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Nursing Graduates' Strategies for Success on the NCLEX-RN

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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Karla L. Sanders

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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2023

Abstract

Nursing Graduates' Strategies for Success on the NCLEX-RN

by

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MSN-Ed, Walden University, 2012

BSN, Francis Marion University, 2009

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

June 2023

Abstract

A nursing program has had difficulty from the years 2015-2022 consistently meeting the national pass rate requirement during students' first attempts taking the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore perceptions of recent traditional and nontraditional nursing school graduates regarding which evidence-based learning strategies and resources were most effective in leading students to be successful during their first NCLEX-RN attempt. Knowles' theory of andragogy was the conceptual framework for this study. Research questions involved traditional and nontraditional nursing graduates' perceptions of which evidence-based strategies were successful for them. Using a population of 35 spring and summer 2020 graduates from this nursing program, purposeful sampling was employed to obtain eight participants, of whom four were traditional and four were nontraditional. Data were collected by conducting one-on-one private and semistructured interviews. Using Braun and Clark's analysis, four themes were identified: effective classroom techniques, resources to prepare for the NCLEX-RN, consistent Health Education Systems Incorporated policies, and consistent faculty guidance. Based on these findings, a three-day professional development training program was created to review evidence-based teaching strategies that can promote learning for nursing students. Improving this school's scores on the NCLEX-RN will lead to positive social change by increasing availability of nurses in growing communities and improving the reputation of the school via improved enrollment rates.

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Dedication

This project study is dedicated, first and foremost, to my Heavenly Father, who gave me the strength and knowledge to complete this study. Next, to my parents, Leroy and Carrie Williams, who have pushed me, encouraged me, and prayed for me over the years to pursue my degree. Even when I wanted to give up and change my mind, my mother would tell me to keep going and that I could do it. Thank you, Mom, for that push! To my one and only brother, Nick, thanks for all your support and encouragement! To my husband Lance, thank you for being supportive and encouraging me to pursue my dreams. Thank you for everything you do to allow me time to work on my studies. To my children Kari London, Landon William, and Abigail Cecelia, thank you for understanding and being supportive when I had to work on my study instead of being able to go certain places. Thank you for wanting to help me complete my project study. To my pastors Elder Charles and Minister Sylvia Frazier, who treat me like a daughter, thank you for your prayers and encouragement throughout this process. I am so glad that I could make my entire circle proud of me for completing this task. I love you all and am so thankful for each one of you.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) is the required licensure exam for all candidates who have completed an accredited nursing program and are seeking to work as registered nurses (RNs). Nursing programs are designed to prepare students for this exam as well as the workforce. A nursing program that has students who are not meeting recommended averages for passing the NCLEX-RN on the first attempt is at jeopardy of losing accreditation. This can be detrimental to communities where nurses are in high demand. This study was used to determine, based on perceptions of recent traditional and nontraditional nursing graduates, what evidence-based learning strategies and resources have been proven to help them be successful on the NCLEX-RN.

Problem Statement

There is a problem at a southeastern technical college's associate degree nursing (ADN) program related to first attempt success rates on the NCLEX-RN. Pass rates on the NCLEX-RN were reported to be below the state's average scores for the years 2015-2019, except for 2018. The program has seen higher pass rates between 2020 and 2022 (southeastern state department of labor, licensing, and regulation, 2023). According to the southeastern state department of labor, licensing, and regulation (2023), "A deficient NCLEX pass rate means an annual pass rate of first-time takers on the NCLEX that is more than 5% below the annual national pass rate." National, state, and nursing program NCLEX-RN pass rates between 2015 and 2022 are listed in Table 1.

Table 1*National, State, and Program NCLEX-RN Pass Rate Scores*

<i>Year</i>	<i>National Pass Rate Scores</i>	<i>State's Pass Rate Scores</i>	<i>Program's Pass Rate Scores</i>
2015	84.51%	89.27%	82.18%
2016	84.56%	87.12%	72.00%
2017	87.12%	89.83%	80.49%
2018	88.30%	91.68%	91.80%
2019	88.18%	90.50%	84.13%
2020	86.58%	90.45%	82.54%
2021	82.48%	89.05%	85.71%
2022	79.91%	87.13%	81.40%

Success on this exam leads to the RN license, and students can practice nursing in their state. Low pass rates have negatively impacted the college in several ways. In Fall 2015, the nursing program was required to submit documentation to the accrediting agency to bring the program to its expected standards. The accreditation process wanted to know what the nursing program's plans were to improve their NCLEX-RN scores. This process required a detailed outline of what the faculty were doing differently as far as instructional methods, examination methods, and outside resources. In November 2015, required documentation was presented, and the school was visited again in spring 2021 (Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, 2015).

Although the accreditation issue was resolved in 2015, the problem remained that graduates of the program were still not consistently successful on the NCLEX-RN during their first attempt. Students have successfully completed the program but are not successful on this exam. Reporting low pass rates can result in the program being shut down by the state board of nursing or losing its accreditation through ACEN which can be devastating to communities where there are only a small number of institutions that provide nursing education.

To remedy the situation, the school began researching learning strategies and additional resources to help reinforce nursing material. During ACEN's first visit, the school had purchased resources from Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI), LLC. This was a company that provided various resources for both the nursing instructors and the nursing students to assist in preparing the nursing students for the NCLEX-RN. These resources included, but were not limited to, practice NCLEX-RN questions, simulations, case scenarios, practice tests, and even a comprehensive predictor exam. With pass rates not showing much improvement, the school then decided to stop using ATI and purchased Health Education Systems Incorporated (HESI) in 2017. They finally met the benchmark of acceptable pass rates in 2018, but since then, pass rates have fluctuated. Learning strategies that were currently being used in the program include lectures as well as virtual and in-class simulations. Additional learning activities include question and answer sessions, case studies, and group work. The resources used with HESI were adaptive quizzes, case scenarios, and the HESI NCLEX-RN review book which summarized all the important information in one book.

However, the problem has not been fully resolved, even though most students who were unsuccessful during their first attempt did eventually pass (see Table 1). Faculty at the college are interested in what learning strategies and resources in the nursing program are most effective to help students pass the NCLEX-RN during their first attempt. A gap in practice exists involving learning strategies and resources and nursing school graduates' readiness to succeed on the NCLEX-RN.

To address the problem, 2020 nursing graduates' perceptions were important in terms of viewpoints of both traditional and nontraditional students. Recent nursing school graduates who graduated from the program in 2020 and are currently working as RNs shared their viewpoints regarding what activities were or were not helpful in terms of preparing them for their NCLEX-RN. These graduates compared in-class examinations to questions seen on the NCLEX-RN. Although it is not appropriate for students to describe specific questions on exams, their perspectives regarding these questions provided evidence in terms of whether they believed NCLEX-RN practice questions that were provided during their time in school were helpful in terms of preparing them for the NCLEX-RN. Also, these graduates were able to share what activities, learning strategies, and classroom resources improved understanding of content and led to increased confidence regarding the exam. As active participants in the nursing program, their experiences provided insights to faculty members as well as the chair of the nursing department. Using feedback from recent graduates led to valuable insights regarding the nursing program and can lead to positive changes involving the curriculum and program itself.

It is also important to understand the viewpoints of traditional and nontraditional nursing graduates. Traditional students transitioned straight into the program from high school and other college courses, while nontraditional nursing students may have been out of school for years before returning to the program. Nontraditional students also included licensed practical nurses (LPNs) who have returned to obtain their RN degree and license. Both traditional and nontraditional graduates' perceptions may differ based on learning styles as well as different family and work obligations.

In this southeastern community, the technical college is one of only two nursing schools. With such a high demand for nurses and limited faculty and resources, losing a nursing program can be detrimental to the community. Nursing is a rigorous program, and although there is an extreme shortage of nurses, they must be able to produce competent nurses who can adequately care for patients. Ensuring that the nursing program is using active learning strategies and resources in the classroom to assist graduates in successfully passing the NCLEX-RN on the first attempt and enabling graduates to join the workforce of RNs will aid in decreasing the shortage of RNs in the U.S. (Murray et al., 2016).

For students to truly grasp nursing concepts and answer NCLEX-RN-style questions, they must be able to think critically. Critical thinking is not always an innate skill, so active learning strategies have been proven to be a method to teach critical thinking skills to students (Vetter & Latimer, 2017). For nursing students, they have become accustomed to using recall and memorization for their exams.

However, when they begin their nursing school curriculum, they are required to address case scenarios and critically think to answer NCLEX-RN-style questions correctly.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Low pass rates can lead to decreased student enrollment and can also threaten employment for faculty members, which has negatively impacted the nursing program. A former graduate of the program who has also been an instructor for over 10 years stated that the nursing program has progressively declined over the past 20 years. The instructor described how the program used to be one of the top programs in the state. A 2016 graduate of the program described frustrations involving the program: Policies would change every semester and even within semesters, students were made to feel like they were being set up for failure, and the program did not promote feelings of confidence in terms of being successful on the NCLEX-RN. This graduate further stated that they did not feel confident in their ability to pass the NCLEX-RN until they took a NCLEX-RN review class that focused on test-taking strategies. Two former instructors at the institution described not meeting the needs of students and said faculty opinions were not readily considered during discussions of how to improve the nursing program.

One former instructor also shared how she typically would spend large amounts of time with senior students reviewing NCLEX-style questions with them to help better prepare them and was told to no longer continue that practice.

Students voiced their disapproval regarding this change because frequent practice questions strengthened their confidence in preparing for the NCLEX-RN.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

The NCLEX-RN is administered in all 50 states in the U.S. as well as Canada (southeastern state department of labor, licensing, & regulation, 2023). A possible cause of this nursing school's low pass rates may be that methods of instructors are not effective in terms of engaging students to learn or to promote critical thinking skills (Hackney, 2017). Students may not be adequately tested on content that they may need to be successful on the NCLEX-RN (Butzlaff et al., 2018). Another possible factor may be that HESI, the independent organization that the school uses to provide additional resources for nursing instructors and faculty, is not being used to its full capabilities. The HESI exit exam used by an independent organization accurately predicted students who would be successful or unsuccessful on their NCLEX-RN (Chen & Bennett, 2016). McGillis Hall et al. (2016) found nursing school graduates reported that it was necessary to purchase additional material outside the nursing school curriculum and the HESI resources to help increase confidence in taking the NCLEX-RN. The technical college may not be using all the available resources that HESI has to offer, which may have resulted in decreased test scores.

As the nursing program strives to improve its board scores, it is important to ensure that evidence-based strategies that have been proven effective are being used.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore perceptions of recent traditional and nontraditional nursing school graduates regarding which evidence-based learning strategies and resources are most effective in terms of leading students to success during their first attempt on the NCLEX-RN.

Definitions of Terms

ACEN: ACEN stands for the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. This regulatory agency is responsible for issuing accreditation to nursing programs. If a nursing program is not accredited, then its graduates are not eligible to take their licensure exam (Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, 2015).

Active learning strategies: Critical thinking methods such as case studies and practice NCLEX questions that are used in the classroom to promote learning versus traditional lecture methods (Vetter & Latimer, 2017).

ATI: ATI stands for Assessment Technologies Institute, LLC. It is an independent company that promotes nursing student success throughout the nursing program and assists the student in preparation for the NCLEX-RN exam (McClenny, 2018).

Evidence-based learning strategies: Methods that have been proven effective in terms of promoting critical thinking skills and assisting nursing students with the NCLEX-RN (Sin & Bliquez, 2017).

Faculty members: Full time or adjunct instructors who are responsible for course content instruction in the classroom. It is important to include adjunct instructors as this program does employ adjunct instructors in classroom settings.

HESI: Health Education Systems Incorporated (HESI) is an independent company that promotes nursing student success throughout the nursing program and assists the student in preparation for the NCLEX-RN exam (Sosa & Sethares, 2015).

Kaplan: Kaplan is an independent nursing company that promotes nursing student success throughout the nursing program and assists the student in preparation for the NCLEX-RN (Salvucci, 2015).

NCLEX-RN: The NCLEX-RN is designed to test the nursing school graduates' knowledge of patient care via four major categories: providing a safe environment, health promotion and care, maintaining the client's psychosocial status, and maintaining the client's physiological status (National Council of State Boards of Nursing, 2019).

Nontraditional student: According to Burnell (2019), nontraditional students are typically defined as those students who have not furthered their education past the high school level for various reasons. For this study, the term refers to all students who have returned to college after being out of high school for at least 5 years. This definition includes students who may have already earned a college degree and are returning for a second degree or LPNs who have returned for their RN degree.

Recent nursing school graduates: Students who completed the ADN program in the past academic year, successfully passed the NCLEX-RN on the first attempt and are currently working as a RN. This definition does not exclude LPNs who have completed the transition program to RN and are currently working as RNs.

Traditional student: All students who have transitioned from high school directly into college and have been accepted into the nursing program.

This also includes students with learning disabilities and minority students who did not take a break between high school and college. These students are familiar with school policies and test preparation while the non-traditional student may have to be re-introduced to school policies and test preparation (Burnell, 2019, p. 164).

Significance of the Study

Nursing has become a profession that is in dire need of increased numbers. As the Baby Boomer population has become older and needs more healthcare, nurses are in high demand. The RN shortage has led to a need for more than a million nurses in the U.S. (Juraschek et al., 2019). There has also been an increase in turnover rates among nurses who choose to leave the bedside and seek other pursuits. Reasons for burnout include fatigue and inadequate staffing. Burnout has been identified to be as high as 70% of RNs worldwide along with aging nurses preparing to retire (Bakhamis et al., 2019).

A gap in practice exists involving learning strategies and resources used in the curriculum and nursing school graduates' readiness for success during the first attempt on the NCLEX-RN. This study involved determining which evidence-based learning strategies and resources have been shown to be most influential in terms of leading to success on the NCLEX-RN from the perspectives of recent nursing school graduates. Identifying evidence-based strategies and resources that promote success on the NCLEX-RN could lead to positive social change because there could be an increase in the availability of nurses which can decrease the amount of time a patient or client is seen for treatment, more rigorous client teaching, and client advocacy.

As the nursing program produces more graduates who are successful on the NCLEX-RN during their first attempt, the reputation of the college is promoted. More students will choose this school where they can be successful in their chosen field. A nursing program that has high NCLEX-RN scores can attract more students.

Successful nursing programs at colleges or universities promote positive social change because they allow students who ordinarily may have not had the opportunity to attend nursing school to become nurses. If schools are near where students live and have a reputation for producing strong nurses, more students will be attracted to them. Instead of leaving where they live and seeking schools with good reputations, students may be more inclined to attend school locally, and after graduation, work in their communities.

Research Questions

The two research questions for this study are:

RQ1: What are perceptions of recent traditional nursing school graduates regarding which evidence-based learning strategies and resources are most effective in terms of leading students to success during their first attempt on the NCLEX-RN?

RQ2: What are perceptions of recent nontraditional nursing school graduates regarding which evidence-based learning strategies and resources are most effective in terms of leading students to success during their first attempt on the NCLEX-RN?

Review of the Literature

When conducting this literature review, CINAHL, CINAHL & MEDLINE Combined Search, ProQuest, SAGE Journals, Academic Search Complete, and Education Source were used.

Keywords for the search were: *associate degree nursing, NCLEX-RN exam, evidence-based teaching and learning strategies, nursing faculty, traditional nursing student, nontraditional nursing student, and success on the NCLEX-RN exam*. In this review, I discuss the conceptual framework, evidence-based teaching strategies, evidence-based learning strategies, resources outside the nursing curriculum used to promote success on the NCLEX-RN, nursing student success, retention of nursing faculty, and ADN programs.

Conceptual Framework

Extensive research has occurred regarding positive outcomes for students in terms of success on the NCLEX-RN. The theoretical framework for this study was Knowles' theory of andragogy. This theory is appropriate for this study as it involves six components of learning: need to know, self-concept, prior experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn (Knowles et al., 2012, p. 3). Andragogy is a term that involves understanding how adults learn best. All adults do not learn the same, and their learning is dependent on the setting and content being taught. Adult learners differ from traditional students because there are extenuating circumstances that affect their learning. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore perceptions of recent traditional and nontraditional nursing school graduates regarding which evidence-based learning strategies and resources are most effective in terms of leading students to success during their first attempt of the NCLEX-RN. Although all students in the current nursing program were adults, there was a mixture of traditional and nontraditional students.

Colleges and universities' primary purpose is to provide knowledge to their students. If institutions of higher learning are failing to meet this purpose, then an action plan must be created to fix the problem. Knowles' theory of andragogy was appropriate for focusing on adult learners. At this institution, most students were adults who were either seeking their first college degree or coming back to school after it became necessary to make a career change. These students also had other obligations, such as children and working at multiple jobs. Focusing on Knowles' theory of andragogy allowed for a deeper understanding of the perspective of the adult learner.

NCLEX-RN

The NCLEX-RN was developed by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) in 1978 (NCSBN, 2019). The NCSBN regulates nursing practice and ensures that quality care is provided to patients (NCSBN, 2023). The NCLEX-RN is used in all 50 states of the U.S. as well as Canada to grant licensure to both practical and RNs in their prospective areas. The test is revised every 3 years and reflects each individual state's nursing regulations. To ensure that the test is designed to assess knowledge of entry level nursing, the NCSBN interviews thousands of new graduate nurses about their experiences and uses that information to build the exam. The exam can range from 75 to 265 questions with a maximum time of 6 hours (NCSBN, 2019). The exam is designed to test students on various topics such as safety, physiological adaptation, and reduction of risk potential. If their answer is correct, then they can move on to higher-level questions. If their answer is incorrect, then they are dropped to lower-level questions. Once they answer these questions correctly, then they are moved to higher-level questions.

If they continue to fail to advance to higher level-questions, then they are not successful on the exam (NCSBN, 2019). Although nursing programs have their own standards relating to passing and successful completion of the program, graduates must be prepared to take licensure exams so they can practice as licensed nurses in their state and country, as this has been determined to be the deciding factor in terms of whether graduates can be licensed as RNs (Foreman, 2017). The NCLEX-RN was updated in 2019 and again in 2022 (A Pass Educational Group, LLC, 2023). With the new exam, the NCSBN includes case studies where students are given a scenario and then asked multiple questions about that one scenario. These case studies focus more on what is seen in real life settings versus a simulated NCLEX environment (A Pass Educational Group, LLC, 2023).

ADN Programs

ADN programs began in the 1950s when there was an urgent need for nurses after World War II (Kubec, 2017). The nursing programs at that time were typically hospital-based programs and were not able to meet the demands for nurses (Kubec, 2017). According to Thies & Serratt (2018), ADN programs produce more than 50% of the world's nurses. Although more hospitals are desiring to hire baccalaureate-prepared nurses, ADN programs can produce graduates in a quicker timespan compared to a bachelor's degree program. These graduates are then able to potentially pass the NCLEX-RN and begin working in the nursing field. ADN programs are cost effective for students and not as time consuming academically.

Nursing Program Entrance Requirements Standardization

Nursing programs should also have a standardized way of choosing their students for nursing programs and having available resources for them. It is important to not only focus on the needs of students that are applicable to nursing school but also focus on their academic and personal needs (Nayak, 2018). According to Kubec (2017), awareness of students' grades in their science courses, such as biology and chemistry, may be adequate predictors of success on the NCLEX-RN. There has also been a positive correlation between students who performed well in their psychology courses during the prenursing program and their success in the nursing program. Sterner et al. (2019) indicated once students enter the nursing program, they are challenged to think through critical thinking scenarios. Students with high grade point averages and strong backgrounds in science courses have little to no difficulty shifting their thinking and using evidence-based strategies and resources to answer NCLEX-style questions. Being able to think critically also assists students in understanding how to care for clients in various situations.

Evidence-Based Teaching and Learning Strategies

Although learning styles may affect students' success on the NCLEX-RN, students who are able to use multiple learning styles are more likely to be successful during their first attempt on the exam (Lown et al., 2017). Vetter & Latimer (2017) determined evidence-based teaching and learning strategies are important and influential in terms of promoting NCLEX-RN success. Evidence-based nursing care is an important part of nursing school curriculum.

Clinical skills are learned through evidence-based practice; although sources list the same strategies that should be used, they differ in terms of priority.

Groups and Teams

Sin & Bliquez (2017) said one strategy that has been shown to be effective in terms of teaching nursing skills as well as critically thinking through client scenarios is for instructors to be creative with the students by using groups or teams. Students are divided into groups and assigned their topic. They then work together to create a presentation to teach the concept to the rest of their class. This strategy allows students to be creative as well as learn at the same time (Sin & Bliquez, 2017). Students need to be engaged in their classroom to fully understand how to prepare to answer critical thinking scenarios in the classroom. Allowing students to take the lead on presenting information with faculty guidance promotes student success as they are now responsible for their learning and can use their own preferences to help them learn material (Opsahl et al., 2018).

Pre/Post Quizzes and Case Studies

Moxley et al. (2017) discussed using lectures with pre and post quizzes along with case studies to promote critical thinking. Lectures may not appear to be an effective means of promoting learning, but when used in conjunction with other strategies, they can be very effective. The purpose of the pre-lecture quiz is to assess students' knowledge of content prior to lecture. Results of this quiz can help focus lectures on content areas that students are weak in and need further information.

After completion of the lecture, students are given a post quiz to assess its effectiveness and ensure content has been learned. Once the instructor has ensured that students have a strong understanding of the content, then a case study is used to assist students in critically thinking through client scenarios (Moxley et al., 2017). The case study includes a clinical scenario in which students are required to take knowledge they just learned and apply it to a patient scenario. This instructor-led activity allows students to not only learn information but also be able to apply information, which is crucial in the clinical setting as well as the NCLEX-RN (see Moxley et al., 2017). Before students can truly be expected to answer application questions, they must be taught how to answer these questions. Using case studies for approaching NCLEX-style questions helps students begin to grasp concepts of critical thinking and allows them to transition from memorization and begin applying information and using analysis (Williams, 2016).

Reflective Papers and Concept Mapping

A third evidence-based teaching method is the use of reflective papers and concept mapping to reinforce material. After instructors' lecture, students are required to write reflections and map out the material they learned, which enables them to take more responsibility in terms of their learning and strengthen their critical thinking skills (Shoemaker et al., 2017). Darney et al. (2018) claimed technology may be a large factor in terms of success for students as well. Some students may not be as technologically savvy as others, and therefore may have increased anxiety involving using technology when it is a requirement in their studies.

Assisting students and providing them resources to help them navigate technology will also improve their learning processes (Darney et al., 2018).

Resources for Students

Nursing graduates have voiced their concerns that they do not feel prepared for their NCLEX-RN. Evidence-based research has shown some possibilities that can be used in the classroom to increase student success. Classrooms should be designed to promote adequate learning environments for nursing students, and faculty members should establish what is allowed in classrooms so that distractions are kept to a minimum (Muliira et al., 2017). Nursing faculty should ensure they are using evidence-based practice methods to adequately prepare their nursing students to complete programs and be successful on the licensure exam (Kalb et al., 2015). Students should be required to be in the practice of taking multiple practice NCLEX-RN style questions from the start of their nursing school careers. This can only strengthen their ability to answer questions on their licensure exam (Blozen, 2017). Encouraging graduates of the nursing program who have met all requirements of the state to sit for the NCLEX-RN to continue studying and performing practice NCLEX-RN questions is essential to aid in success. Students should be encouraged to continue practicing questions and using all their available resources to prepare to maintain their readiness for the NCLEX-RN (Robinson, 2015).

