well for courses by focusing on practice and engagement with online education.

We explored process and best practices when rapidly transitioning in-person nursing and emergency management courses to remote instruction. How can we know if our nursing online practice materials are effective? How can we give our students in emergency preparedness online education options for flexibility with their materials? Examples will include interactives, simulations, and government resources to consider for nursing education and “full-scale” exercise as identified in the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) manual.

Pursuing innovation in a quickly changing field is challenging. We will review online education and training materials for on-demand emergency preparedness and response training resources offered by CDC, other federal agencies, OER materials related to health and coronavirus created by universities several as part of the National Nurse Emergency Preparedness Initiative (NNEPI), as well as several new surveys from the field (NIH, CIC and others). Both 2D/3D scenarios will be shared that can assist with training and educating nurses when they cannot meet outside of clinical duties.

Social distancing restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic have profoundly changed how nursing students are learning around the globe. With 70% of America’s schools closed, many universities are scrambling to train nurse educators on how to conduct distance learning, as well as inform students how to complete coursework from home. The COVID-19 pandemic may also
encourage many nurses to seek higher education to move away from the bedside and work in administrative roles. It is a complex process, to bring interactivity and simulations into online learning but can be crucial to providing the practice that is required in the current climate.

**Key themes discussed in the presentation included:**
- Best practices for incorporating clinical practice needs into online courses with callouts, handouts, and interactives
- Utilizing open educational resources and publisher resources to assist with content needs
- Best practices for transitioning faculty to online course teaching for medical education
- Sharing lessons learned from the frontlines of the fight against COVID-19

The following are quotations and resources from the September 2021 discussion.

<table>
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<th>Key Takeaways</th>
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<td><strong>COVID-19 Impact on Nursing and EP Courses:</strong> Social distancing restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic have profoundly changed how nursing and EMT students are learning around the globe. Many universities are scrambling to train nurses and medical educators on online learning, as well as inform students how to complete clinical coursework from home. Early data shows that the COVID-19 pandemic is also encouraging students to seek higher education to move away from the bedside and work in administrative roles.</td>
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| **Nursing and EP Online Practice Effectiveness:** How can we know if our nursing and EP online practice materials are effective?  
  - Radical simplification  
  - Deep understanding  
  - Extreme focus  
  - Personal connection  
  - Direct communication  
  - Active practice online |
| **Preparing Nursing and EP Students:** How to help prepare students for what they will face entering the field?  
  - Prioritizing content instead of content saturation  
  - Integrating classroom and clinical settings  
  - Transparency on the differences between school clinical and work clinical  
  - Connecting students to peer support (in-person and online)  
  - Encouraging hospital programs to support new nurses  
  - Creation of appropriate application-based course components, text-based or 2D/3D simulations |
| **Simulation and the Lego Philosophy:**  
  - **Apprentice Level:** Simulations should be created to cover one event. For instance, a patient going into cardiac arrest.  
  - **Journeymen/women Level:** Add another simulation event (equipment failing) and combine the two in order to raise the level of complexity.  
  - **Master Level:** Add another simulation event (distressed family member) and combine the three and you raise the level of complexity further.  
  - **Use:** You create only “Apprentice” level simulations (as many as you need based upon the tasks
or objectives of the course and combine them as needed). You have the ability to change the Lego colors and size of the Legos based upon each simulation's complexity and task/topic you want simulated.

**Keep the Benefits of Online Learning While Returning to the Classroom:**
We have been remote since March 2020 and plan to return to campus in September for the new 2021-22 academic year. Our goal is to build on the strength that we built with online and distance education and integrate that with in-person efforts for a hybrid option for our teaching environments.

**Online Education is Here to Stay:**
Online education appears here to stay, whether it's the complete institutional online model or versions that combine in-person with online. Campus life will resume. We will need to consider the partnerships and staff that will enable us to be successful in this increasingly new hybrid environment.

**Active Learning Focus:**
Faculty are committed to working harder at student engagement to ensure that students are actively involved in the classroom, even in a lecture mode. Students expect active, meaningful work both online and in the classroom setting rather than passively listening to a lecture.

**Individualized Online Learning Focus:**
One of the foundations of our strategic planning is innovative solutions, so we take a very individualized and diverse approach to education. We define diversity as how students prefer to learn and what type of learning resources speak to them, whether they're a tactile learner or a visual learner, etc. All of our instructional design and learning resources within the online classroom follow this one-to-one approach.

**Resources:**

*Lessons Learned: Online Nursing and Emergency Preparedness Education:*

*Transforming Teaching and Learning Panel Summary: Online Nursing and Medical Education:*

*National League for Nursing: Coaching and professional development materials for nursing and emergency preparedness:*
http://www.nln.org/professional-development-programs/teaching-resources

*Nursing Education Resource Guide: Nursing educator groups and standards information:*
https://www.smartscholar.com/nursing-education-guide

*Online Paramedic and EMT Overview: Program and key contact information:*
https://www.firescience.org/paramedic-training-and-degree-programs-online

*National Center for PTSD: Educational resources for trauma:*
https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/continuing_ed/psych_firstaid_training.asp

*National Human Genome Research Institute Website:*
https://www.genome.gov
NHGRI for Health Professionals Website: https://www.genome.gov/health/For-Health-Professionals

NHGRI Genomics Educational Resources for Healthcare Professionals: https://www.genome.gov/For-Health-Professionals/Provider-Genomics-Education-Resources


Genetics/Genomics Competency Center (G2C2): Website repository of genomics educational resources mapped to competencies. https://genomicseducation.net

Genetics/Genomics Competency Center: Genomics competencies published for five disciplines: physician, nurse, physician assistant, pharmacist, genetics: http://genomicseducation.net/competency


My Family Health Portrait (MFHP): Web-based tool to build a family pedigree with health information for patients and their providers: https://phgkb.cdc.gov/FHH


As coronavirus cases in Maryland increase, photographer and nurse Rosem Morton shares her frustrations, fears, and coping strategies: https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/i-feel-defeated-a-nurse-details-unrelenting-pressures-of-frontlines

NGS Classroom Resources: https://www.nationalgeographic.org/education/classroom-resources

Resilient Nurses Initiative: https://r3.wikiwisdomforum.com

Nurse Abnormalities: https://www.nurseabnormalities.com

Nurse Career Support: Community forum and articles for nurses. https://allnurses.com

OER Resources:
OER LibGuide @ NCU: https://ncu.libguides.com/oer
OER Training @ NCU: https://youtu.be/MzscjyLXmgE

LearningMate Transform is a subscription tool paired with instructional design and technology services that enable institutions to rapidly transition to effective online and blended learning: https://learningmate.com/transform

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