

## Standardized Participant Simulation Experiences Increase Nursing Student Teamwork and Communication Skills

Josie Doss  
Georgia College & State University

Debbie Greene  
Georgia College & State University

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. Dr. Greene is a TeamSTEPPS master trainer. She is currently the treasurer of the Theta Tau chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International.

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Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) graduates often enter fast-paced health care environments that require strong communication, teamwork, and patient advocacy skills. Preparing nursing students to communicate and work within interdisciplinary teams supports safe patient care. Among adults, 12% report experiencing a medical error in the past two years (Schneider et al., 2017). Often, medical errors occur due

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The goal of this activity was to introduce a group of 4 semester BSN students to teamwork tools aimed at optimizing patient outcomes by improving communication and teamwork skills among health care professionals. This was accomplished by developing a program that incorporated TeamSTEPPS strategies and simulation pedagogy. Teamwork knowledge and attitudes, and communication skills were measured before and after the activity to identify any impact the activity had on these variables.

The peer role-play experience was also 1 hour long and focused on conducting briefs, huddles, and debriefs, using the "I'm safe" checklist, CUS, and DESC scripts. Here, students worked in pairs to discuss case studies and play the role of information provider and recipient.

Two instruments, the TeamSTEPPS Learning Benchmark Quiz and the TeamSTEPPS Teamwork Attitudes Questionnaire (T-TAQ) were used for pre/post-program assessment (AHRQ, 2016b).

Findings indicate that implementation of TeamSTEPPS training and simulation into the 4 semester of a prelicensure BSN program improved students' knowledge of communication, teamwork, and patient care quality. Further, the data indicated that the program helped students become more aware of the importance of teams and team function related to teamwork strategies, leadership, situation monitoring, and mutual support.

Student feedback was positive. One student indicated, "*The most important concepts I learned [in this course] were leadership skills through TeamSTEPPS...*" Another student stated, "*Our TeamSTEPPS and diversity trainings were very helpful.*" Other students have verbalized positive feedback from interviewers when they mention they have received TeamSTEPPS training.

Deliberate strategies to improve communication and teamwork are necessary to prepare nursing students for the interprofessional practice environment. One significant limitation to this activity was the absence of an instrument to measure students' abilities to incorporate these TeamSTEPPS strategies into the simulation scenarios. Future activities will include this additional measure.

By supplementing didactic information from the supplied TeamSTEPPS workshop with standardized patient experiences students are able to practice their new skills in real life scenarios. While this activity was evaluated to determine the perceived impact of this activity in BSN nursing students, the principles could be easily adapted to apply to other disciplines.

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