Another resource that can be available to students is a tutor and retention coordinator (TRC). This is a person with a strong nursing background who is available to aid all graduating seniors. The coordinator not only provides tutoring sessions with an emphasis on test-taking skills, but also provides various means of support to students.

This includes dealing with personal issues, test anxiety, and concerns about what to do after graduation (Czekanski et al., 2018). The TRC can also assist the nursing student with scholarship opportunities, and other financial means to ensure the nursing student is able to stay enrolled in the program (Diefenbeck & Klemm, 2021).

Using outside resources to strengthen students' knowledge of how to answer NCLEX-RN exam style questions has been shown to be effective when nursing instructors are using companies that are intended to assist with nursing students' success. Faculty should be aware of all the resources that the company offers for nursing graduates to prepare for the NCLEX-RN. The different companies provide practice NCLEX-RN questions, clinical scenarios, case studies, and even standardized tests to mimic the NCLEX-RN. Using an independent nursing education company that uses standardized testing also strengthens students' ability to answer NCLEX-style questions in high stakes situations. Standardized testing can prepare students to face high-stakes testing (Shoemaker et al., 2017).

There are two companies that have been extensively researched: HESI and Kaplan. One specific example is the use of HESI, that prepares students for the NCLEX-RN. Using HESI and its standardized exams as a benchmark for progression in nursing programs has been shown to lead to students being successful during their first attempts on the NCLEX-RN (Johnson et al., 2017). Students who have high scores on HESI exams are more likely to be successful during their first attempt on the NCLEX-RN.

HESI provides various resources for nursing students, including practice NCLEX-RN questions, critical thinking clinical scenarios, and standardized exams for every nursing course that can be taught by the college. When HESI and the resources that it offers are fully integrated into a nursing program, nursing programs have seen increased scores on in-class examinations, improvement in critical thinking skills, and success on the NCLEX-RN (Johnson et al., 2017). With all the resources that HESI offers nursing programs, the most important is the HESI exit exam. The HESI exit exam is a predictor of NCLEX-RN success. A score of 900 or greater indicates a high probability of students being successful during their first attempt on the NCLEX-RN (Sosa & Sethares, 2015).

Kaplan is another company like HESI. Kaplan develops products that promote success on the NCLEX-RN. Students who score high on their Kaplan examinations also are successful on their NCLEX-RN on the first attempt. There is a strong positive correlation between high scores on comprehensive predictor exams and the NCLEX-RN (Xin & Mills, 2017). Students who scored at least 60% on the Kaplan readiness exam had a less than 2% chance of failing (Jefferys et al., 2017). However, it was determined that students who had been struggling throughout the program and had not been remediated along the way were not successful on the Kaplan readiness exam. As nursing students progress through the program and are found to have greater difficulties than is expected with the course work, they should be involved in a focused remediation, such as assigned practice questions and tutoring sessions with a nursing instructor to build their knowledge base and test taking strengths (Jefferys et al., 2017).

Faculty should identify students who score poorly on their practice standardized examinations (Koestler, 2015). Once these students are identified, then a formal remediation plan, such as required weekly check-ins with nursing faculty, practice questions, and critical thinking exercises can be designed to focus on the students' individual weak topics.

Faculty Recruitment

One of the criteria that has been identified in promoting success on the NCLEX-RN is using evidence-based learning strategies such as concept mapping and having an active learning environment for nursing students. However, nursing schools are in dire need of faculty members who would be able to implement these evidence-based learning strategies. Many faculty members indicated that they did not have much knowledge about evidence-based strategies (Kalb et al., 2015). In the year 2013, nursing schools across the United States had to turn away almost 80,000 potential nursing students due to the lack of faculty (Feldman et al., 2015). If there are not enough available faculty, then the students are at a disadvantage when it comes to their learning. There must be enough qualified faculty available to teach the various nursing courses and the clinical rotations. Each nursing program has a predetermined amount of course and content hours along with the number of clinical hours. Failure to complete this requirement will result in students being unsuccessful in the program and, ultimately, being unable to take their licensure exam.

As nursing programs seek out strong, competent nurses already in the workforce and recruit them into the educational setting, students are being provided quality instructors that can adequately prepare students for their licensure exam (Thies & Serratt, 2018). Nursing programs that have focused on obtaining a strong, diverse workforce allow the students to be exposed to various aspects and points of views to help create a holistic view of healthcare and patient care. Nursing instructors, who have worked in a variety of settings other than just acute care facilities, are able to provide students with a personalized view of patient care versus requiring the students to depend on their textbooks or less personalized resources to provide the information (Salvucci & Lawless, 2016).

Faculty Retention

As nursing programs continue to shift to more evidence-based learning strategies, nursing programs need to have more faculty to implement these interventions and should maintain the faculty members who are currently there, to meet the students' needs (Carlson, 2015). As nursing programs have built a strong faculty, it is of great importance to ensure that the universities retain their faculty members to assist the program in gaining further success in producing students who are successful on their first attempt on the NCLEX-RN. One key component of faculty retention is the leadership of the university and the nursing program. A strong leadership team that listens to their faculty can assist in ensuring that the faculty are happy and have the resources needed to be effective instructors (Lee et al., 2017). Another option to help retain faculty is to provide mentoring programs for new faculty.

Just as nursing students need adequate support for progressing through the program, the faculty need support from each other while implementing new strategies in the classroom and improving NCLEX-RN scores (Hardesty, 2015).

Prevention of faculty being overworked and stressed can also promote faculty retention. Faculty members, who are teaching multiple courses and clinical assignments in a single semester, can easily burn out from the stress that corresponds with the multiple responsibilities. For faculty members, who are presently full time, the offer of tenure has been proven to promote retention. As the benefits for a full-time faculty member increase, then the morale of the faculty member increases and encourages retention. Universities that do not limit the type of nursing faculty that are hired to only those with doctoral degrees can also promote faculty retention. There have been some instances in which nurses that may have the qualifications to teach may not be willing to give up their current job whether it be due to personal or financial reasons. If the university allows the faculty member to be an employee of the university and satisfy their employee requirements at their initial place of employment, the compromise has allowed the university to retain strong faculty members (Feldman et al., 2015). An additional method of encouraging faculty retention is by offering workshops which focus on “the mentoring process, emotional intelligence, bias, and civility” (Washington Nurse, 2022, p.44). These workshops can improve communication skills among faculty members and create a more positive work environment which will encourage faculty members to stay at the institution (Washington Nurse, 2022).

Knowles' theory of andragogy focuses on the adult learners and ensures that their academic needs are being met while also ensuring that the adult learners can meet all their personal and work obligations. As nursing schools implement evidence-based strategies and resources to improve students' learning, they may see an increase in the success of their students on the NCLEX-RN during their first attempt. Faculty recruitment and retention are key factors to improving student's success on the NCLEX-RN as well, so that the students have the available faculty and resources for evidence-based strategies, such as concept mapping, and clinical experiences can be implemented.

Implications

During data collection of this study, strategies were identified by traditional and nontraditional nursing graduates that were shown to be most helpful to being successful on the NCLEX-RN on the first attempt. The data obtained can lead to changes in nursing curriculum, how the material is presented, and how the material is tested. Based on tentative anticipated findings of the data analysis, two possible projects were identified. The first project could be a professional development program for faculty that would focus on how to incorporate evidence-based teaching strategies in the classroom. This would be consecutive, 3-day sessions where the evidence-based teaching strategies and resources are reviewed, and experts from an independent company, such as HESI or Kaplan, would be present. The second project could be a policy recommendation position paper focusing on the nursing school program testing policy, specifically focusing on additional NCLEX-RN resources such as HESI or Kaplan.

Although it is important to consistently test students with NCLEX-style questions, it is important to use resources that have been provided to show positive results in student performance.

Summary

A problem at a southeastern technical school has been identified. Nursing students are completing the program but are not able to successfully pass the NCLEX-RN during their first attempt, which prevents them from obtaining RN licenses and working in their state. A gap in practice exists involving learning strategies and resources used in the curriculum and nursing school graduates' readiness for success during their first attempt on the NCLEX-RN. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore perceptions of recent traditional and nontraditional nursing school graduates regarding which evidence-based learning strategies and resources are most effective in terms of leading students to success during their first attempt on the NCLEX-RN. I identified evidence-based strategies and resources for success on the NCLEX-RN such as using independent external organizations that provide resources for preparing students for the exam. Results of the study could lead to positive changes in terms of teaching delivery methods as well as nursing testing policy changes.

In Section 2, the methodology is discussed. A basic qualitative research design was used to identify strategies that recent nursing school graduates have found that led to success on the NCLEX-RN.

Semistructured interviews were conducted with a sample of traditional and nontraditional recent graduates who successfully passed the exam during their first

attempt. Findings can lead to possible changes involving nursing curriculum as well as entrance requirements for prospective students.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

A southeastern technical college's ADN program has a problem related to first attempt success rates on the NCLEX-RN. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore perceptions of recent traditional and nontraditional nursing school graduates regarding which evidence-based learning strategies and resources were most effective in terms of leading to success during their first attempt on the NCLEX-RN.

The design chosen for this qualitative project study was the basic qualitative design. Qualitative research involves focusing on verbal accounts of what is being said. According to Worthington (2013), "The overall purpose of the basic qualitative design is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (p. 23). Contrary to quantitative research which involves statistical data, qualitative research allows for participants to share their accounts regarding what is being studied. For this study, I interviewed recent traditional and nontraditional graduates and presented their viewpoints. The basic qualitative design involves focusing on describing perspectives and opinions of those who are involved in the study (Lodico et al., 2010, p. 146). The basic qualitative design also allows the participants to share their experiences (Harrod et al., 2017).

Using this design allows for a description of people's perceptions and their experiences (Soeker et al., 2016). The basic qualitative was used for this study because I was seeking viewpoints of the recent nursing graduates. They had just completed the program, and their feedback was still pertinent.

I used the basic qualitative design to collect data as graduates presented it and reported it verbatim in my findings. Consideration was given to other types of designs, but they were not chosen for this study. Phenomenological research involves participants' descriptions of experiences (Morrell-Scott, 2018). This was not appropriate for this study because I was not trying to understand experiences of people regarding a phenomenon. Also, my focus was not to interpret graduates' experiences; I was simply gathering information about their experiences. Ethnography is a type of qualitative study design that involves focusing on cultural understanding and immersion into participant cultures (Lodico et al., 2010, p. 156). The ethnographic design was not appropriate for this study because I was not studying a cultural group. I was not trying to immerse myself in a cultural group's beliefs, behaviors, or attitudes.

A quantitative research design was not chosen for this study because it involves assigning numerical values to information but does not allow for participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions (Lodico et al., 2010, p. 26). This type of research was not appropriate for my study because my focus was on nursing graduates' perceptions of learning strategies that were most effective in the nursing curriculum.

Participants

The site for this study was a southeastern technical college's ADN program. The population of this study consisted of all traditional and nontraditional recent ADN graduates in this program who graduated in 2020 and successfully passed the NCLEX-RN during their first attempt.

This included nursing graduates who are LPNs and returned as nursing students to obtain an associate degree in nursing, and those who successfully passed the NCLEX-RN. Purposeful sampling was the method of choice for this study. Purposeful sampling involves selecting individuals who have information that is relevant to the study (Lodico et al., 2010, p. 37). The college graduates two classes of ADN students per year, one in May and the other in August. The average class size is 30 students. Based on this information, a sample size of eight graduates was chosen since purposeful sampling does not warrant a large sample size. The sample size for this study was comprised of eight nursing school graduates from the May and August 2020 classes. Of these eight nursing school graduates, four of them were traditional students, and the other four were nontraditional students.

Access to Participants

After Institutional Review Board approval was obtained from both Walden University and the college, I spoke with the dean of nursing and educational effectiveness coordinator to obtain email addresses that nursing graduates had outside of their school email, as they do not readily check their school emails after they have graduated. Once email addresses of graduates were obtained, emails were sent to 35 graduates (see Appendix B). The email identified me and the purpose of the research study and asked for graduates' participation. Graduates were assured that confidentiality would be maintained and there were no repercussions if they chose not to participate. I also specified that I was looking to interview both traditional and nontraditional graduates.

Definitions of traditional and nontraditional graduates were included for participants to understand. They were asked to identify if they were traditional or nontraditional graduates. Also, I informed participants that they must have passed the NCLEX-RN during their first attempt.

I instructed participants to email or call me to participate in the study and identify if they were traditional or nontraditional students. After participants replied, I selected the first four nontraditional and traditional graduates that responded as my sample.

Researcher-Participant Working Relationships

To create positive researcher-participant working relationships, I did not currently have any supervisory or authoritative positions with participants. Although these participants may have been former students of mine, they will never be students again at this institution. I will not have these graduates in a classroom again, because the institution does not offer further higher education beyond the associate degree program. Participation of these graduates in the study was purely voluntary, and they were not reimbursed in any type of way. It was important to maintain and consider all ethical standards to create positive relationships between myself and participants.

Ethical Considerations and Confidentiality

Prior to conducting interviews, consent forms were signed electronically by participants. This form explained their information would be protected, and I would only use information in the manner that was described to them. The consent form also said all participants would be protected from harm.

No personal identifying information was used in the study, and participant information was protected. Participation in this study was voluntary, and there were no repercussions. At the end of the consent form, there were two boxes that stated, “I consent” and “I do not consent.” It did not require a signature from participants. Once forms were signed, they were saved in an electronic folder. Participants received a copy of their electronic consent agreement. They were notified that data would be kept in a secure location and only shared with necessary persons involved in the study, which included myself, my committee chair, and co-chair. To ensure that data were accurate, all participants were asked for permission to record sessions. Participants were informed that audio recording was only used to transcribe interviews and then promptly deleted. All information was saved in a password-protected file as well as Dropbox file to ensure security. Walden University requires all data to be stored for 5 years. After 5 years, files will be deleted in a proper fashion; no paper copies will exist, and all information will be saved electronically.

Data Collection

Semistructured Interviews

Semistructured one-to one interviews were the appropriate mode of data collection for this study because it allowed the graduates to share their experiences and perceptions using my own developed instrument for collecting the data. In Appendix C, I included the interview protocol, which included the demographic information and 14 open-ended questions that were asked in the interview session.

I chose these questions because they related directly to my research questions and focused on Knowles' theory of andragogy since my questions were geared for adult learners and focused on their individual needs in the classroom.

Pilot testing was performed with faculty members outside of this institution. Two faculty members pilot tested the instrument to ensure that the questions were clear and that the participants understood the questions that were being asked. Their qualifications included having a minimum of a Master of Science Nursing degree or a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. They had been nurse educators for at least two years. The two faculty members reviewed the interview protocol and did not recommend any changes to the questions that were listed on the interview protocol. The interview sessions with the study participants were performed in a private conference room in the college's library on the main campus. I chose this location because it was a familiar area to the graduates, but it also provided a central location where interviews could be done without fear of being seen by healthcare science faculty or other current healthcare science students. If the interview was conducted in person, I ensured that the conference room was locked and that our voices were not loud enough to hear. I also chose a conference room towards the back, if it was available, to help further protect privacy.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was the possibility that the school might be closed so online interviews were conducted using Zoom or Skype for the participants who did not wish to meet in person. These interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis. For the interviews conducted during an online format, they were conducted in an area where there was complete privacy.

I used headphones to ensure that their answers were not heard by anyone else. The electronic interview was also conducted in my home during a time when no one was present. Rapport was established by thanking the graduates for being involved in the interview process and by asking them how their careers as registered nurses were going. There was no personal identifying information on the interview protocol; each participant was assigned a number and that was how the information was transcribed based on their number. No actual names or personal identifying information were used. The interviews lasted from thirty to forty-five minutes depending on the individual's response. As I took notes, there were times that I needed to ask further questions to fully understand the participant's answer. I also explained to them that, if I asked questions, I was not doing that in a judgmental manner but only to fully understand the answer to the questions (see Mitchell et al., 2018).

During the interview, I made field notes in a small composition notebook; these notes along with the audio recording were used to help me transcribe my data. If the participant requested that the interview not be recorded, then I would have only used a small composition notebook to take notes as I went through the interview protocol with the participant. However, this did not present as a problem. All participants agreed to the video recording. I explained to the participants that all information written down would be transcribed as soon as the interview was complete, and an electronic copy would be sent to them for verification that all information was accurate, and the participants were informed that the paper copy of the interview would be shredded.

To establish the sufficiency of data collection, additional probing questions were used as appropriate for understanding the participants' answers. If probing questions were used, I still maintained the 30-to-45-minute time limit for my participants (see Mitchell et al., 2018). Both I and the participants may have felt some anxiety about participating in the interview process, but it was important to assure the participants that those feelings of anxiety were a normal feeling and that I would do my best to make my participant feel at ease (see Roulston, 2019). It was an honor to be conducting these interviews, so I needed to be sure that I was always respectful and professional during the interview (see Roulston, 2019).

At the conclusion of the interviews, I thanked the graduates for participating. I informed them that, within a week, I would send them an electronic copy of their interview. This included the interview with the questions and answers. I also included my original field notes and recordings if applicable. Once I gave this information to the graduates, I asked them to review and return the transcription within one week via email. The recordings were saved on my device so that I could simply email them to the graduate. This was done to be sure that everything I received in the interview was what the graduate wanted me to understand and know. If I made errors, the graduate was able to fix the changes or inform me of the changes that needed to be made. I then made the corrections and re-sent them within a week. If they agreed with the findings, then I returned to them a final transcription of the interview as well as retained a copy for my records.

Data Analysis

For the interview process, I used a copy of the interview protocol to help guide my questioning. I audio recorded and took handwritten notes in a notebook during each interview. As I began data analysis, I first began to transcribe the handwritten notes. I accomplished this by creating a Word document and transferring all the handwritten notes into the Word document. For the audio recorded interviews, I used the NVIVO software to transcribe the data. During this step, I also combined my typed transcription with the NVIVO-produced transcription. This process required me to listen to the audio recordings multiple times to ensure that all information was correctly included in the transcripts. After my transcriptions were complete, I began reviewing the 8 transcripts identifying the key words that were common in all the scenarios. As I identified key words, I named these key words open codes (see Appendix D). Then I clustered the open codes to identify axial codes to give me broader topics to narrow my focus.

With my table that listed all the open codes and axial codes, I was able to isolate emerging themes. As the themes emerged, I gave names to those common themes. I pulled direct quotations from the interviews to support the themes in a descriptive analysis (Miller, 2023). The final step of data analysis, producing the report, was comprised of the themes listed in order of priority, the supporting data behind them, and their relationship to the research questions.

Accuracy and Credibility of Findings

It is important to maintain the accuracy of the information received from the interview. One way I accomplished this task was by using member checks. At the conclusion of the interviews, the graduates were emailed the initial transcriptions of the interview to member check to be sure that I understood all the information that was provided (see Lodico et al., 2010, p.177). A second method that I used is a peer debriefer. I asked a doctoral prepared nurse to review my findings with me and ensure that I stayed on task and did not allow my bias to influence the findings (see Lodico et al., 2010, p.177). Using a peer debriefer was crucial because it allowed me to receive feedback from a nursing educator who understood the direction of my study and a doctoral prepared educator who understood the process of the doctoral study. Before I reviewed any findings with my peer debriefer, I had the individual sign a confidentiality form that ensured that confidentiality was always maintained. I analyzed data from both traditional and nontraditional nursing graduates. Although I collected two sets of data, I combined the data since both groups had similar answers. This was performed to be sure that all information received from the graduates was accurate because I listened to the interviews while taking notes, transcribed what was heard, and then the graduates reviewed the preliminary findings for accuracy.

Clarifying any researcher bias was important when ensuring the credibility of my findings (see Lodico et al., 2010, p. 176). In my analysis, I shared that I may have taught some of these graduates.

I also shared that my bias is that all the faculty were using evidence-based teaching strategies and that the institution followed all evidence-based research for instruction. However, I also stated that, by peer debriefing, member checks, and analysis of the data, I ensured that all data provided were true and accurate.

Discrepant Cases

To handle discrepant cases, I first reviewed the transcripts of the interviews. If information seemed to be missing or inaccurate, I sent the initial analysis back to the participant for review (see Rohrer et al., 2019). I asked follow-up questions for clarification purposes. I also had my peer debriefer review my findings for accuracy to ensure that all information was entered correctly (see Rohrer et al., 2019). There were no discrepant cases found during data analysis.

Data Analysis Results

A qualitative study was conducted at a southeastern technical college's associate degree nursing program. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore perceptions of recent traditional and nontraditional nursing school graduates regarding which evidence-based learning strategies and resources were most effective in terms of leading students to success on the first attempt of the NCLEX-RN. Purposeful sampling was performed. From the graduates of the May and August 2020 classes, eight participants were chosen: Four traditional and four non-traditional recent associate degree nursing graduates. The four traditional participants were graduates who had graduated from high school and, immediately, enrolled in the college and the nursing program.

The four non-traditional participants were graduates who had either returned to school after many years or were changing careers. The non-traditional sample also included LPNs who were enrolled so they could obtain their RN license. The semistructured one-to-one interviews were conducted via Zoom. Informed consent was obtained prior to the interview and the participants were assured that their interview would not be reviewed by anyone but myself. All participants gave consent for their interviews to be recorded. The interview protocol included 13 open-ended questions that related back to the research questions. The interviews lasted between thirty and forty-five minutes. After each interview was completed, I informed all the participants that I would transcribe the interviews to ensure that I obtained all the information correctly. Within a week, a transcript was sent back to all participants to have them read and ensure that all information obtained was accurate. All transcripts were returned by the participants with a statement that all information transcribed was correct.

Findings

A southeastern technical college's associate degree nursing program has had a problem with first attempt success rates on the NCLEX-RN. Even with a rigorous five semester program and consultation from an independent standardized testing company, the pass rates for the years 2016-2022, excluding the year 2018, have been below the expected average. The gap in practice exists between the learning strategies and resources used in the curriculum and the nursing school graduate's readiness for success on the first attempt of the NCLEX-RN.

Because this qualitative study was designed to discover the perceptions of recent traditional and nontraditional nursing school graduates as to which evidence-based strategies and resources were effective in promoting success on the first attempt on the NCLEX-RN Exam, two research questions were developed.

RQ1: What are perceptions of recent traditional nursing school graduates regarding which evidence-based learning strategies and resources are most effective in terms of leading students to success during their first attempt on the NCLEX-RN?

RQ2: What are perceptions of recent nontraditional nursing school graduates regarding which evidence-based learning strategies and resources are most effective in terms of leading students to success during their first attempt on the NCLEX-RN?

There were four themes identified from the data analysis. Both the traditional and nontraditional groups had similar responses for Theme 1. For Theme 2, Theme 3, and Theme 4, there were some slight variations of answers. I combined all participants into one group as I presented the findings. However, I will explain any differences between the two groups during the discussion of the themes. Theme 1 is effective classroom techniques; Theme 2 is resources to prepare for the NCLEX-RN; Theme 3 is consistent use of HESI; and Theme 4 is consistent faculty guidance.

Theme 1: Effective Classroom Techniques

Both the traditional and the nontraditional graduates that participated in the study had similar responses for the interview questions related to Theme 1.

For the traditional nursing graduate interviews, one effective classroom technique mentioned by all participants was that the active learning classroom was more effective than the traditional lecture. Participants stated that the active learning classroom was more beneficial because it allowed for the students to interact with each other as the instructor guided the experience. Traditional Nursing Graduate Participant (TNGP)1 stated, “I liked the active learning classroom because it allowed me to hear my classmates’ viewpoints on different scenarios.” The active learning classroom places more responsibility on the student to engage in learning versus passively listening to a lecture and allows for more open discussion. TNGP 2 stated “I get bored easily in a lecture class, but the active learning classroom keeps things interesting.” TNGP 3 stated “Although I am a visual learner and lecture was helpful, I found that doing group work and teamwork helped me to better understand how to apply the information learned in patient scenarios.”

During the interview, the participants were asked about three additional evidence-based strategies: the clinical setting, pre/post quizzes, and reflective papers and concept mapping (Shoemaker et al., 2017). All participants stated that they did not remember doing reflective papers and concept mapping in the classroom. TNGP 1 stated “I loved the clinical setting because it allowed me to see what we were learning in the classroom on a real, live patient. This made the information more understandable, and I could better answer the application style questions.” TNGP 3 stated “I would have liked to see more quizzes because that would help to reinforce the material that was being taught and I would be able to see if I really understood the material.”

The nontraditional nursing graduate participants (NNGP) had similar responses to the traditional nursing graduate participants. All nontraditional nursing graduate participants stated that the active learning classroom was most effective in learning the material.

NNGP 1 stated:

Most of the time, during a traditional lecture, I did not pay attention to the instructor. But the active learning classroom helped me to bring together the information I had read in the textbook and what the instructor was reviewing in the classroom.

NNGP 3 stated that “I enjoyed it when we did other things in class other than lecture. I get bored easily.” When asked about the other evidence-based strategies, such as the clinical setting, pre/post quizzes, reflective papers & concept mapping, the responses were like the traditional graduates as well. NNGP 1 stated “Clinical was my favorite part because I am a hands-on learner; I learn best when I can actually perform tasks versus just listening in the classroom.” NNGP 1 went on to further state “I don’t remember pre/post quizzes or reflective writing, but I did use concept mapping during my study time.” NNGP 3 stated “I really liked clinical because it helped me to make sense of what we were learning in the classroom.”

Theme 2: Resources to Prepare for the NCLEX-RN

In interviewing the traditional graduates, TNGP 1, 3, and 4 paid for an out-of-pocket service, such as You World, to prepare for the NCLEX-RN.

All four participants stated that they used HESI, which was the independent contractor for their school, as well to prepare for the exam. TNGP 3 stated “Although I hated HESI, it was very good in providing numerous practice questions and I felt more prepared to take the exam.” TNGP 2 stated “I did not buy anything else; I just used HESI to help me prepare for the exam.”

For the nontraditional graduates, NNGP 1 and 3 paid for an out-of-pocket service, such as You World, to prepare for the NCLEX-RN. NNGP 2 stated “I actually just purchased review books for labs and books with mnemonics to prepare for the NCLEX-RN.” It is important to emphasize that this participant was already an LPN and shared, during an earlier exchange in the interview, nervousness about the exam was not felt since the participant had previously taken the NCLEX-PN. NNGP 4 stated that “I used the HESI resources that I already had and shared a You World account with one of my classmates. But I did not pay for the You World myself.”

Theme 3: Consistent Use of HESI

The consistent use of HESI involved a discussion of what the HESI policy was during the participants’ first and fifth (final) semester, and activities that were assigned in HESI to assist the graduates in preparing for the NCLEX-RN. For the traditional nursing graduate participants, the use of HESI as part of their overall grade and its policy dramatically changed from their first semester to their final fifth semester. For the purposes of the interview, the questioning was limited to the first and fifth semester policies as outlined in the interview protocol.

TNGP 1, 3, and 4 described the first semester policy as the HESI standardized exam only being 10% of the overall grade with no recommended score. One participant, TNGP 2, stated that they could not remember what the policy was for the first semester. All four participants described the fifth semester HESI policy the same way. The students were required to make a score of 900 on the HESI exit exam. The HESI exit exam was worth 25% of the entire grade. If they scored less than 900, they would receive a zero which, ultimately, would result in failure of the course. TNGP 3 described the policy change as this: “The policy for the fifth semester was made in the middle of our semester. We entered the course under one policy and, when the policy was changed mid semester, it increased stress and tension because now we could ultimately fail.”

NNGP 2, 3, and 4 described the 1st and 5th semester policies the same way as the traditional graduates. However, NNGP 1 stated that they could not remember what the first semester policy was but “did not think the HESI was incorporated into our grades.”

Theme 4: Consistent Faculty Guidance

Consistent faculty guidance focused on the inconsistency of information received from the faculty members. Information taught by the faculty was not current evidence-based practices. Also, faculty should be a resource for students to be able to go to for assistance when they are struggling in a course. For the traditional nursing graduate participants, all four mentioned, in some capacity, how faculty played a role in their success.

TNGP 4 stated:

Sometimes, hearing the faculty teach, I realized that it had been years since they actually worked in the hospital setting and were giving us outdated information.

Sometimes, the faculty would go against the textbook which would have the current evidence-based practices.

Another factor was that only one faculty member taught a large proportion of their courses. TNGP 1 stated that “I had an instructor that seemed to be teaching in every class. I wanted to hear more than just her perception.”

The nontraditional graduate participants had similar answers to the traditional graduate participants related to the consistency of faculty in the classroom. However, the nontraditional graduates also had another aspect to add to this topic. The nontraditional graduate participants felt that faculty were not willing to consider that students had other responsibilities outside of the classroom such as working jobs, families, and other life responsibilities. The nontraditional nursing graduate participants also mentioned the difficulty of interacting with the faculty. NNGP 4 stated:

As a working LPN, I would reach out to faculty for assistance but, most often, they were not available to help. And, when I did have an actual meeting with them, everything was discussed in broad terms, so I was not able to see where I was really struggling.

NNGP 2 stated that “I felt that faculty were really out of touch with us and that they did not care about other life responsibilities.”

When NNGP 2 mentioned “other life responsibilities,” I asked them to elaborate more on what they meant by this statement. NNGP 2 stated “I have a full-time job, I am a full-time student, and I have a family. It is very hard because I never get to see my family and I am always doing schoolwork.”

Discrepant Data

I reviewed all data obtained to ensure there was no missing information. As necessary, I would ask follow-up questions to ensure I understood the statements. My peer debriefer also reviewed the information as well once the confidentiality form was signed. There were no discrepant data obtained.

Evidence of Quality

One way that I maintained accuracy of the data was by using member checks. After each interview, I sent a transcript of the interview to the participant. This was done so that the participants could review the information that I had written down and ensure that I understood what was said and I documented correctly. A second method I used was a peer debriefer. Before any information was shared, I had a doctoral prepared nurse educator sign a confidentiality form to maintain participant confidentiality. Once this form was signed, the nurse educator reviewed my findings to ensure no bias was occurring. I analyzed data from both traditional and nontraditional nursing graduates, which included the recorded interview, field notes, and the final transcripts.

Summary of Outcomes

There has been a problem identified at a southeastern technical college’s associate degree nursing program related to success rates on the first attempt on the NCLEX-RN.

After a qualitative study was performed interviewing four traditional and four non-traditional recent nursing graduates, four themes emerged.

Based on the research questions, a 13 question semistructured interview was conducted with all participants. Informed consent was obtained by all participants. Field notes were obtained with each interview. All participants agreed to have their interview recorded for me to review later when I prepared the transcripts. After each individual interview, each participant received a copy of their transcript to review for accuracy, and all participants returned the transcripts without requesting any corrections. After all data were obtained and analyzed, four themes were identified based on the research questions. The traditional and nontraditional graduate participants had similar answers throughout all the interviews, so I combined the two research questions into one. This allowed me to place similar information together and then discuss the differences that were learned during the interviews.

Theme 1

Both the traditional and nontraditional nursing graduate participants identified the active learning classroom as being the most effective technique used by the faculty members to promote learning. In the active learning classroom, students are more engaged in the classroom, which promotes critical thinking (Opsahl et al., 2018). The active learning classroom also helps students learn how to answer application-style questions that are presented to them on the NCLEX-RN (Williams, 2016).

Theme 2

For the traditional nursing graduate participants, all four participants used HESI throughout their nursing school career, as well as studying for the NCLEX-RN after graduation. The nontraditional nursing graduate participants also acknowledged that they used HESI in their nursing school career. When HESI has been used as a benchmark for progression in the nursing program, it has been shown to have a positive correlation with students being successful on their first attempt of the NCLEX-RN Exam (Johnson et al., 2017). The HESI exit exam is an excellent predictor of success on the NCLEX-RN (Sosa & Sethares, 2015).

Theme 3

Both the traditional and nontraditional graduate participants addressed questions regarding the HESI Policy. For the purposes of the interview, the policy changes were limited to their 1st and 5th semesters. The policy changed between their first and fifth (final) semesters. The HESI proctored exams were used as 10% of the final course grade during their first semester; by the fifth semester, the HESI exit exam (a proctored exam) was 25% of the course grade, which could ultimately result in course failure if they did not meet the benchmark score of 900. Although standardized testing can be considered “high stakes testing,” it is important to prepare students to face high stakes testing before taking the NCLEX-RN (Shoemaker et al., 2017). A score of 900 or greater indicates a high probability of students being successful on their first attempt of the NCLEX-RN (Sosa & Sethares, 2015).

Theme 4

Both the traditional and nontraditional nursing graduate participants stated that faculty had a large role in their success, whether it be positive or negative. One point that the participants identified was, sometimes, the faculty seemed to be outdated in some of their teaching. Kalb et al.'s study found that many faculty members admitted that they were not aware of how to implement evidence-based strategies (Kalb et al., 2015). Faculty may have not worked in bedside nursing for quite some time and, therefore, were unable to give a realistic description of what students would encounter. Also, availability of faculty to teach the various topics was an issue. Some participants reported that they only had one main faculty member for most of their time as a student. To maintain adequate faculty staffing, reduction of workload and stress is vital (Feldman et al., 2015).

Faculty members who are overloaded with courses, student advising, and their individual department needs can become burned out at an increasingly fast rate. When burnout occurs, faculty members may leave the academic setting which results in fewer faculty available to teach the required courses. And, finally, a concern was given that faculty did not appreciate that their students had family and work obligations outside of their school responsibilities. Faculty were also not available to meet with students as often as students requested. When students are struggling, faculty should be able to identify them early, and begin a formal remediation plan with the student to help them focus on their weak topics (Koestler, 2015). Knowles' theory of andragogy focuses on the adult learners by ensuring that they can meet all their personal, employment, and academic obligations.

A nursing program that uses Knowles' theory of andragogy, effective classroom techniques, available resources, consistent HESI policy, and consistent faculty guidance may see improvement in students' learning, and possibly higher rates of success of the NCLEX-RN.

Project Description

The project that I developed is a professional development training. Professional development training will allow me to meet with nursing faculty and review strategies that the participants in my research stated were helpful to them in preparing for the NCLEX-RN. This is a 3-day session for 8 hours each day and involves reviewing nursing resources that are available to both faculty and students, as well as discussions on how to implement active learning strategies in the classroom.

Section 3: The Project

The project is a 3-day professional development training designed for nursing faculty at a technical college. The purpose, goals, and learning outcomes are included in the opening session of the professional development training. The moderator will have a presentation packet for their use that will include the timeline, activities, trainer notes, and module formats in the agenda. Each faculty member participant will receive a presentation packet that will include a copy of the purpose, goals, and learning outcomes; the presentation packets will also have a copy of the agenda and printed copies of all PowerPoint presentations given during training included in their packets. Materials, implementation, and evaluation plans, and hour-by-hour details of training are included in Appendix A.

There are two goals for this professional development program. The first goal is that, by the end of 3 days, each nursing faculty member will be able to write five NCLEX-RN style questions pertaining to their discipline. Accomplishing this goal is important because faculty member participants are preparing students to take the NCLEX-RN. Students who receive more exposure to NCLEX-RN style questions are more likely to be successful on the exam (Pike et al., 2019). The second goal is that, by the end of the 3-day training, each nursing faculty member will be able to state two ways in which they will be able to incorporate more evidence-based strategies in the classroom. Using evidence-based strategies has been proven to be effective for nursing students and assists faculty members in terms of preparing their nursing students to be successful on the NCLEX-RN (Pike et al., 2019).

Rationale

The professional development training was chosen to help nursing faculty identify areas of weakness when preparing students for the NCLEX-RN. Nursing requires both didactic and clinical components. For students to feel prepared to take the NCLEX-RN and be successful, faculty must be knowledgeable about current practices related to the clinical setting as well as evidence-based strategies that have been proven to be effective to promote learning for nursing students in the classroom (Kallestedt et al., 2022). Lack of current knowledge of evidence-based practices may result in outdated practices being taught to students, leading to misinformation and failure on the NCLEX-RN (Kallestedt et al., 2022). A second reason for this professional development training is to build faculty confidence. Colleges and universities are seeing a shortage of nursing faculty due to experienced nursing faculty retiring before orienting new faculty members, and nurses with advanced degrees are seeking employment opportunities that offer more financial income than teaching nursing (Gardner & Bedford, 2021). This professional development program will help all faculty member participants have confidence in writing NCLEX-RN style questions as well as learning evidence-based strategies to use in the classroom.

Review of the Literature

When conducting this literature review, the following databases were used: EBSCOHost, OVID, ProQuest, Science Direct, and Wiley. Keywords for the search included: *faculty development*, *nursing faculty*, *nursing faculty shortage*, *professional development*, and *NCLEX-RN exam*. A Boolean operator was also used.

I used the word “AND” to search using the following keywords: *nursing faculty AND professional development, nursing students AND success on NCLEX-RN exam, and resources AND NCLEX-RN exam.*

Professional Development

Nursing professional development encompasses “education, competency management, onboarding/orientation, research/evidence-based practice quality improvement (EBPQI), collaborative partnerships, and professional role development” (Dagg et al., 2022, p.206). Nursing faculty are in a leadership role, and it is important that they remain knowledgeable in their field. Coaching is one form of professional development that can be used among nursing faculty members (Patterson et al., 2022). When seasoned nursing faculty begin to coach newer faculty members, they are not only sharing their knowledge and expertise, but are also providing encouragement and support to their colleagues (Patterson et al., 2022). Not only are nursing faculty expected to know sciences and math, but they are also expected to be up to date in terms of evidence-based practices both in classroom and clinical settings (Timmins et al., 2022). With such strict demands, nursing faculty are responsible for preparing student nurses for success on the NCLEX-RN.

Nursing faculty can also help improve graduates’ pass rates on the NCLEX-RN by identifying students who are at high risk for failing the exam during their first attempt. This group includes individuals whose primary or first language is not English as well as those who delayed taking the exam after graduation, failed a course in the program, or received low or failing scores on readiness exams (Conklin & Cutright, 2019).

Faculty must also stay up to date on evidence-based changes in the clinical setting (Alexandre et al., 2021). Inpatient and outpatient centers are constantly updating policies and procedures to reflect current evidence-based practices. It is important that faculty members take the initiative to keep their knowledge base current regarding their clinical area of expertise (Alexandre et al., 2021).

Not all faculty are housed on the physical campus; some faculty may be adjunct or online instructors only. It is also important to ensure these faculty members are not overlooked in professional development. Having videorecorded sessions of in-person faculty development sessions and providing online resources ensures all faculty members receive the same information (Hunker & Robb, 2021).

Designing an Effective Professional Development Training

When developing a professional development training, the facilitator must be aware of their target audience. Although some professional development trainings are designed to cover a wide array of disciplines, nursing professional development trainings are designed differently (Nor, 2019). The main reason for this is that the discipline of nursing involves providing care and life-saving measures for real live humans. Another component of preparing an effective professional development training is practice assignments with new material (Nor, 2019). Adult learners prefer that information be provided to them in a straightforward manner and then apply the new information in a real-life scenario (Nor, 2019).

Nursing faculty may also benefit from hearing real life experiences from other nurses and patients that may be applicable to material being presented in professional development (Clisbee et al., 2019). Hearing real life experiences allows faculty member participants to develop empathy (Clisbee et al., 2019). Having empathy encourages faculty member participants to be more engaged in professional development training.

Faculty professional development training should occur frequently to assist faculty members with staying up to date on evidence-based strategies to promote learning in the classroom as well as any changes that may occur on the NCLEX-RN (Ha & Press, 2019). Faculty development training should also be clear, concise, and organized. As faculty members have numerous responsibilities, faculty development training should be designed to be time-conscious and pertinent to faculty discipline and needs (Collin & Smith, 2021). Faculty professional development training should allow participants to provide feedback to moderators (Aydogan & Ulupinar, 2020). This is not only beneficial to moderators, but also allows faculty member participants to provide input regarding what could have assisted them in learning concepts during training. Without feedback, information provided during professional development training may not be applicable to faculty member participants' needs (Aydogan & Ulupinar, 2020).

Effective Classroom Techniques

One of the themes that was identified in my research was effective classroom techniques. The participants all stated that the traditional lecture method was not as effective in preparing them for the NCLEX-RN. Nursing students are interested in active learning methods (Tesema et al., 2020).

Faculty who are aware of active learning methods, as well as how to effectively use them, can promote more participation from the students (Tesema et al., 2020). With nursing, there are both didactic and clinical components. In the clinical setting, peer learning and problem-based learning are two effective methods in assisting nursing students to understand clinical techniques (Suci Tuty Putri S. Kep et al., 2021). Peer learning has been proven to be a very effective tool in preparing nursing students (Narayanan, 2021). This type of learning requires students to work together to become competent in nursing skills. The students practice together once the faculty has taught the skill to ensure faster retention of the information (Narayanan, 2021). Although there is still some contention as to whether peer learning is superior to self-learning or not, peer learning still has strong evidence of its efficacy (Ko et al., 2022).

Problem-based learning has been proven to be effective in improving nursing students' communication skills between the nursing instructor and themselves. Also, problem-based learning is effective in helping nursing students to critically think using textbook and clinical knowledge to figure out patient scenarios (Lee & Son, 2022). This can also be incorporated in the classroom because clinical scenarios can be reviewed in the classroom setting as well. An effective classroom technique that has been shown to increase student success is the use of whiteboards in the classroom (Krautscheid et al., 2022). This technique allows the students to see the lecture material and allows for the faculty to add additional notes while lecturing in the classroom.

For example, if a faculty member is teaching a particular concept, and through classroom discussion additional points are brought out, the faculty member can write the material directly onto the lecture presentation for the students to refer to later (Krautscheid et al., 2022).

Resources to Prepare for the NCLEX-RN

There are many products available to both faculty and students to prepare for the NCLEX-RN. In general, products that have defined student objectives, contextual information, NCLEX-RN style questions with rationales, and reference materials have been proven to be the most effective in promoting success on the NCLEX-RN (Gaudet et al., 2022). The Kaplan Learning Integrated Course (KLIC) was designed as a course to be taken in the nursing student's final senior semester. This course was designed to prepare the students for the NCLEX-RN by removing the fear of the exam itself (Conklin & Cutright, 2019). Techniques such as practice assessments, test taking strategies, and mandatory attendance at a NCLEX-RN review course were just some of the items used to improve student performance (Conklin & Cutright, 2019). Another invaluable tool in preparing students for the NCLEX-RN is the HESI exit exam. This test can be used as a benchmark to predict student success on the NCLEX-RN exam (Shah et al., 2022). Students who do not meet the benchmark score can be identified early and remediated to help them be successful on the first attempt of the NCLEX-RN (Shah et al., 2022).

Using Evidence-Based Knowledge in the Classroom

A reason why faculty may struggle with evidence-based practice is because many known facts of nursing are based on tradition and not necessarily related to evidence. Morton's study describes how, in situations where nursing faculty are asked why things are taught the way they are, it is not usually due to research. It is only based on how things have always been done (Morton, 2020). One of the main reasons why the nursing faculty are lacking evidence-based knowledge is because many faculty are new and do not have the opportunity to be mentored by senior members (Boamah et al., 2021). Although newer faculty may have learned evidence-based strategies, they have not had the opportunity to utilize them in the classroom. Older faculty members are also retiring earlier and there is a gap where there may not be any seasoned faculty available to orient the newer faculty (Boamah et al., 2021).

Nursing faculty have a rigorous demand on them outside of the duties that all faculty at a college or university may have. As nursing faculty, they have the didactic and clinical components that they must manage. They also have additional responsibilities for the university such as staying involved in current research and writing publications (Ramirez et al., 2022). Many universities have lost nursing faculty due to the cumbersome workload. The research has shown that nursing faculty need support in maintaining their workloads so that they will not leave their positions (Ramirez et al., 2022).

Nursing faculty also need large amounts of support when transitioning from a clinical setting to an academic setting. Having this support will encourage them during a difficult transition (Brower et al., 2022). Also, nursing faculty are not always respected in the higher academic world. This lack of respect has prevented some from pursuing the educational route and choosing more higher-paid avenues (Mariani, 2022). One intervention that can be done to assist faculty with staying up to date on current evidence-based practices is by requiring students to participate in research (Humbles & Jones, 2019). Having students research current practices allows them to feel more in control of their learning, as well as have a better understanding of patient-centered care and how to implement it (Humbles & Jones, 2019). Although faculty still have the responsibility of maintaining current knowledge practices, allowing the students to be actively involved in understanding evidence-based practices is helpful to both the faculty and the students.

Project Description

Project Details

The project that I developed is professional development training. I chose this project because my study showed how the participants felt that faculty were not teaching accurate information based on current evidence-based practices. Also, the active learning classroom has been shown to be most effective in preparing students for their course nursing exams as well as their NCLEX-RN. Faculty members who have a strong, current knowledge base of nursing material, as well as writing NCLEX-RN style questions, can prepare their students better for the NCLEX-RN (Stalter et al., 2020). The focus will be nursing faculty at a technical school. This will be a 3-day session for 8 hours each day.

The sessions will focus on evidence-based teaching and learning strategies, and test writing workshops using PowerPoint presentations as well as handouts. HESI will also be a primary topic during professional development. HESI will be reviewed with the faculty along with the resources that HESI offers, and how the nursing faculty could incorporate the HESI resources into their courses. Throughout the three days, test item writing will be incorporated in different ways. The faculty will review strategies on how to write good NCLEX-RN exam style questions and identify tactics to avoid when writing questions. The faculty will be divided into groups based on two components: whether they teach upper or lower level students, and the content that they teach. For example, all the lower level medical-surgical nursing instructors will work together, and all the upper level medical-surgical nursing instructors will work together. Each group will write a sample exam, and, at the conclusion of the training, the groups will swap tests and view another group's exams. This way, the faculty can receive feedback from fellow faculty members as well as ones who may not be as knowledgeable as them in their discipline.

Resources and Existing Supports

The first resource needed to conduct this professional development training is the use of a classroom for the training to take place. After obtaining permission from the technical college to have the training on campus, a request will be made for a classroom that will accommodate all participants and allow for all participants to social distance if preferred. The classroom should also have a working heating and air conditioning system to ensure the room is at a comfortable temperature.

The classroom should also have a functioning computer system complete with microphones, projector, and a means for wireless remote control. A second resource would be to have an information technology person available to troubleshoot any possible problems that may occur. The information technology person would not have to be present for the entire professional development but should be close by to help prevent delay of the training. A third resource would be to provide food and beverages for the participants. Although the participants would be free to obtain lunch on their own, there would be beverages and small snacks available throughout the entire 3-day training. An area should be available where beverages could be kept cool, and participants would be able to make their hot beverages. A fourth resource is the availability of materials needed. I will be sure to provide paper, pencils, pens, dry erase markers, erasers, and a stapler to provide to the participants during their breakout sessions.

An existing support needed would be the dean of nursing. The dean would be able to assist with scheduling the faculty around their current workload. Also, the dean of nursing would be able to assist with communication between myself and the college, as well as to help with any unforeseen needs that may arise.

Potential Barriers and Solutions

One potential barrier to the professional development training is that the faculty member participants may feel that they do not need this training. The participants may be resistant to attending mandatory training. A solution to this barrier is to begin the session on a positive note. Thank the faculty member participants for their attendance and their hard work in the classroom.

Remind them that they put in long hours, both in the classroom and the clinical setting, and that they are the students' primary resource for success. Explain that the professional development training is not meant to make any participant feel as if they are being attacked; this is simply training to help improve current practices and the school's NCLEX-RN scores. Another potential barrier is that, even with careful planning, something could go wrong with technology or even the assigned room. The solution to this potential barrier is to have a backup plan. There should be a second room prepped and available should the first room present problems. Also, the presenter will have provided paper printouts of the PowerPoint presentations so the material could still be presented if technology fails.

Implementation

The 3-day faculty professional development training will take place during the week between the spring and summer semesters. This date was chosen because it will allow the faculty to enjoy a break from teaching in the classroom, and to have time to prepare for the upcoming fall semester. I would like to book the classroom at least 2 months in advance to ensure the availability of the classroom(s). I would want to have two classrooms booked in case that technology fails so that there is a designated back-up classroom. Also, I want to make sure that all faculty are aware of the dates and times of the professional development training at least 2 months in advance so that their schedules will reflect this training. The detailed timeline of the professional development training is included in Appendix A.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student

My role in this professional development training is to prepare a training presentation that reflects what I learned during my data collection about which learning strategies were most effective in assisting the participants to be successful on the NCLEX-RN. My experience in the classroom is helpful as it gives me an idea of what the faculty are currently experiencing. However, I cannot depend solely on this. As I prepare my professional training, I want to be sure that I discuss various scenarios to provide a well-rounded picture for the nursing faculty members. It is also my responsibility to be knowledgeable about the evidence-based practices that I will be presenting to the faculty. I will accomplish this task by referring to the previous research that I have conducted for the literature review to verify and review what each evidence-based strategy is and how it is used in the classroom. I also will ensure that I have reviewed all current standards for the NCLEX-RN. The format of the test, as well as the procedure of nursing graduates taking the exam, may change in a 2-year period so I need to be sure that I have read up on the most current information. When I am presenting my project to faculty members, I must maintain professionalism. Professionalism means that I have everything prepared and ready for my participants. I need to have the phone numbers for the dean and the information technology person so that I can reach them if there are any problems. I should be early to ensure that the room is set up with working computers, lights, and air conditioning systems. I should be prepared to greet the participants as they enter the classroom and have their Power Point packets ready for them.

I should have all my speaker notes to help as reminders of what I am discussing. And, also, following my timetable is important to show that I respect the participants and their valuable time.

Project Evaluation Plan

Evaluation is an important part of any project because the developer can see what was done well and what can be improved. For this 3-day professional training I will use a formative evaluation. Formative evaluation is an ongoing process that provides data on my professional development training (Wylie & Lyon, 2020). Formative evaluation can be conducted multiple times in a study. For example, formative evaluation can be done in the classroom setting using graded and non-graded quizzes, study sessions, group discussions, and assignment grades (Rivers et al., 2019). Formative evaluations occur continuously throughout the project until it is finally completed (Rivers et al., 2019). A formative evaluation is appropriate for my professional development training because I can obtain feedback prior to presenting and even during the actual presentation. With my project, I will ask two doctoral prepared nurses to perform a formative evaluation. These nurses are also currently nursing faculty members. Their input will provide feedback on both the nursing content of the presentation as well as the relativity to the faculty members.

The overall evaluation goals for this project are that the professional development training will provide clear and concise information to the nursing faculty and that the information is free of any bias from myself.

With the two evaluators reviewing the project, their input will allow me to see what I can improve or change in the presentations so that my goals will be reached. Since I am the key stakeholder in this professional development training, I want to be sure that the information is current, relevant, and that the faculty member participants will reap benefits from the professional development training.

Project Implications

A possible positive social change implication is that the nursing faculty will be more knowledgeable of evidence-based practices that can be used in the classroom. With this knowledge, their students may have a higher probability of success on the first attempt of their NCLEX-RN. As the institution produces more successful students, the school will be more attractive to incoming nursing students. Another positive social change implication is that there will be an increase in the availability of registered nurses. Nursing shortages are at an all-time high. Facilities are understaffed, nurses are overworked and are caring for clients with higher acuities (Bourgault, 2022).

The local stakeholders are universities and colleges that would hope to see an increase in nursing students. By an increase in nursing students, the revenue that is produced will assist the schools in keeping their doors open and their programs active. Another local stakeholder would be local facilities that are seeking to hire registered nurses. With the increase in students who are successful on their NCLEX-RN, they will be looking for job opportunities. The local facilities will have a larger population of graduates to recruit from and retain in the area.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

One strength of this professional development training is easy accessibility of material to faculty. Faculty members may not have a lot of free time to perform extensive research on evidence-based strategies. Evidence-based strategies and practices are constantly being updated, and it is important that faculty are using the most current techniques in their classrooms (Letterstall et al., 2022). Another benefit of this professional development training is that faculty members are involved in a community of practice. Especially for inexperienced faculty members, professional development training can provide an opportunity for more seasoned faculty members to share their experiences. These experiences can help newer faculty members understand how to apply content learned in training in the actual classroom (Ivanova et al., 2022). This professional development training can be used numerous times at any nursing school.

A limitation of professional development training is that the information being provided is based on one institution's NCLEX-RN scores, and low pass rates due to lack of evidence-based teaching strategies may not be an issue for other institutions (Chen et al., 2021). Other institutions may have low pass rates for their graduates for various reasons that are not directly related to the use of evidence-based strategies. Since this professional development training focuses on evidence-based teaching strategies and writing NCLEX-RN questions, training may still be beneficial but may not address all issues that other institutions are facing.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

One alternative approach to my project study would be to conduct a quantitative study comparing nursing students' final grade point averages (GPAs) to their success or failed attempts on the NCLEX-RN. This statistical information could be used to determine whether students with higher GPAs were successful during their first attempt on the NCLEX-RN. A second alternative approach would be to perform a study that follows a group of students from their entrance into nursing to completion of their second semester, followed by their graduation and taking the NCLEX-RN. This would provide more information on how students are progressing through their program, comparisons of GPA scores upon graduation, and whether they passed the NCLEX-RN during the first attempt. A third approach would be to interview all nursing graduates to determine if there were correlations between length of time after graduation when the NCLEX-RN is taken and success or failure on the first attempt.

Alternative Definitions and Solutions

An alternative definition of the local problem at this southeastern technical college would be that new nursing students are not able to transition their thinking from memorization to critical thinking scenarios. They may not have been exposed to critical thinking scenarios prior to entering nursing programs and may struggle on their exams. There are not enough certified nursing faculty members to teach nursing courses. Lack of available faculty leads to larger classrooms and inability to identify students in a timely manner who may be struggling in their courses.

There are some possible solutions to addressing what could be done differently during the professional development program for the nursing faculty. Instead of focusing primarily on in-class teaching strategies, the focus could be on nursing students and what they are doing to prepare for their in-class examinations. For example, the focus of professional development could be to obtain information about students' study habits. Another alternative solution to preparing the professional development for nursing faculty is determining if students are taking a review course prior to the NCLEX-RN and what their probability is of passing the NCLEX-RN during their first attempt after completing the review course.

Another alternative solution to preparing the professional development training is to have nursing students complete professional development training on how to study for nursing school exams. Many students struggle with critical thinking that is expected of them when answering NCLEX-RN questions but have not been taught how to answer critical thinking questions. Completed training upon entrance into the nursing program can help students feel more prepared to answer nursing examination questions. A second alternative solution to professional development is to incorporate a mandatory review course into the nursing curriculum. This will ensure all students participate and have a stronger idea of how they may do on the NCLEX-RN.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

As a scholar, I have learned how important a focused literature review is for any research study. The vast amount of research articles that are available for use can help guide the scholar in preparing their own research (Greenberg & Hibbert, 2022).

Scholarship in research can lead to influence arising in the educational realm (Spencer et al., 2022). I have also learned that research does not always lead to direct answers to research questions. During my research, I found studies where overall conclusions were different, and I was able to understand more about my research topic as a result.

Project Development

In developing the project, I learned how important it is to prepare an active learning environment for nursing faculty. Nursing faculty participants may be more likely to listen and participate if they are able to take active roles during training (Bartley & McKay, 2022). A second important lesson I learned about professional development is to review professional development training that has been done. As I created my project, I reviewed research articles on similar topics and was able to use previous professional development programs to create my own. A review of what others have done allowed me to develop a well-rounded professional development training program.

Leadership and Change

Career enhancement may be the primary reason for choosing to pursue an advanced or doctoral degree. Doctoral students can be strong leaders in their academic or research settings (Burleigh, 2020). Once the doctoral degree has been earned, the prestige of this academic accomplishment carries the distinction of higher income and increased opportunities for career enhancement and research opportunities (Chiappa & Perez Mejias, 2019).

Reflection on Importance of the Work

Reflections on Self as a Scholar

As I reflect on myself as a scholar, I have grown in my understanding of how to conduct a thorough literature review. I was able to see how a Boolean search can help narrow down search results and provide more specific results based on my research. Many articles were available in the literature pertaining to professional development, nursing faculty, and evidence-based teaching strategies. Although I expected to be able to find some articles that focused on my topics, I found hundreds of articles with similar topics.

Reflections on Self as a Practitioner

As I reflect on myself as a nursing educator, I have found, through my research, that I can improve in all aspects of the courses that I teach. Prior to researching my project, I knew a fair amount about evidence-based teaching strategies. As I conducted my research and learned more about the evidence-based strategies, I became aware of more techniques that I can use in the classroom and clinical setting. There is always room for improvement, and I have learned how to better implement evidence-based teaching strategies. As evidence-based teaching strategies continue to be researched, I have a better understanding of why it is so important to continue reading research articles so that I am aware of current changes and better practices related to evidence-based teaching strategies. Also, I learned just how important it is to stay involved in the research realm post doctorate.

Although research is not going to be my primary direction after graduation, I still would like to participate in research studies so that I can remain actively involved in positive change in the field of education and nursing.

Reflections on Self as a Project Developer

Prior to creating my own project, I did not realize just how meticulous I needed to be. One example is the amount of preparatory work that had to be done before I could present the project. I needed to consider all possible problems that could occur such as technology malfunction, and unavailability of the assigned room.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

Throughout this nursing shortage, the need for nurses has been at an extremely high level due to the baby boomers retiring (Buerhaus, 2021). Also, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a significant impact on healthcare by increased client admissions to the hospitals, and there are not enough experienced registered nurses available to care for the clients (Buerhaus, 2021). My work for this project has helped to identify strategies that have been shown to help improve students' success rates on the NCLEX-RN. As nursing schools are taking a more aggressive approach in using these evidence-based teaching strategies, the hope is that more students will pass the NCLEX-RN on the first attempt and quickly go into the workforce. Nursing schools could also see an increase in enrollment due to prospective students seeing the high pass rates of the school and choosing that program over another one.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

With the use of more evidence-based teaching strategies and encouraging both student nurses and graduate nurses to answer practice NCLEX-RN style questions, potential positive social change can be seen in various ways. The first potential positive social change may be the individual impact for the nursing graduate. The nursing graduates could see an improvement in their test scores and the ability to approach the NCLEX-RN with confidence. A second potential positive social change for the nursing graduate may focus on the family. The family may be the main support for the nursing graduate. Although the student nurse may not be as active in family gatherings, the family can continue to encourage the student nurse to pursue being successful in nursing school. Once the student has graduated, passed the NCLEX-RN, and found a job, they may be able to contribute more to the household physically, emotionally, and financially. A possible positive social change for the community could be an increase in the availability of nurses. Having more registered nurses working in the community could lead to shorter wait times at hospitals and other facilities, less acute flareups of chronic conditions due to more rigorous client teaching, and clients having nurses who are advocates for them and their healthcare.

A recommendation for future research is to perform a quantitative study that is focused on determining if there is a correlation between a student's final GPA in their senior semester and whether they are successful on the first attempt of the NCLEX-RN.

Participants could be the graduating seniors and the data to be obtained would consist of the GPA of each student and whether the graduate passed the NCLEX-RN on the first attempt. A possible research question could be What positive correlation can be determined related to a higher GPA and success on the first attempt of the NCLEX-RN?

Conclusion

The empowerment that I feel after writing two research questions, developing my own study, and creating professional development training is amazing. As a nursing educator, it is important to me that I prepare my students, to the best of my ability, to be successful in their nursing program as well as the NCLEX-RN. After researching and reading many research articles, I have found that evidence-based teaching strategies and practice NCLEX-RN questions are just two factors involved in promoting success. I hope that future research continues to identify techniques that can be used to help nursing students.

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Appendix A: The Project

The project will be a 3-day professional development training planned for nursing faculty members at a technical college. Each day of the training will begin with the goals and learning outcomes for the day. Each faculty member participant will receive a presentation packet that will include a copy of the purpose, goals, and learning outcomes. All of the presentation packets will include a copy of the agenda, and printed copies of all PowerPoint presentations given during the training. The following table provides the hour-by-hour detail of the trainings.

Nursing Faculty's Professional Development Training Day One: August 9, 2023

Time Frame	Topic	
8:30 a.m.- 9:30 a.m.	Introduction & Welcome Purpose Goals	Slide 2 Slide 3 Slide 4
9:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m.	Objectives for Day #1	Slide 5
10:00 a.m.-10:15 a.m.	Break	Slide 6
10:15 a.m.-11:15 a.m.	Discussion: What are you currently doing in the classroom? What seems to work and doesn't work?	Slide 7
11:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Discussion: evidence-based strategies and how to incorporate them Slides 8-12 Active Learning Classroom Pre/Post Quizzes Case Studies Concept Maps Knowledge of Resources	Slide 8 Slide 9 Slide10 Slide11 Slide12
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.	Lunch	Slide 13

1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.	What not to do when writing NCLEX style questions	Slide 14
2:00 p.m.-2:15 p.m.	Break	Slide 15
2:15 p.m.-3:30 p.m.	<p align="center">NCLEX-RN exam blueprint: how do we choose information to test?</p> <p align="center">Slides 16-20</p> <p>NCLEX-RN exam blueprint Slide 16</p> <p>Safe & Effective Care Environment Slide 17</p> <p>Health Promotion & Maintenance Slide 18</p> <p>Psychosocial Integrity Slide 19</p> <p>Physiological Integrity Slide 20</p>	
3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.	Brainstorming Session: How can we incorporate at least 3 evidence-based strategies in the classroom?	Slide 21

**Nursing Faculty's Professional Development Training
Day Two: August 10, 2023**

Time Frame	Topic	
8:30 a.m.- 9:30 a.m.	Introduction for Day #2 Recap of Day #1 Objectives for Day #2	Slide 23 Slide 24 Slide 25
9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.	Group Discussion Review	Slide 26
10:30 a.m.-10:50 a.m.	Break	Slide 27
10:50 a.m.-11:50 a.m.	<p align="center">Discussion: HESI (Part I)</p> <p align="center">Slides 28-31</p> <p>Introduction to HESI Slide 28</p> <p>Sherpath Slide 29</p> <p>Elsevier Adaptive Quizzing Slide 30</p> <p>HESI Compass Slide 31</p>	
11:50 a.m.-12:50 p.m.	Lunch	Slide 32
12:50 p.m.-1:50 p.m.	<p align="center">Discussion: HESI (Part II)</p> <p align="center">Slides 33-38</p> <p>HESI Standardized Exams Slide 33</p>	


	Next Generation NCLEX (NGN) types Extended Drag and Drop Example Highlighting Example Bowtie Example Trend Example SL	Slide 34 Slide 35 Slide 36 Slide 37 Slide 38
1:50 p.m.-2:10 p.m.	Break	Slide 39
2:10 p.m.- 3:10 p.m.	Group Assignment: Bad NCLEX-RN exam questions	Slide 40
3:10 p.m.-3:30 p.m.	Break	Slide 41
3:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m.	Summary of Group Assignments	Slide 42
4:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.	Incorporating Questions in the Classroom	Slide 43

**Nursing Faculty's Professional Development Training
Day Three: August 11, 2023**

Time Frame	Topic	
8:30 a.m.- 9:30 a.m.	Title Review of Day #2 Objectives for Day #3	Slide 44 Slide 45 Slide 46
9:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m.	Available resources for evidence-based strategies	Slide 47
10:00 a.m.-10:20 a.m.	Break	Slide 48
10:20 a.m.-11:20 a.m.	Individual Assignment: Writing 5 NCLEX-RN style questions	Slide 49
11:20 a.m.-12:20 p.m.	Group Assignment: Reviewing the 5 NCLEX-RN exam questions	Slide 50
12:20 p.m.-1:20 p.m.	Lunch	Slide 51
1:20 p.m.-2:20 p.m.	Group Discussion: How can we turn our classrooms into active learning classrooms?	Slide 52
2:20 p.m.-2:40 p.m.	Break	Slide 53
2:40 p.m.-3:30 p.m.	Individual Assignment:	Slide 54

	In your specific course, how do you plan to incorporate the information learned in this training?	
3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.	Wrap-Up Session	Slide 55

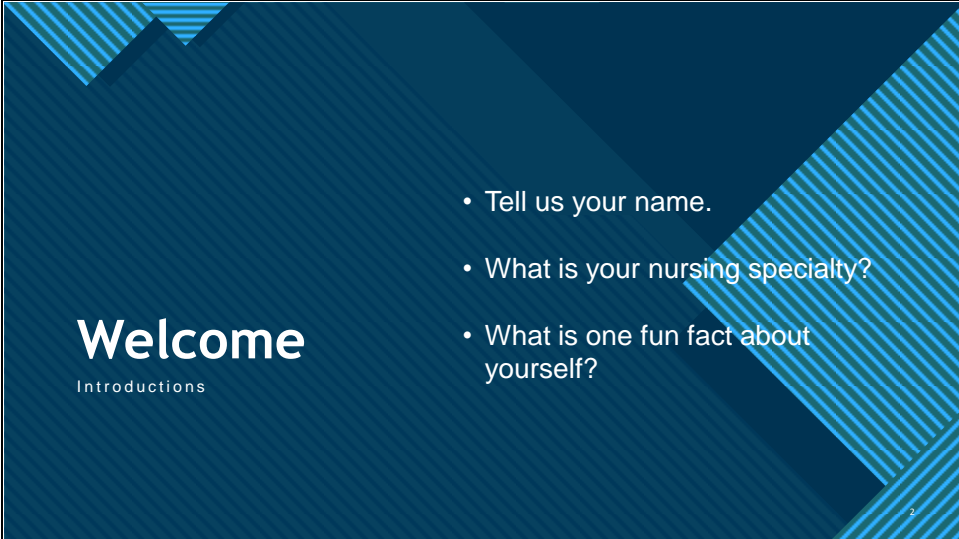
Slide 1

The slide features a dark blue background with a decorative pattern of light blue diagonal lines and geometric shapes on the left side. The main title is centered in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below the title, the facilitator's name and credentials are listed in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

Professional Development Training for Nursing Faculty

Facilitator: Karla Sanders, MSN-Ed, RN

Slide 2



Welcome
Introductions

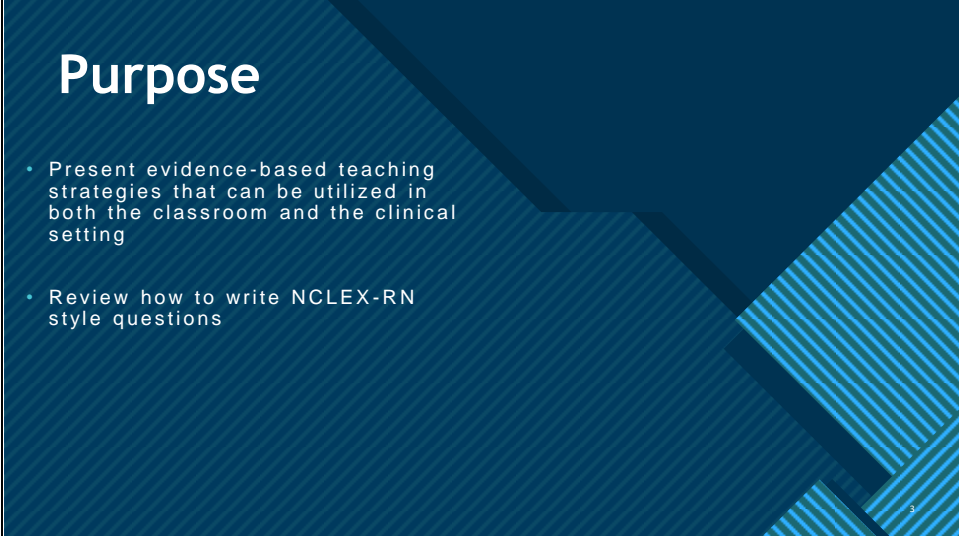
- Tell us your name.
- What is your nursing specialty?
- What is one fun fact about yourself?

2

Good morning! My name is Karla Sanders and I will be presenting your Professional Development Training. I just want to share a little information about myself. I am currently a doctoral student at Walden University. I am currently working on my project study and I have done my research on nursing graduates' strategies for success on the NCLEX-RN exam. I have been a registered nurse for 13 years and I have been a nursing educator for the past 8 years. Currently, I am focusing on my family and performing in the role of a stay-at-home parent but, when my youngest is a little older, I would like to return back to the world of education.

Now that I have shared a little about myself, I would love to hear about you. If you would, please tell me your name, what specialty of nursing you teach, and one fun fact about yourself.

Slide 3

A presentation slide with a dark blue background and a lighter blue geometric pattern on the right side. The word "Purpose" is written in large white font at the top left. Below it, there are two bullet points in white text. A small number "3" is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

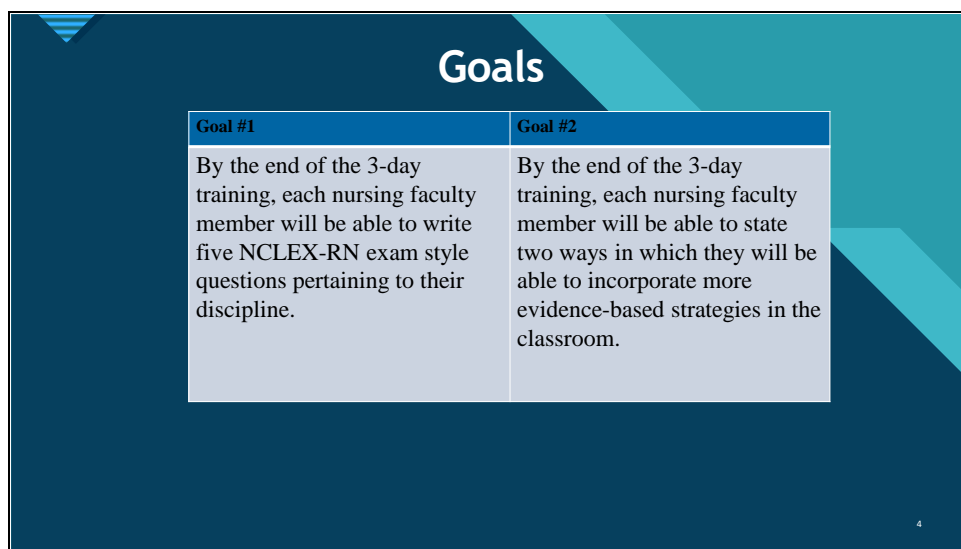
Purpose

- Present evidence-based teaching strategies that can be utilized in both the classroom and the clinical setting
- Review how to write NCLEX-RN style questions

Now that we are well introduced and comfortable, I want to tell you about the purpose of this professional development training. I am sure that one of your main goals for your nursing program is to have high pass rates on the NCLEX-RN exam. That is important not only for the reputation of the school and to meet accreditation standards, but, most importantly, high pass rates means a high number of successful students who are able to go and find a job in their new career. Nursing is in dire need of more good nurses and we want to be a part of that goal.

The purpose for this presentation is to present evidence-based teaching strategies that can be utilized in both the classroom and the clinical setting. Based on my research, there are some strategies that are most effective in helping students to be successful on the NCLEX-RN exam. Also, I would like to review NCLEX-style questions and how to write them. This is just a review because, as the NCLEX-RN exam evolves and the evidence-based research behind it, there is always something new that we can learn and use. Nursing is a dynamic profession, always changing, and we want to be sure to stay up-to-date.

Slide 4

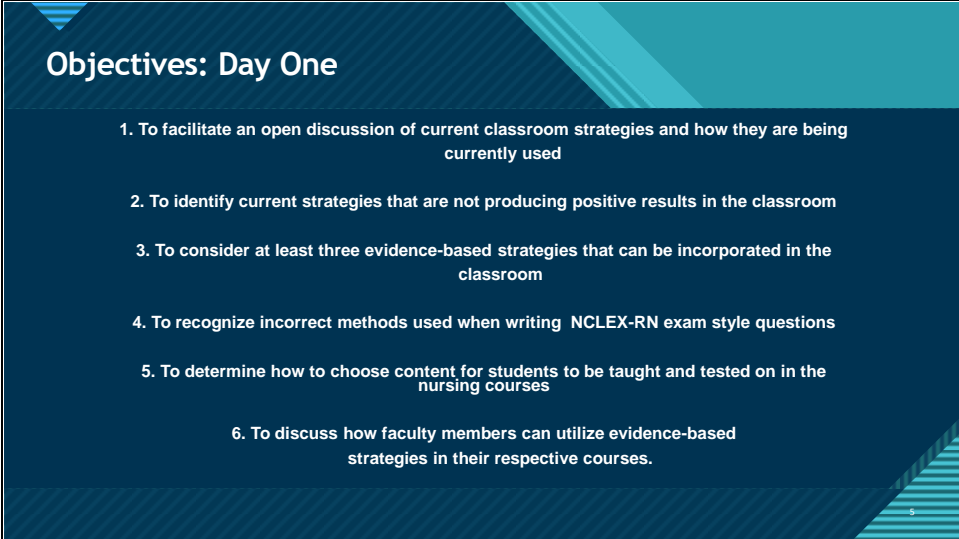


Goal #1	Goal #2
By the end of the 3-day training, each nursing faculty member will be able to write five NCLEX-RN exam style questions pertaining to their discipline.	By the end of the 3-day training, each nursing faculty member will be able to state two ways in which they will be able to incorporate more evidence-based strategies in the classroom.

For the training, there are two goals that I would like to have us accomplish. Goal #1 is that, by the end of the 3-day training, each nursing faculty member will be able to write five NCLEX-RN exam style questions pertaining to their discipline. NCLEX questions are the main course of the NCLEX-RN exam. We want all of our students to be successful on the NCLEX exam. Being able to write NCLEX-RN style questions and teaching the students how to answer the questions will provide more confidence in answering NCLEX style questions and instructors will be able to see improvement on test scores, and ultimately, success on the NCLEX-RN exam.

The second goal is by the end of the 3-day training, each nursing faculty member will be able to state two ways in which they will be able to incorporate more evidence-based strategies in the classroom. Using evidence-based strategies in the classroom has been proven to promote success on the NCLEX-RN exam. I am going to share a few strategies and, hopefully, you will find some of them useful and applicable for your classroom.

Slide 5



Objectives: Day One

1. To facilitate an open discussion of current classroom strategies and how they are being currently used
2. To identify current strategies that are not producing positive results in the classroom
3. To consider at least three evidence-based strategies that can be incorporated in the classroom
4. To recognize incorrect methods used when writing NCLEX-RN exam style questions
5. To determine how to choose content for students to be taught and tested on in the nursing courses
6. To discuss how faculty members can utilize evidence-based strategies in their respective courses.

5

Review each objective with the group.

Slide 6



It is time for a 15 minute break. Make sure all participants know where the restrooms are, and where they can get snacks and beverages. Also, remind them that the next session will begin at 10:15 a.m.

Slide 7

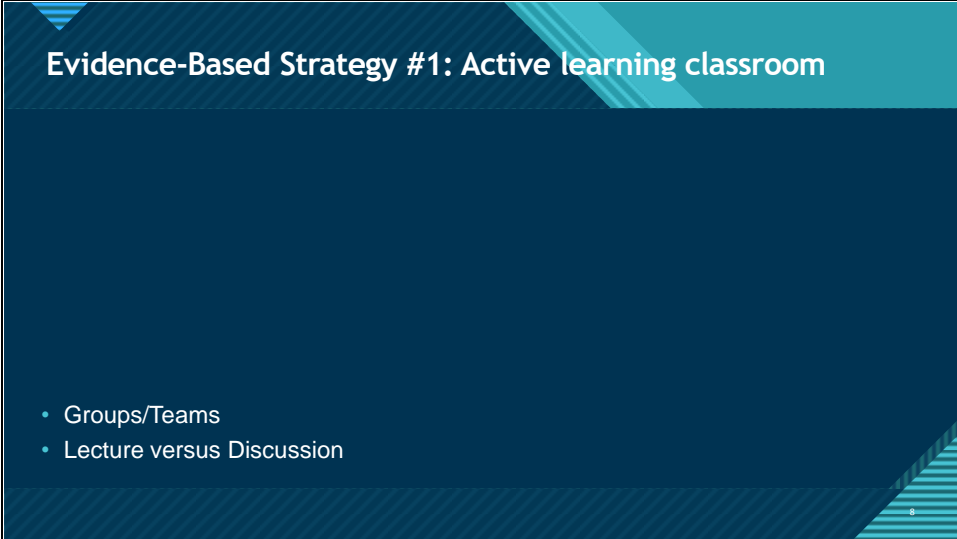
Discussion: What are you currently doing in the classroom? What seems to work and doesn't work?

Lower-Level Courses	Upper-Level Courses	Specialty Courses
• Fundamentals	• Medical Surgical II	• Psychiatric/Mental Health
• Medical Surgical I	• Medical Surgical III	• Women's Health
	• Leadership (Senior Course)	• Children's Health
		• Pharmacology

For this discussion, I want to break it up into sections. I want to have a group called the lower level courses that would consist of Fundamentals and Medical Surgical I. The lower level courses are for those students in their first and second semesters. The next group is the upper-level courses. The upper level courses are for students in their third to fifth semesters. And then, I want to have a category for Specialty Courses as they are nestled in different semesters. For example, in this program, not every course is offered every semester. If students begin classes in the Spring semester, they may take a specialty course in their 2nd semester while students who begin classes in the Fall Semester may not take a specialty course until their 3rd semester.

I will instruct the faculty to give their answers based on the course(s) they teach, and I will be jotting them down. When we return the next day, I will type them up and have them ready to hand out as reference points.

Slide 8



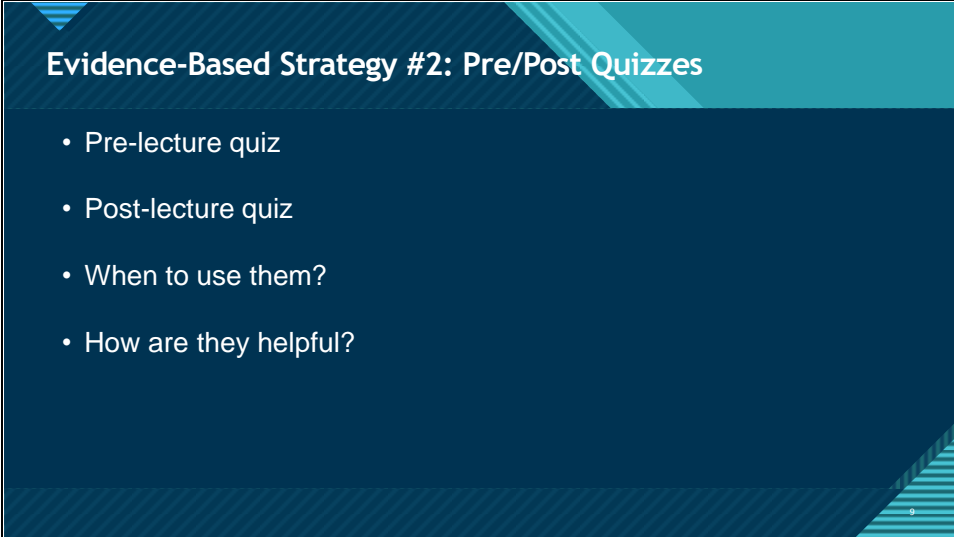
The slide features a dark teal background with a lighter teal header and footer. The header contains the title "Evidence-Based Strategy #1: Active learning classroom" in white text. The footer contains a small white number "8". The main body of the slide is dark teal and contains a bulleted list of two items: "Groups/Teams" and "Lecture versus Discussion".

Evidence-Based Strategy #1: Active learning classroom

- Groups/Teams
- Lecture versus Discussion

The components of the active learning classroom are to create an classroom environment that promotes open discussion among the faculty and students. One way an active learning classroom can be set up is by dividing students into groups or teams. Also, in an active learning classroom, the faculty want to avoid the traditional lecture method and use other techniques such as group discussion.

Slide 9



Evidence-Based Strategy #2: Pre/Post Quizzes

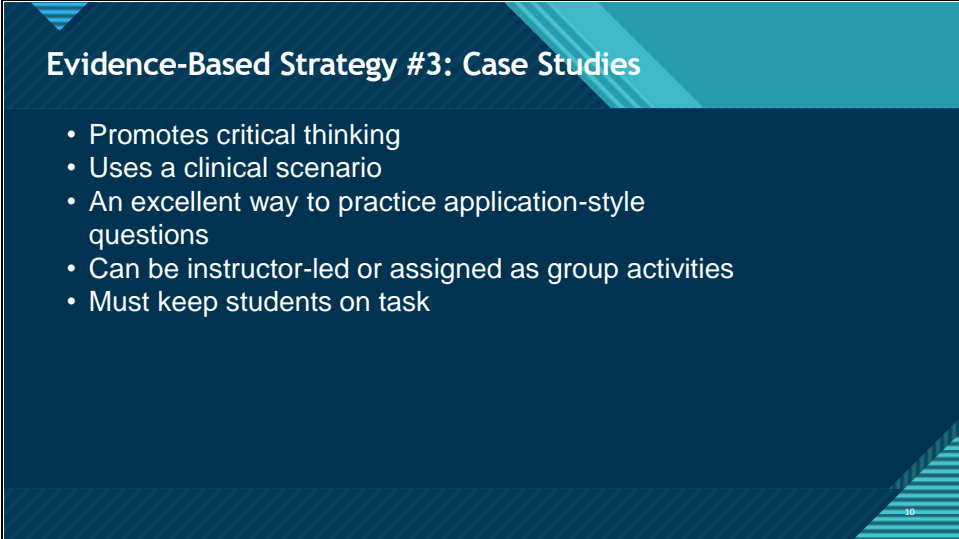
- Pre-lecture quiz
- Post-lecture quiz
- When to use them?
- How are they helpful?

9

The pre-lecture quiz is given before the material is taught in the classroom. The pre-lecture quiz can be done at the beginning of class or prior to class.

The post-lecture quiz can be used as an evaluation method for the faculty to determine if the lecture material was explained well and if the students are retaining the information.

Slide 10

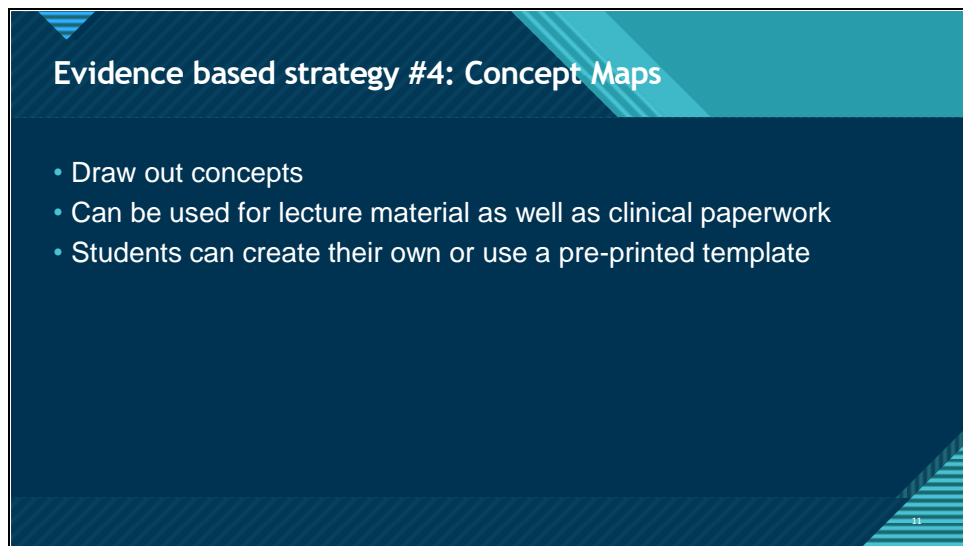
A presentation slide with a dark teal background and a lighter teal header. The header contains the title "Evidence-Based Strategy #3: Case Studies". Below the header is a bulleted list of five points. The slide has a decorative pattern of diagonal lines in the bottom right corner.

Evidence-Based Strategy #3: Case Studies

- Promotes critical thinking
- Uses a clinical scenario
- An excellent way to practice application-style questions
- Can be instructor-led or assigned as group activities
- Must keep students on task

Case studies should be used after content is presented so that students can learn to take that content, use their critical thinking skills, and learn how to apply the information. Many textbooks provide sample case studies as well as online resources that can be used. The instructor can work through a case study with the class as a whole, or have groups to work on the case study together. It all depends on how you want to do it but you must ensure that students stay on task if they are doing group activities

Slide 11



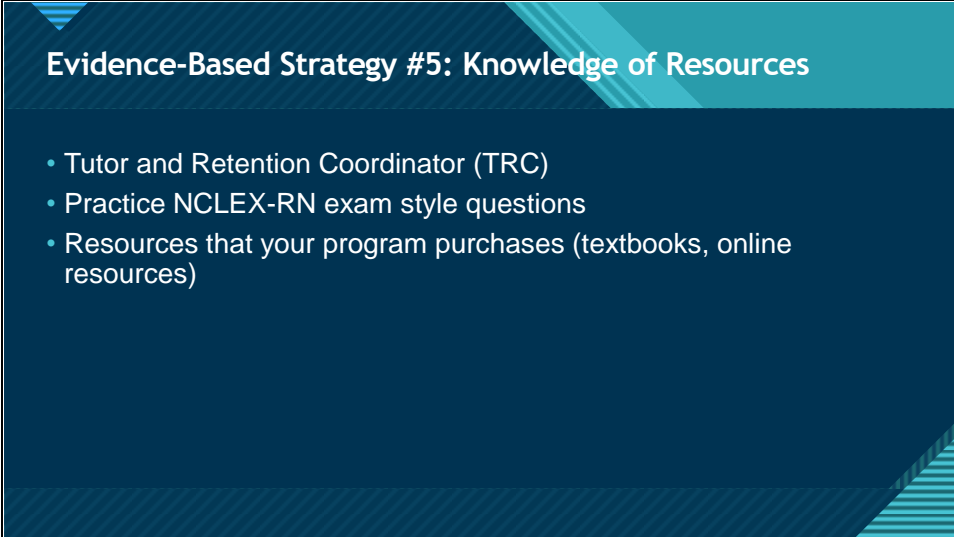
Evidence based strategy #4: Concept Maps

- Draw out concepts
- Can be used for lecture material as well as clinical paperwork
- Students can create their own or use a pre-printed template

11

For your visual students, concept maps are wonderful ways for students to make connections. They can use circles, boxes, or whatever helps them to visualize the information.

Slide 12



Evidence-Based Strategy #5: Knowledge of Resources

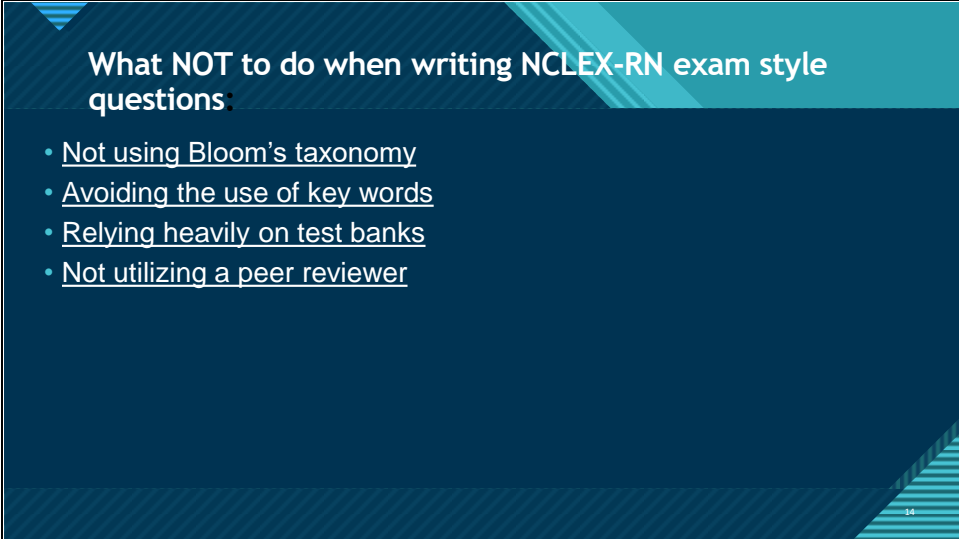
- Tutor and Retention Coordinator (TRC)
- Practice NCLEX-RN exam style questions
- Resources that your program purchases (textbooks, online resources)

We will discuss more resources tomorrow, specifically HESI. But Kaplan is out there as well as ATI. Does your program have a TRC? Where do we direct students to go to find practice NCLEX-RN questions?

Slide 13



Slide 14



What NOT to do when writing NCLEX-RN exam style questions:

- Not using Bloom's taxonomy
- Avoiding the use of key words
- Relying heavily on test banks
- Not utilizing a peer reviewer

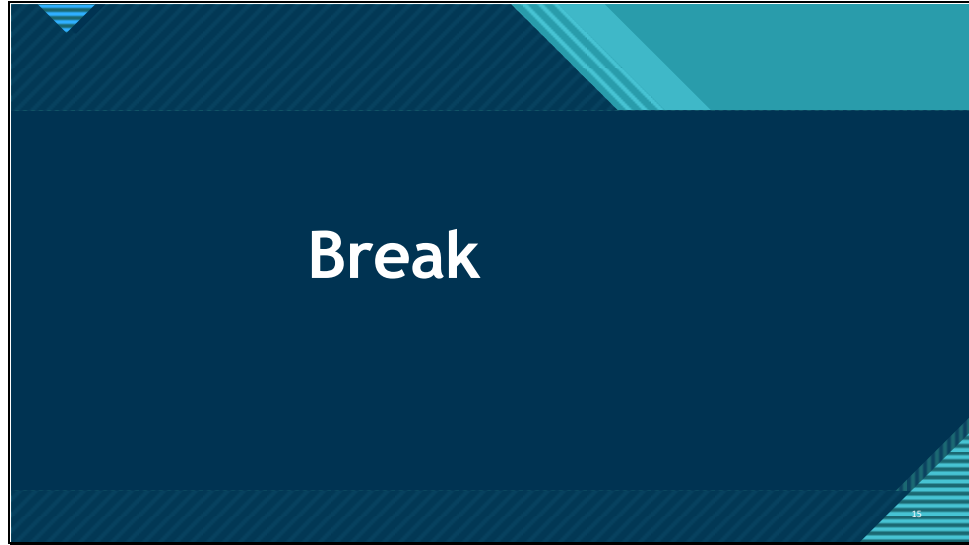
Not using Bloom's taxonomy appropriately is a failure to ask questions of a higher taxonomy level as the student progresses.

The use of key words is a positive test taking tip. If not being used, students are not learning how to pick out the pertinent information in a question.

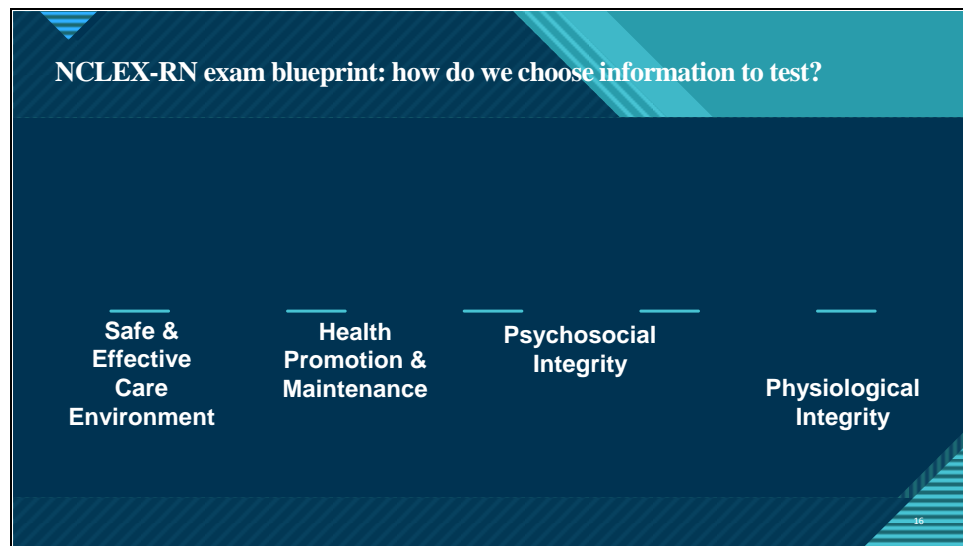
Test banks are; widely available. Although faculty may use the test bank in their resources, there are ways that students can purchase these. They can also do Internet searches and possibly find questions that the faculty are using as well.

A Peer reviewer is helpful for editing grammar, punctuation, and content. They can also ensure that the question makes sense or provide feedback to a question that may not seem clear.

Slide 15



Slide 16



The 2023 NCLEX-RN exam blue print helps us to design our questions to ensure students not only have the knowledge base to answer the question but also how to interpret the question set up and what key words to look for.

- These are the four categories: safe & effective care environment, health promotion & maintenance, psychosocial integrity, and physiological integrity.
- Although we will discuss all 4, I will spend more time on safe & effective care environment and physiological integrity. These areas are the two largest portions of the exam.
- file:///C:/Users/klash/OneDrive/Desktop/Project%20Study/2023_RN_Test%20Plan_English_FINAL.pdf

Slide 17

Safe & Effective Care Environment

- Management of Care
 - Delegation & supervision
 - Management of care
 - Advance directives
 - Prioritization of care
 - Legal responsibilities
 - Hands-off in care
- Safety and Infection Control
 - Assessment
 - Protect client from harm
 - Infection prevention
 - Emergency planning

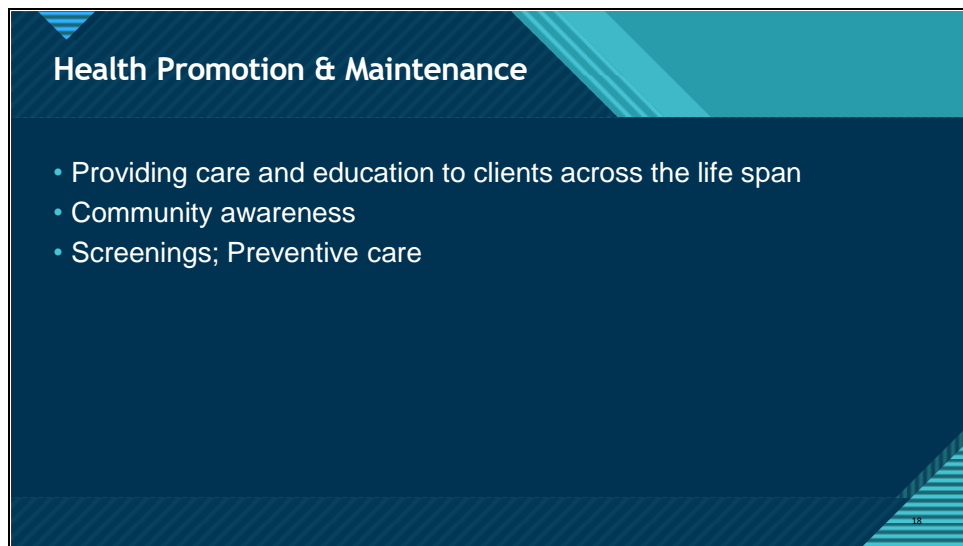
I will be touching the high points of the categories. You can always pull up the 2023 NCLEX RN exam test plan to read in even more further detail

Safe and effective care environment is broken down into 2 categories: management of care and safety and infection control.

Management of care focuses on how the nurse handles care of the patient. Who can tasks be legally delegated to? What legal ramifications should the nurse be aware of? One complaint I have heard about prioritization of care is that most of this material is not presented until later semesters. This can be incorporated in every semester as long as the style of questioning is appropriate for the student.

With safety and infection control, the nurse is thinking about how can we protect our patient from illness/injury. The basis for this begins in fundamentals when they learn basic nursing skills. As the students learn what to do, we want to incorporate application with the topic. For example, the nursing student may be asked how many side rails should an alert and oriented client have up compared to how many side rails a client with dementia should have. And when this question is asked, it can facilitate a class discussion to explain the “why” behind what should be done.

Slide 18



The slide features a dark teal background with a lighter teal header area. The title 'Health Promotion & Maintenance' is written in white. Below the title, there is a bulleted list of three items. The slide number '18' is visible in the bottom right corner.

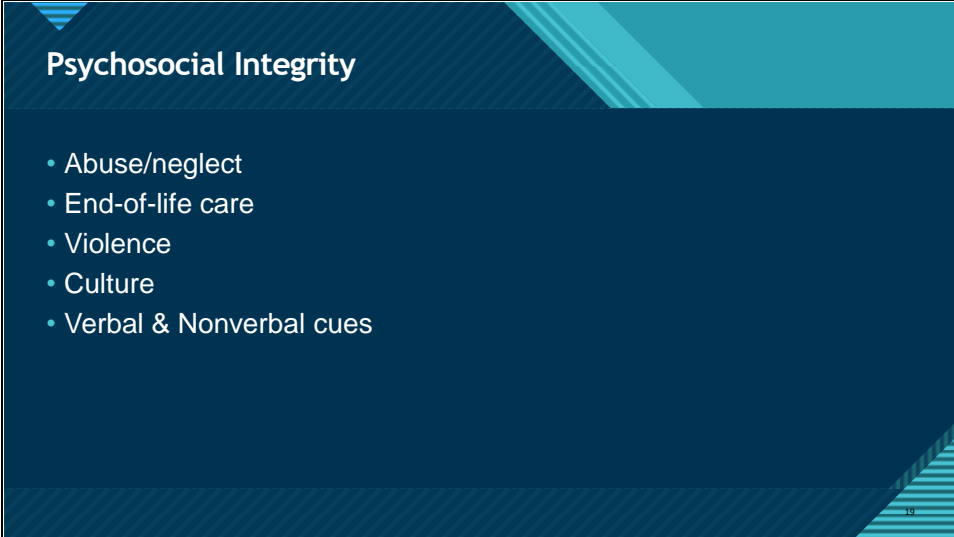
Health Promotion & Maintenance

- Providing care and education to clients across the life span
- Community awareness
- Screenings; Preventive care

18

Health promotion & maintenance covers how the nurse will teach the client in various settings and who they will teach in special populations/community teachings/preventive care. As the student learns the content in the classroom, the application will be made primarily in the clinical setting and with case scenarios.

Slide 19



Psychosocial Integrity

- Abuse/neglect
- End-of-life care
- Violence
- Culture
- Verbal & Nonverbal cues

Psychosocial integrity is assisting the nurse to view the patient holistically and not just the physical signs and symptoms. What is the client telling us besides the actual words they are using?

Cultural awareness and competence are important in the care of the client. The nurse needs to assess, identify, and incorporate cultural preferences into the client's plan of care.

The nurse should also be checking for congruity between verbal and nonverbal cues. What are some warning signs that nonverbal cues may provide us?

Slide 20

Physiological Integrity

- **Basic Care and Comfort**
 - Assisting clients with an impairment
 - Providing non-pharmacological care
 - Positioning/ROM
 - Sleep/rest pattern
 - Nutrition
- **Pharmacological & Parenteral Therapies**
 - How to administer medications using the various routes
 - Administering blood & blood products
- **Reduction of Risk Potential**
 - Identifying changes in vital signs and assessment
 - Care of tubes/catheters/lines
 - Pre-op/Post-op Care
 - Sedation
- **Physiological Adaptation**
 - Caring for a patient during invasive treatments that can cause compromise
 - Signs/symptoms of acute versus chronic illnesses

This is the largest portion of the NCLEX. These are probably the easier questions to write but the hardest material for the students to retain.

I am not going into how to write the questions right now but, tomorrow, we are going to write questions and I want us to be able to identify what area of the NCLEX-RN exam are our questions focusing on.

Slide 21

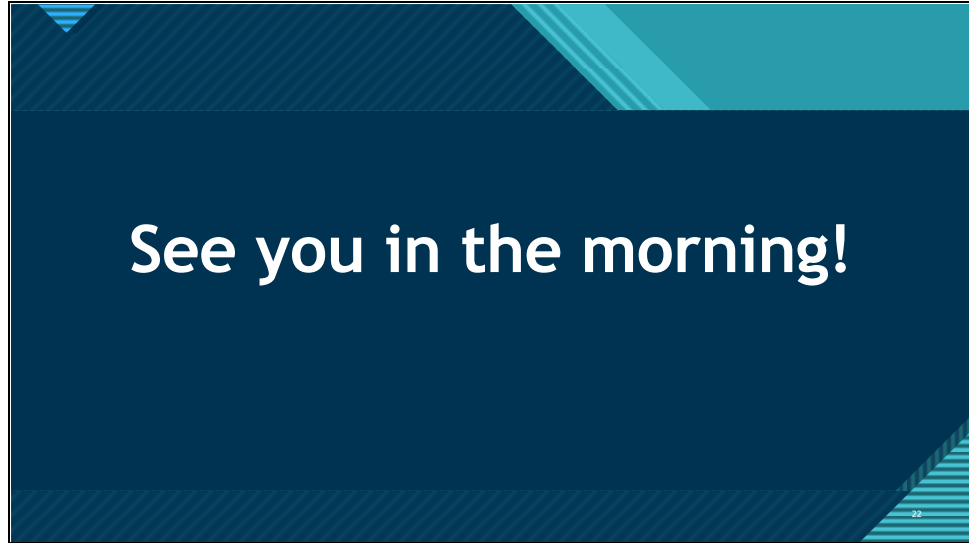
Brainstorming Session: How can we incorporate at least 3 evidence-based strategies in the classroom?

- Would like to break up into the groups we did earlier:
- for 30 minutes, please come up with three of the five evidence-based strategies in your groups that we discussed and how you can begin to utilize them in your courses
- The second half of this session, each group will share their plans and we can offer feedback.

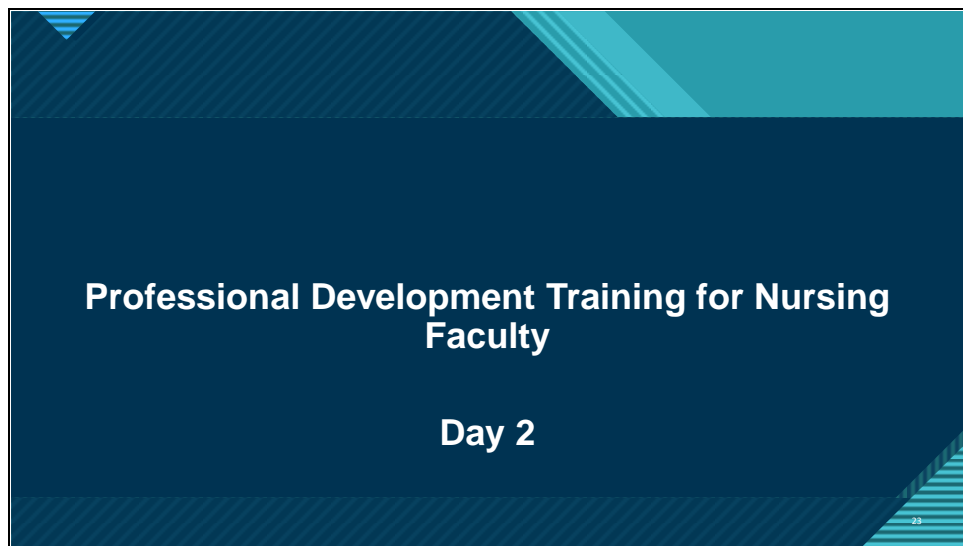
Lower-Level Courses	Upper-Level Courses	Specialty Courses
• Fundamentals	• Medical Surgical II	• Psychiatric/Mental Health
• Medical Surgical I	• Medical Surgical III	• Women's Health
	• Leadership (Senior Course)	• Children's Health
		• Pharmacology

I would review the groups and what I want them to do at this time.

Slide 22

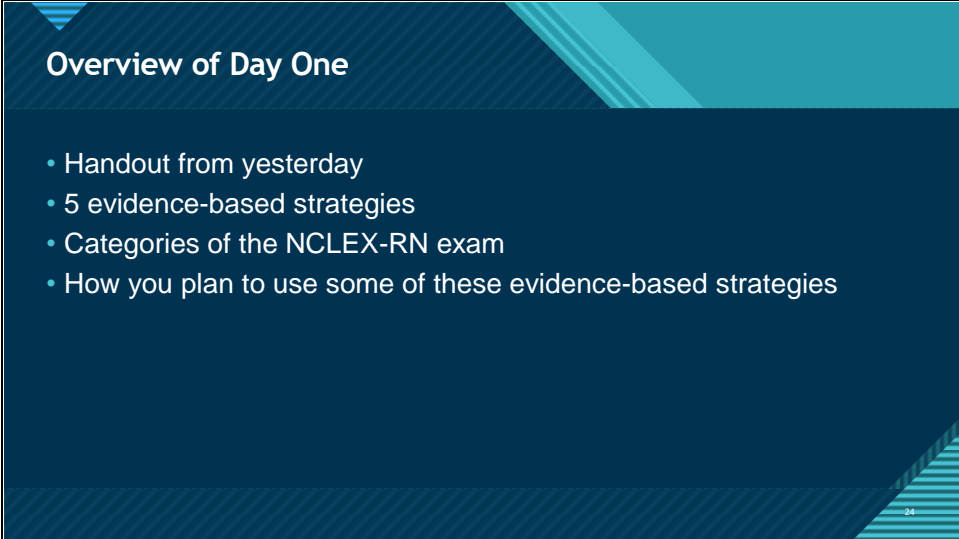


Slide 23



Welcome everyone! I hope that you had a great evening and are ready to get back started with the training. Before we get into today's topics, I would just like to do a short overview of what we reviewed yesterday.

Slide 24

A presentation slide with a dark blue background and a teal geometric pattern in the top right and bottom right corners. The title "Overview of Day One" is in white text at the top left. Below it is a bulleted list of four items. A small number "24" is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Overview of Day One

- Handout from yesterday
- 5 evidence-based strategies
- Categories of the NCLEX-RN exam
- How you plan to use some of these evidence-based strategies

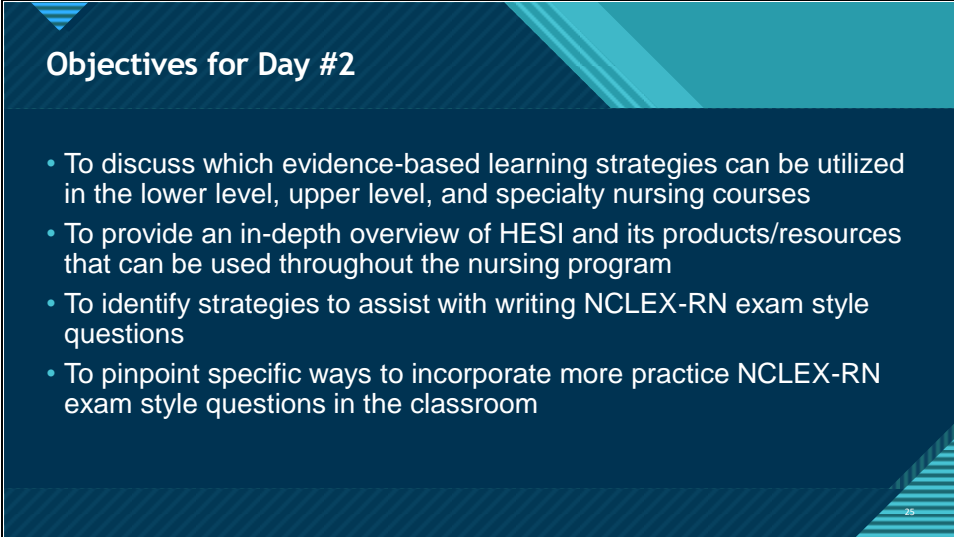
I have prepared the list of current strategies from yesterday. This handout includes all the current strategies that we all discussed on yesterday that you were currently using in the classrooms. (If I have not handed the copies out prior to the beginning of the training, I would do so now.)

These strategies were determined to be helpful and some, not as helpful. We also discussed the five evidence-based strategies: active learning classroom, pre/post quizzes, case studies, concept maps, and knowledge of resources.

Next, we discussed writing NCLEX-RN exam questions. First, we broke down the NCLEX-RN exam test plan and the categories that are tested. It is important to design our questions around these topics because that is what the students are going to be tested on, and they need the exposure to these types of questions. We also discussed some ways in which we would not want to write NCLEX-RN exam style questions.

Finally, we ended the day with a discussion of how the evidence-based strategies discussed in the training yesterday can be used in your various classrooms. We will have time today for each group to present their findings to everyone.

Slide 25

A presentation slide with a dark blue background and light blue geometric patterns in the corners. The title "Objectives for Day #2" is in white. Below it is a bulleted list of four objectives. A small number "25" is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Objectives for Day #2

- To discuss which evidence-based learning strategies can be utilized in the lower level, upper level, and specialty nursing courses
- To provide an in-depth overview of HESI and its products/resources that can be used throughout the nursing program
- To identify strategies to assist with writing NCLEX-RN exam style questions
- To pinpoint specific ways to incorporate more practice NCLEX-RN exam style questions in the classroom

I will review the objectives with the group.

Slide 26



For this discussion, each group will be asked to present what they discussed the previous day about evidence-based strategies. I want to facilitate a discussion where, when a group shares something, other groups can agree with them or even offer suggestions. This will promote a team effort in improving teaching strategies.

Slide 27



Slide 28

A presentation slide with a dark blue background and light blue geometric patterns in the corners. The word "HESI" is written in white at the top center. Below it is a bulleted list of three items. A small number "28" is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

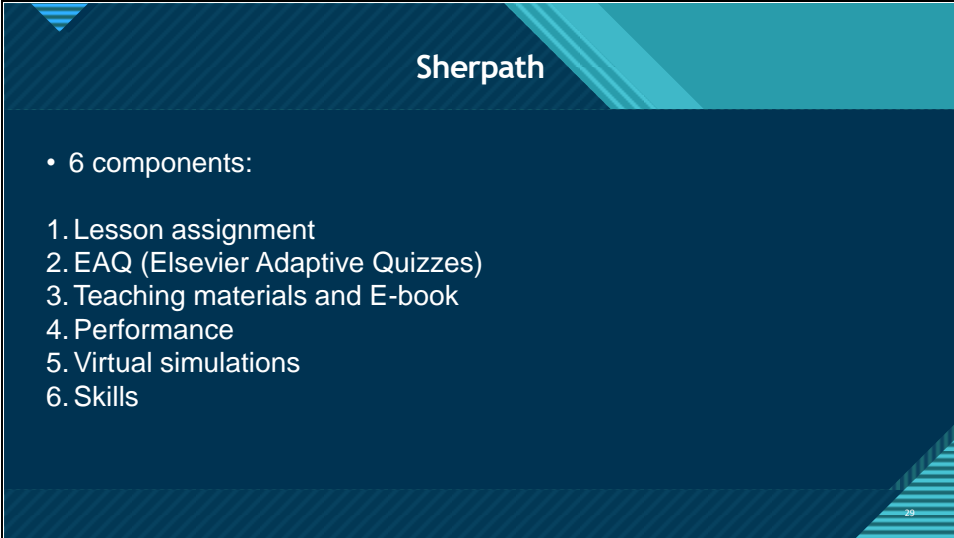
HESI

- **Health and Environment Sciences Institute**
- Vast number of products
- Each institution has its own Elsevier educator
- Each institution can pick and choose which products your program can incorporate

It is important to note here that HESI is the resource that this school uses. I am not advertising for HESI but just sharing with this school what resources are available to them. The students pay for this resource in their tuition and fees.

There are many resources that are available to nursing programs to assist faculty in preparing their students for the NCLEX-RN exam. You may be familiar with some of these resources. Kaplan, ATI, and HESI are just three major ones. But, today, I would like to focus on HESI. HESI stands for Health and Environment Sciences Institute. It is produced by Elsevier Education. There are a vast number of products available. I am going to touch on just a few but, if your program chooses to work with HESI, you are not alone in deciding which products to use. Once an institution has adopted HESI as the resource they are going to use for their program, they are assigned an Elsevier educator. This person is the institution's "go-to" person. The educator will work in close conjunction with the faculty in setting up HESI resources throughout the courses. Any issues that an institution is having with HESI, the educator will be the first person to contact. If the issue is something out of their scope of practice, they will involve the necessary departments so that the nursing faculty are not having to contact multiple people. This can definitely be a stress reducer for nursing faculty!

Slide 29

A slide with a dark blue background and a teal header. The header contains the word "Sherpath" in white. Below the header, there is a bulleted list of six components. The slide has a decorative teal and white striped pattern in the top-left and bottom-right corners.

Sherpath

- 6 components:
 1. Lesson assignment
 2. EAQ (Elsevier Adaptive Quizzes)
 3. Teaching materials and E-book
 4. Performance
 5. Virtual simulations
 6. Skills

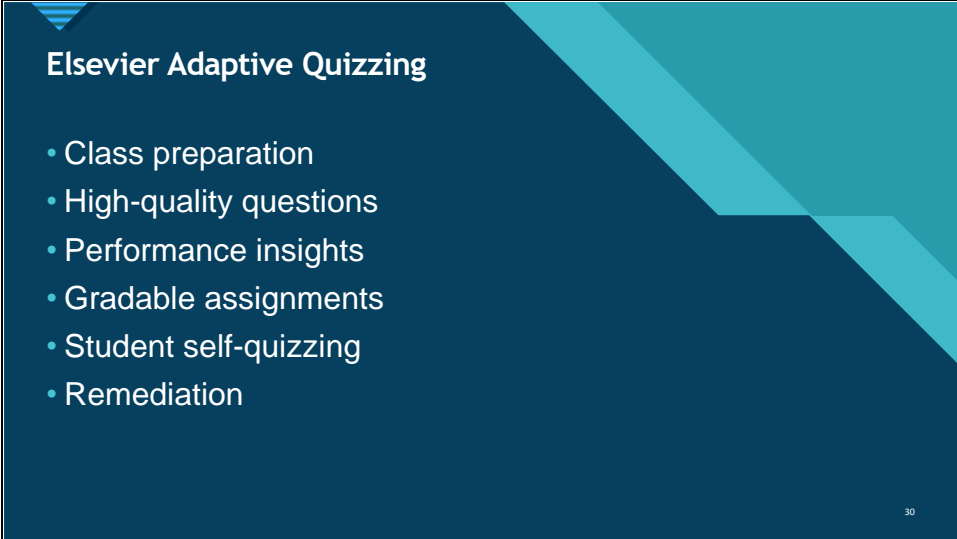
I am going to discuss just a few of the available HESI products and how they can be utilized in the various courses. The first program I would like to discuss is Sherpath. Sherpath can be used throughout the entire program and in every course. It builds upon each individual student's knowledge base versus just a generic program that does not truly focus on an individual's performance.

To help me explain this, I am going to focus on a specific nursing topic so that I can give examples. For the purposes of this topic, we will discuss diabetes. For example, a medical surgical nursing class that is focusing on diabetes may be assigned diabetes on Sherpath. The first step is the lesson assignment. This will give the student a short overview of the topic using interactive techniques and questions to assess the student's basic understanding of the content. After completing the assignment, the student will do EAQ's. EAQ's are probably my favorite product from HESI. EAQ stands for Elsevier Adaptive Quizzes. I will go into greater detail shortly but these quizzes will provide a more individual approach to determining remediation topics. The third component is great for students who may not want to have the hardcover textbook. Students can go here and view the actual pages of the textbook in an electronic format. This can also help streamline students to finding the content to help them answer the questions and also with their remediation topics. The next step is performance. Performance tracks the student's progress from beginning to end, every time they log in, and everything that they do under Sherpath. This is also helpful to us, as instructors, so that we can see where our students are. So, if they are struggling with a topic, we can go in and see how much study time they have devoted to the specific topic. Virtual simulations are another method of explaining different concepts to students. Sherpath addresses all the

types of learners that we may have (visual, auditory, etc.) which is a bonus for both faculty and students. And, finally, students are able to view skills videos. These can be helpful to students who may have forgotten how to perform skills, need to remediate on a skill, or just as a refresher.

<https://evolve.elsevier.com/education/sherpath/>

Slide 30

A presentation slide with a dark blue background and a teal geometric design on the right side. The title 'Elsevier Adaptive Quizzing' is in white. Below it is a bulleted list of six items. A small number '30' is in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Elsevier Adaptive Quizzing

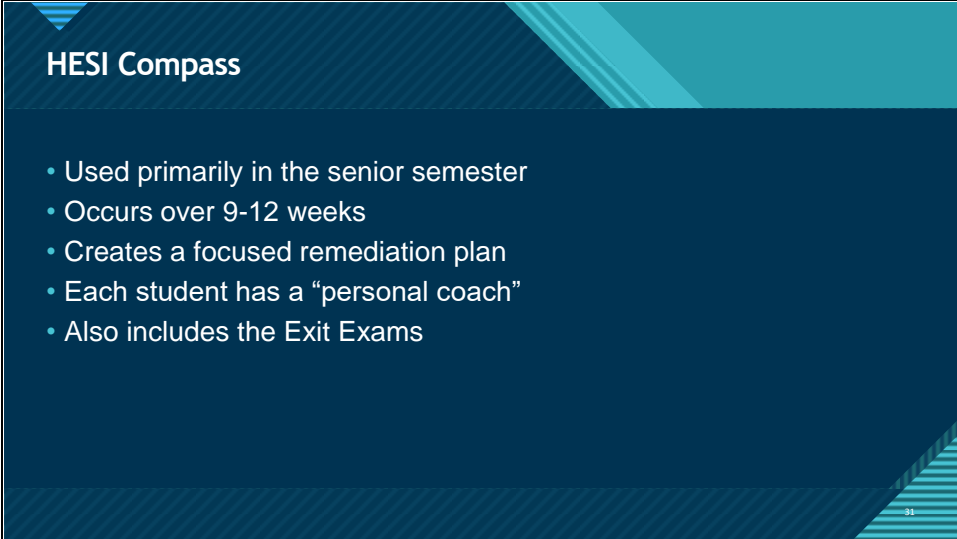
- Class preparation
- High-quality questions
- Performance insights
- Gradable assignments
- Student self-quizzing
- Remediation

30

Elsevier Adaptive Quizzing, or EAQ's, are also used throughout the program. As faculty members, you can use EAQ's in so many different areas of your course. You may require your students to complete a certain number of questions as a requirement for admission into class. You can tailor the questions to cover content. You can narrow the focus down to specific medical-surgical topics or you can even narrow it down to NCLEX-RN exam categories such as safe and effective care environment. Students can also create their own practice quizzes. Again, everything is saved so that both the faculty and student can see their progress and what topics they are weak in. EAQ's can also create a remediation packet for students so that they know which topics they need to spend more time studying.

<https://evolve.elsevier.com/education/eaq/>

Slide 31



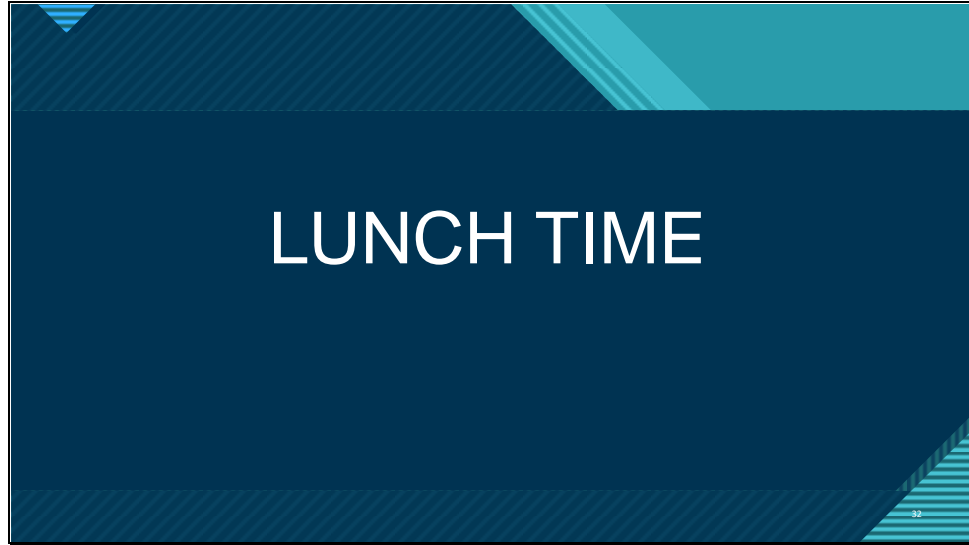
HESI Compass

- Used primarily in the senior semester
- Occurs over 9-12 weeks
- Creates a focused remediation plan
- Each student has a “personal coach”
- Also includes the Exit Exams

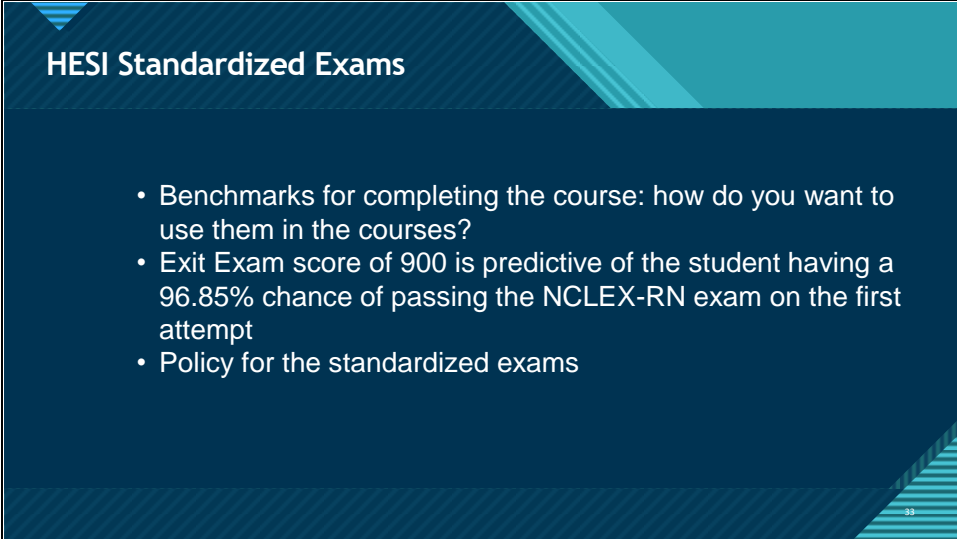
The HESI Compass is set up for each student to do a comprehensive review for their HESI Exit exam as well as the NCLEX-RN exam. This is best done in the senior semester when they have completed all of the major coursework. After taking a review exam, the program creates a focused remediation plan that works with students over a period of 9-12 weeks. The remediation plan includes textbook readings, simulations, and practice questions. Also, a great benefit for both students and faculty is that the Compass gives each student a personal coach who is an actual nurse educator. Any questions the student has about content in the Compass or just the Compass itself would be directed to their coach. All faculty would have to do is check in to ensure that students are completing their assignments. Also, the coach can reach out to the faculty if a student is not completing their remediation plan as necessary. The Compass also includes the Exit Exams but I will talk about those more in detail when we return from lunch. Are there any questions so far?

<https://evolve.elsevier.com/education/hesi/compass/>

Slide 32



Slide 33

A presentation slide with a dark blue background and a teal geometric design in the top right corner. The title "HESI Standardized Exams" is in white. Below it is a bulleted list of three items. A small number "33" is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

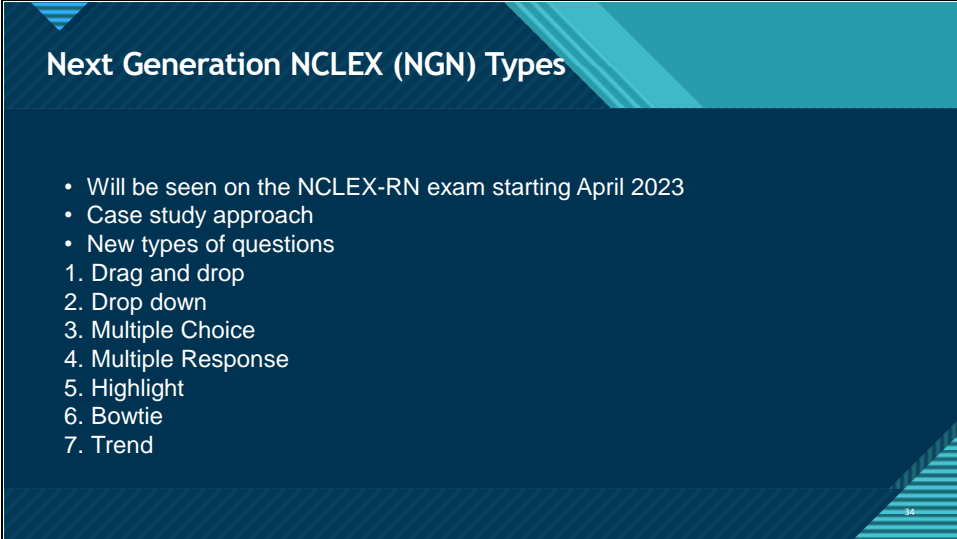
HESI Standardized Exams

- Benchmarks for completing the course: how do you want to use them in the courses?
- Exit Exam score of 900 is predictive of the student having a 96.85% chance of passing the NCLEX-RN exam on the first attempt
- Policy for the standardized exams

HESI also produces numerous standardized exams. When it comes to these standardized exams, HESI has recommendations but will defer to what the institution decides to do. I want to share some examples of how standardized exams may be used. The exam may be used to represent the final exam for the course and is a specific percentage. The exam may be used to determine course progression. However you choose to use the standardized exams is your choice but make sure that you have a strong, well written policy so that students are aware of what is required of them. The Exit Exam is very similar to the NCLEX-RN exam. It is randomized so that two students next to each other would not have the same exact question at the same time. At this time, it is not an adaptive test so the students will still essentially have all of the same questions but it exposes them to the various styles of questions that will be seen on the NCLEX-RN Exam. The Exit exam is given in a proctored setting, and they are in a locked environment so that they can not be opening other search windows while testing.

<https://evolve.elsevier.com/education/hesi/compass/>

Slide 34



Next Generation NCLEX (NGN) Types

- Will be seen on the NCLEX-RN exam starting April 2023
- Case study approach
- New types of questions
 1. Drag and drop
 2. Drop down
 3. Multiple Choice
 4. Multiple Response
 5. Highlight
 6. Bowtie
 7. Trend

34

<https://evolve.elsevier.com/education/next-generation-nclex/ngn-item-types/>

Slide 35

Extended Drag and Drop

The nurse is providing care to a 60-year-old male. The patient arrived to the Emergency Room with a sudden onset of weakness and numbness on the right side of the body. Below is the patient's electronic health record. Use the information in this record to answer the questions in this case study.

Health History	Nurses' Notes	Vital Signs	Laboratory Results
<p>The patient and his spouse were walking their dog around the neighborhood at 0945. The spouse states around 1000 during the walk the patient suddenly started to report a headache and dizziness along with slurred speech. Then right-sided hemiplegia and confused developed. The spouse called 911. The patient arrived to the ER at 1045. The patient is alert and presents with right-sided facial drooping with dysarthria, mild aphasia, no vision changes, and right-sided hemiplegia. NIHSS score is 16. Health history includes hypertension, smoker for 30 years, hyperlipidemia, diabetes Type 2, no head trauma or recent surgeries, and BMI 32.</p>			

* Sample question and graphical user interface for illustration purposes only - not an actual Next Generation NCLEX question.

✦ Drag the patient's modifiable risk factors for an ischemic stroke to the box on the right.

Risk Factors	Modifiable Risk Factors
BMI 32	
Male	
60 years old	
Hypertension	
Smoker for 30 years	
Hyperlipidemia	
Diabetes Type 2	

I am just providing a visual example of what some of the types of questions look like
<https://www.registerednursern.com/extended-drag-drop-nclex/>

Slide 36



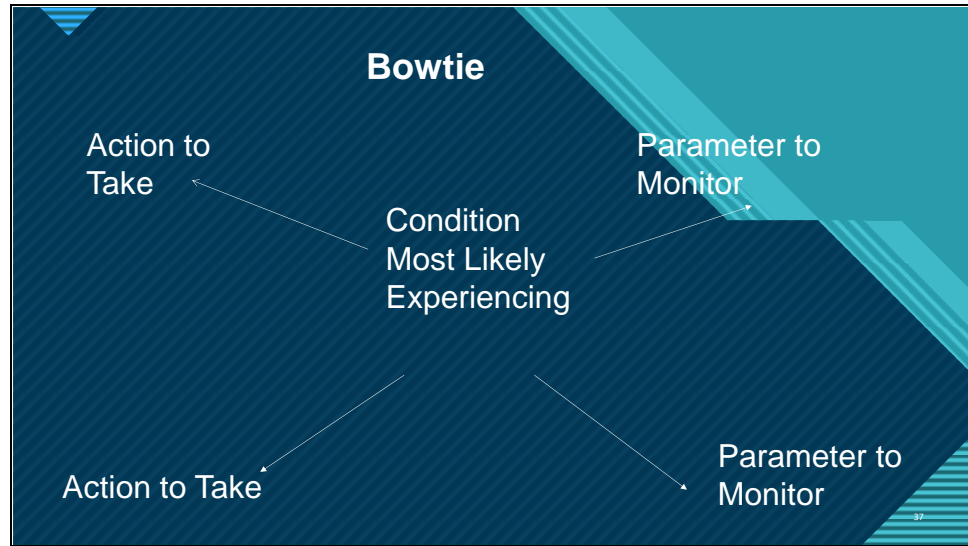
Enhanced Hot Spot (or Highlighting)

The nurse is reviewing the patient's electronic health record to determine the patient's health status. Click to highlight the information in the record that would indicate to the nurse the patient is experiencing a stroke.

The patient and his spouse were walking their dog around the neighborhood around 0945. The spouse states around 1000 during the walk the patient suddenly started to report a headache and dizziness, along with slurred speech. Right-sided hemiplegia and confusion developed. The spouse called 911. The patient arrived to the ER at 1045. The patient is alert and presents right-sided facial drooping with dysarthria, mild aphasia, no vision changes, and right-sided hemiplegia. Vital signs are Heart Rate 99, Blood pressure 210/116, Oxygen Saturation 98% on Room Air, Respiratory Rate 15, and Temperature 98.8 Health history includes hypertension, smoker for 30 years, hyperlipidemia, diabetes Type 2, no head trauma or recent surgeries, and BMI 32.

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.registerednursern.com%2Fenhanced-hot-spot-nclx%2F&psig=AOvVaw2-FbbGGSqcRZYhNIIsYHIK&ust=1676771088312000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CBAQjhxqFwoTCJl75r5nf0CFQAAAAAdAAAAABAE>

Slide 37



<https://nursing.uworld.com/blog/start-introducing-next-generation-nclex-to-students/>

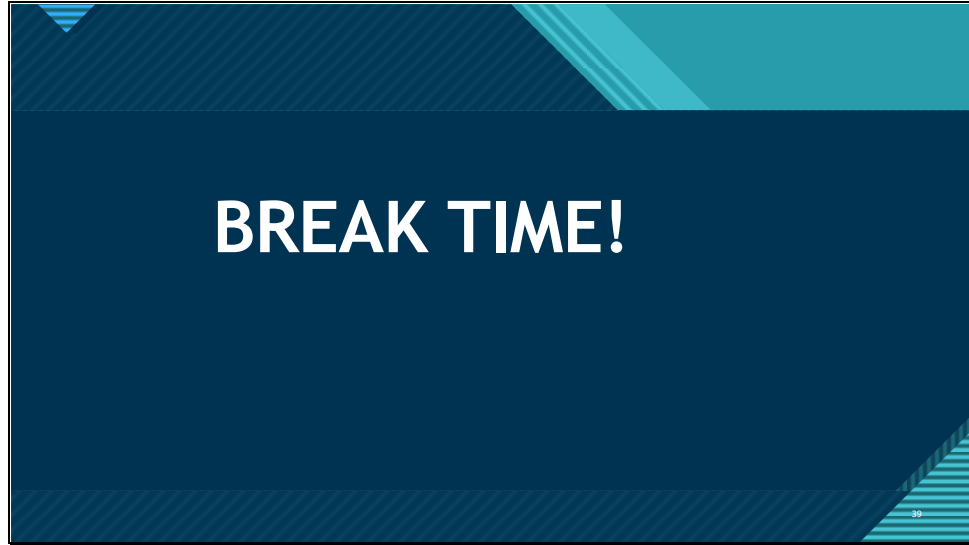
Slide 38

The image shows a screenshot of a 'Trend' report interface. At the top, the word 'Trend' is centered. Below it, there are four tabs: 'Health History', 'Nurses' Notes', 'Vital Signs', and 'Laboratory Results'. The 'Nurses' Notes' tab is selected, and its content is displayed in a large text area below the tabs. The text describes a patient's condition upon admission from a Senior Living Facility, noting symptoms like lethargy, confusion, pale color, dry lips, and abdominal pain. It also mentions a past history of hypertension and the presence of an indwelling catheter.

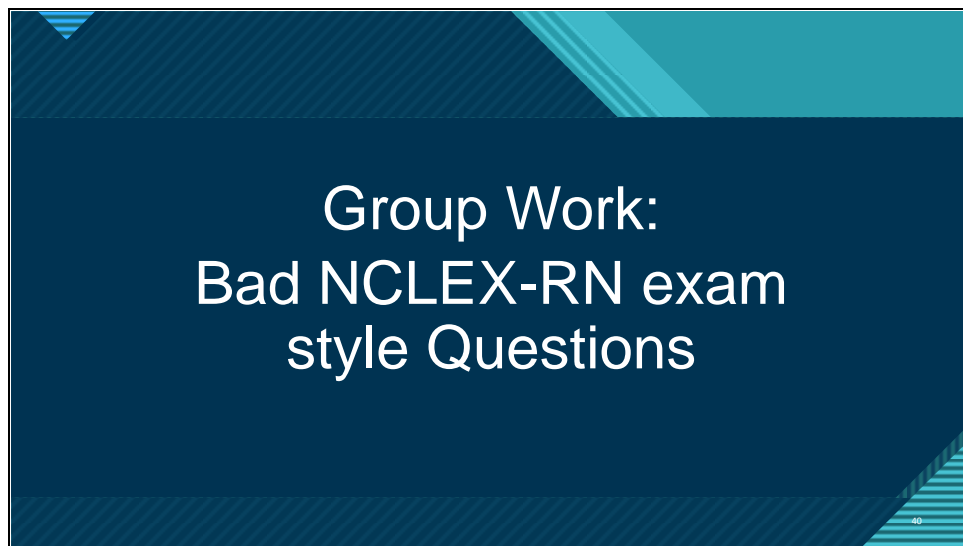
Health History	Nurses' Notes	Vital Signs	Laboratory Results
	<p>Client admitted to unit from Senior Living Facility. Although knows name and current location, continues to be lethargic and confused as to time. Color pale, lips dry, extremities cool to touch, capillary refill slow. States continues to feel nauseated and light headed. Admits to abdominal pain at a level of 5. Past History of moderate Hypertention (140/92). Indwelling catheter in place on arrival at hospital. Urine clear, catheter emptied on arrival to floor @ 0730. Family member with client.</p>		

<https://collaborativemomentum.com/2022/03/15/writing-ngn-style-trend-questions/>

Slide 39

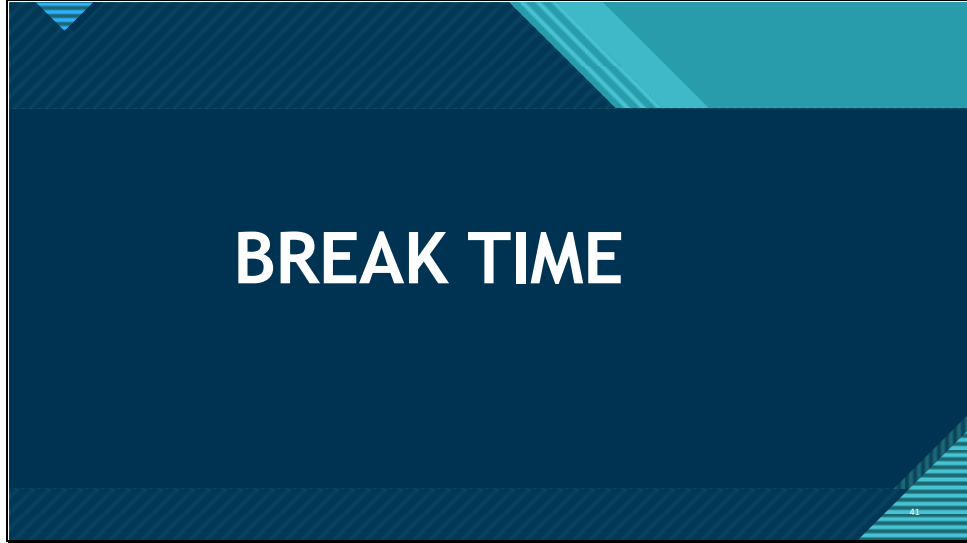


Slide 40

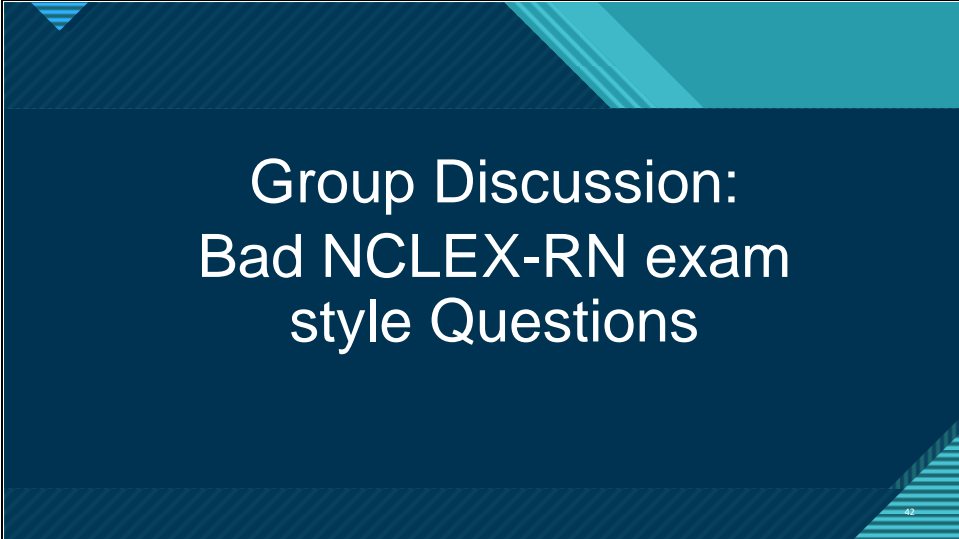


Now, we are going to shift gears a little bit and talk about writing NCLEX-RN exam style questions. We are going to break up into the same groups that we did on yesterday. What I would like for each group to do is write 5 questions that are good examples of bad test questions. After each group has completed this, then we will discuss them together and talk about how we can improve the questions together.

Slide 41



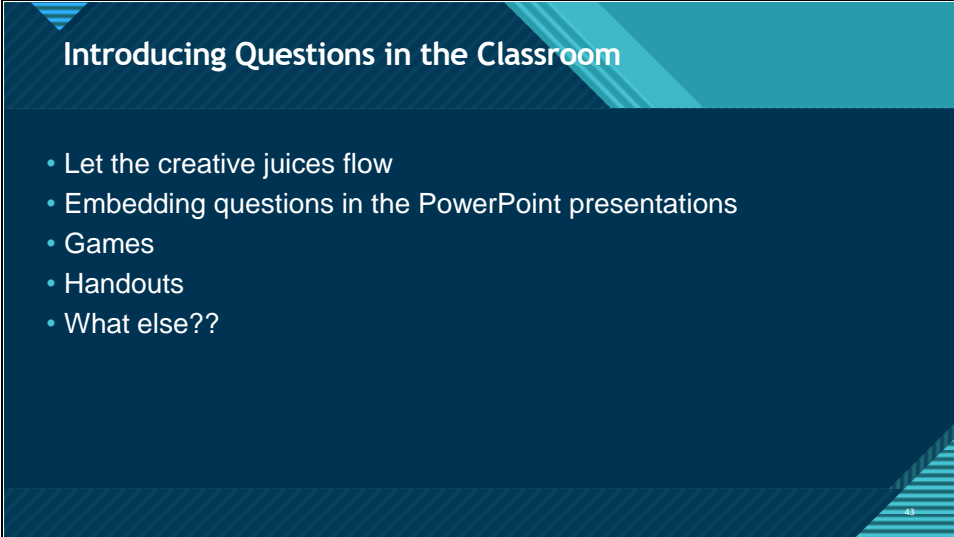
Slide 42



Group Discussion:
Bad NCLEX-RN exam
style Questions

42

Slide 43

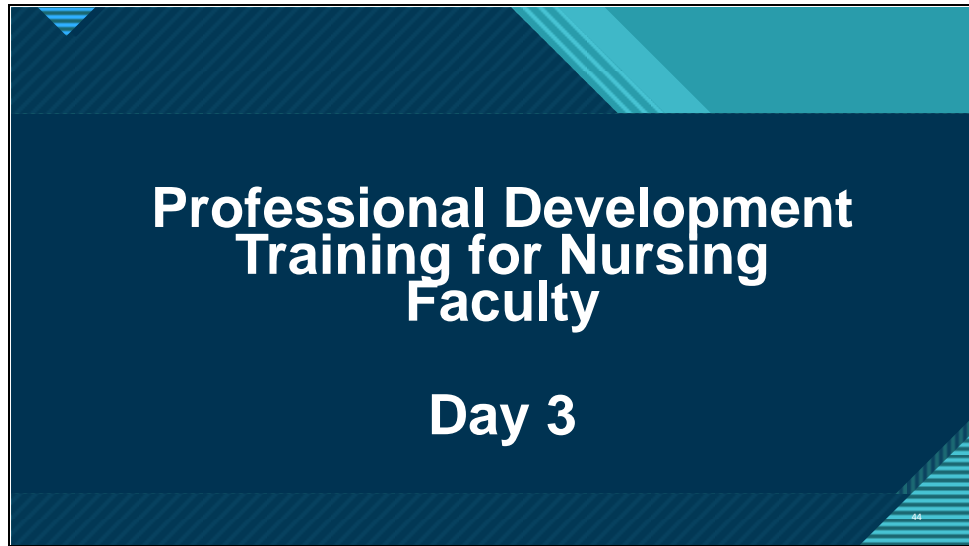


Introducing Questions in the Classroom

- Let the creative juices flow
- Embedding questions in the PowerPoint presentations
- Games
- Handouts
- What else??

Introducing questions in the classroom can really spice up the class and involve the students. There are so many different ways you can incorporate the questions; it all depends on what works for your classroom. One example is by placing questions in the PowerPoints. These can be seen as “checkpoints” for students. They can also redirect a wandering student’s mind. Maybe you would like to introduce questions in the form of a game. I have used games like Jeopardy or Round Robin just to get the students up and moving. You could also provide handouts of questions and have the students do group work to answer questions and create rationales for the questions.

Slide 44



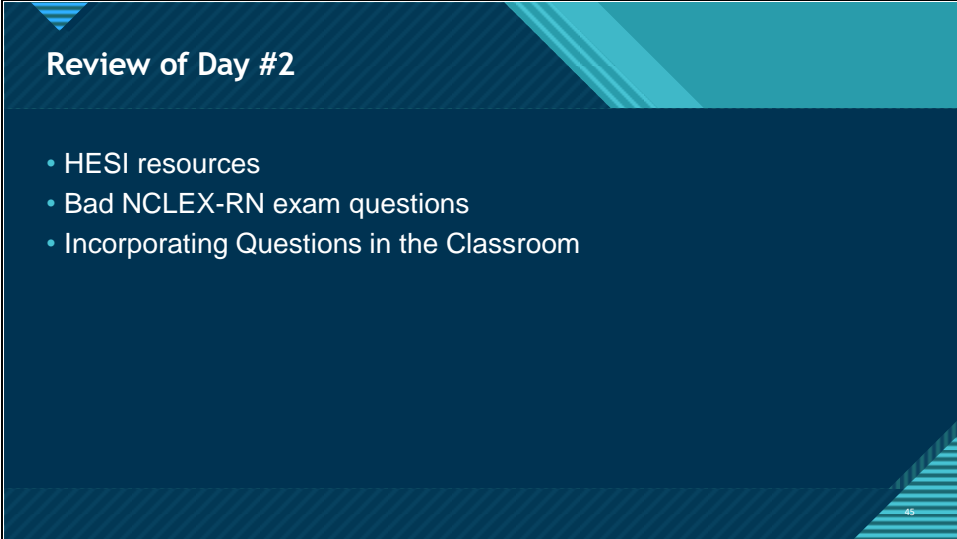
**Professional Development
Training for Nursing
Faculty**

Day 3

44

The slide features a dark blue background with a teal and light blue geometric pattern at the top and bottom corners. The text is centered and rendered in a white, bold, sans-serif font. A small number '44' is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide's graphic area.

Slide 45

A presentation slide with a dark blue background and a teal geometric pattern in the top right corner. The title "Review of Day #2" is in white. Below it is a bulleted list of three items: "HESI resources", "Bad NCLEX-RN exam questions", and "Incorporating Questions in the Classroom". A small number "45" is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

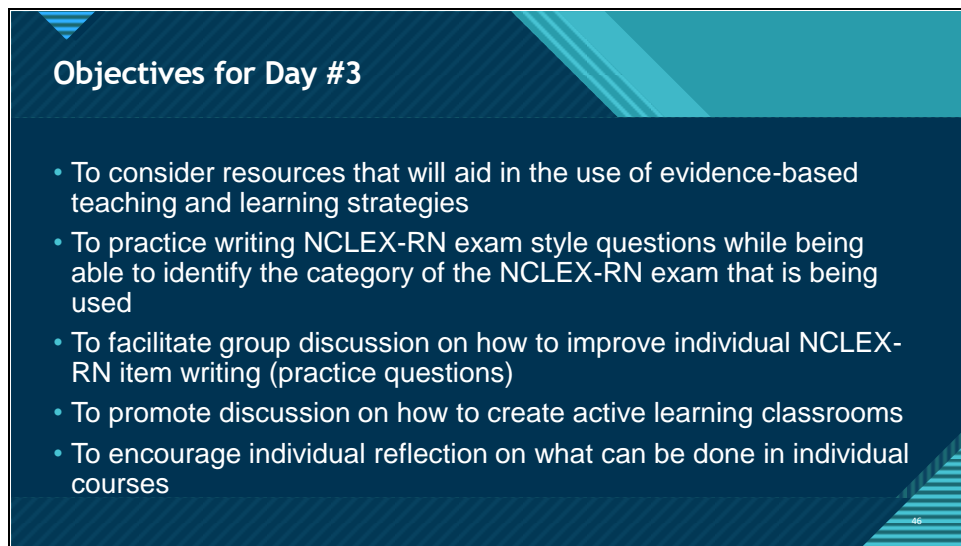
Review of Day #2

- HESI resources
- Bad NCLEX-RN exam questions
- Incorporating Questions in the Classroom

45

I would review briefly a few points on the 3 major topics that we discussed

Slide 46

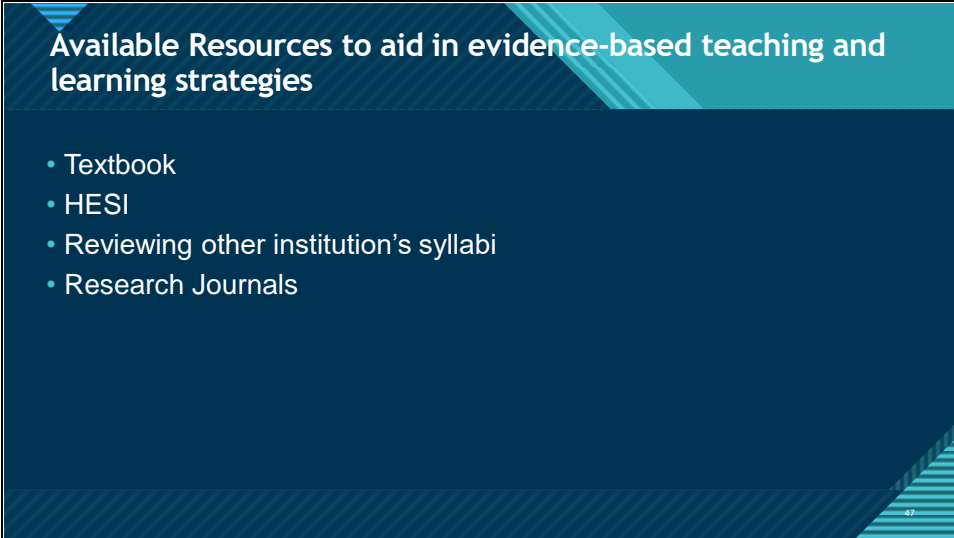


Objectives for Day #3

- To consider resources that will aid in the use of evidence-based teaching and learning strategies
- To practice writing NCLEX-RN exam style questions while being able to identify the category of the NCLEX-RN exam that is being used
- To facilitate group discussion on how to improve individual NCLEX-RN item writing (practice questions)
- To promote discussion on how to create active learning classrooms
- To encourage individual reflection on what can be done in individual courses

I will review the objectives here.

Slide 47

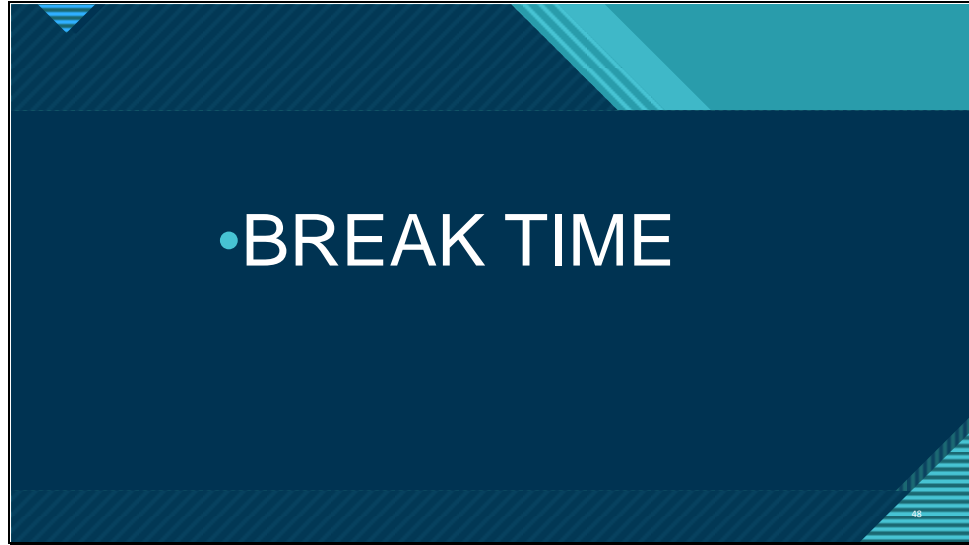


Available Resources to aid in evidence-based teaching and learning strategies

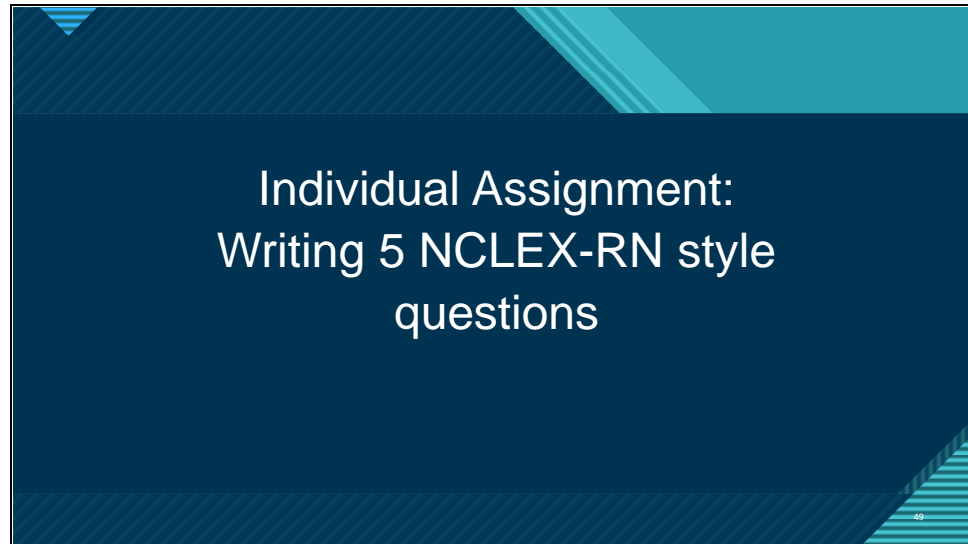
- Textbook
- HESI
- Reviewing other institution's syllabi
- Research Journals

Your course textbook offers numerous resources. One resource is different teaching strategies and learning activities. For each chapter, you are provided different activities that can be done to teach the content outside of lecture. HESI also provides numerous resources that can offer classroom and clinical activities. Sometimes, even reviewing other school's syllabi (that is available to the public) can be helpful. I personally remember certain things that I did in nursing school that were helpful to me. I may tweak those activities to fit in the course I am teaching to promote learning. And, always, research journals are a wonderful place to read up more on evidence based strategies. As we know, the research is always evolving and keeping up-to-date with research journals will help us to stay current in our teaching strategies.

Slide 48

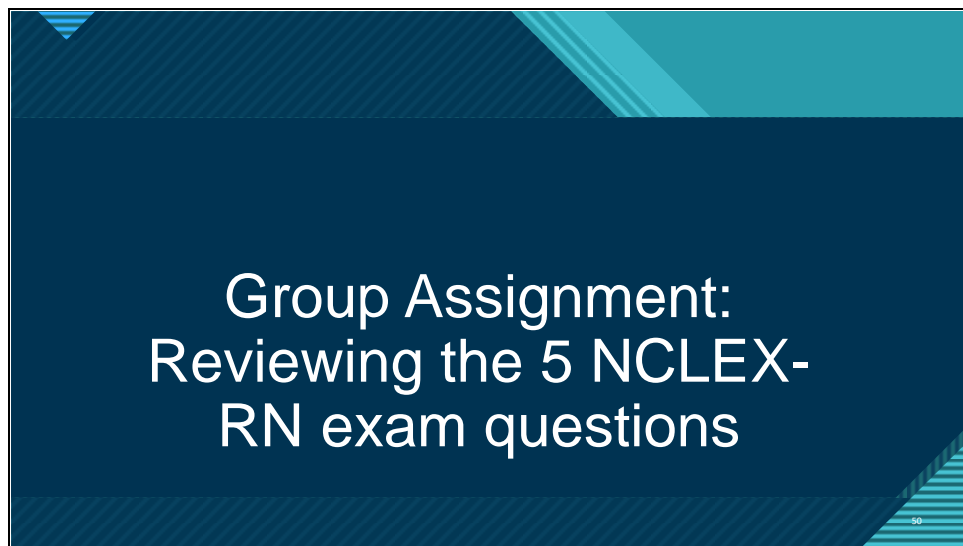


Slide 49



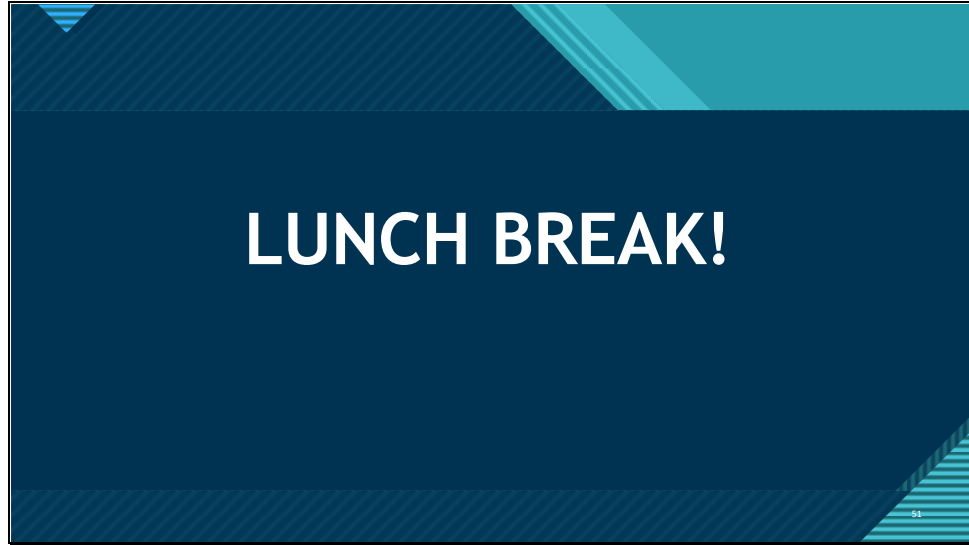
For this assignment, I am going to ask everyone to get a sheet of paper and I would like them to write 5 NCLEX-RN style questions. I would encourage each faculty member to do various types of questions such as multiple choice, highlight, multiple response, and any additional types that they may choose. Second, I would ask the faculty member to ensure that the rationale for the correct answer, as well as why the other options are incorrect, is included with each question. And, finally, I would like each faculty member to describe what category of the NCLEX-RN exam does their question fall into. For example, if they are asking a question about medications, then their category would be Physiological Integrity.

Slide 50

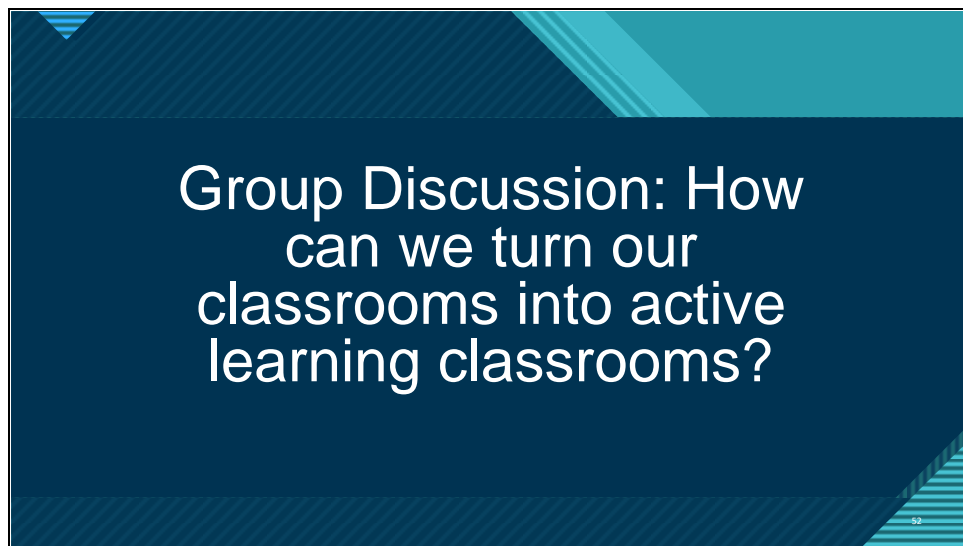


For this assignment, I will ask the faculty members to break up into the same groups that we have been using for the training. They are going to read each other's questions and offer suggestions/improvements. I will be walking around with the groups and listening in while offering additional feedback.

Slide 51

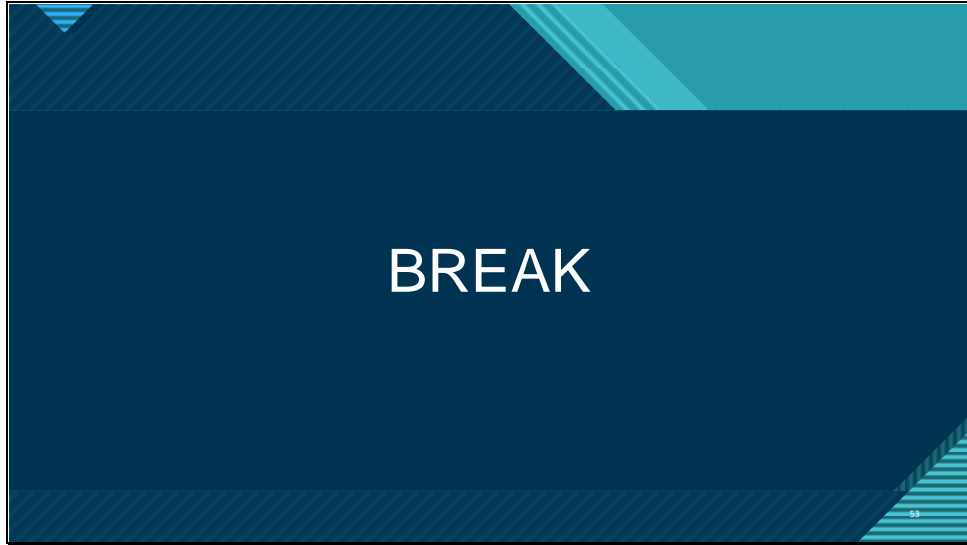


Slide 52

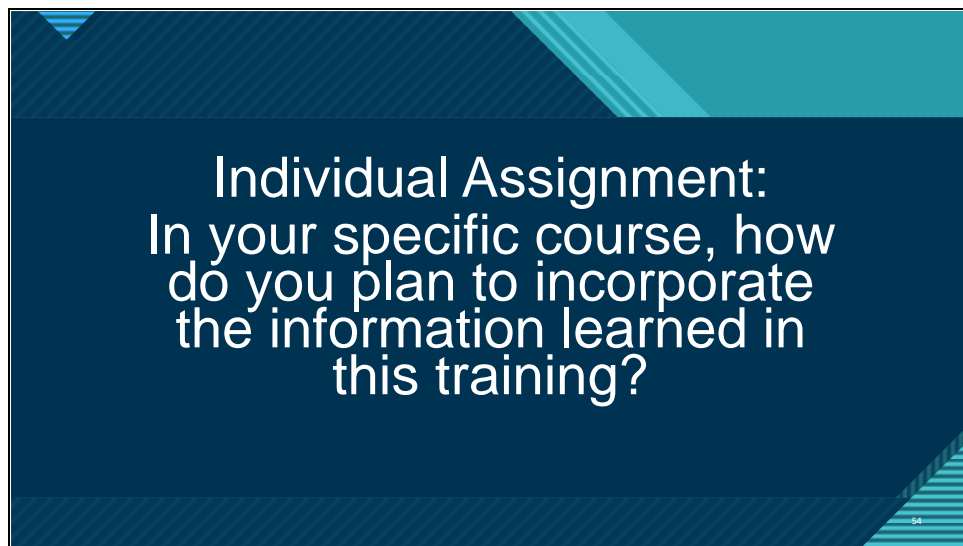


This discussion will be done in the same groups. I would like each group to discuss ways they can transition their classrooms into more active learning classrooms. What evidence-based strategies are they going to use? Are they going to try and rearrange their classrooms?

Slide 53



Slide 54

A slide with a dark blue background and a teal geometric pattern in the top-left and bottom-right corners. The text is centered in white. A small number '54' is visible in the bottom-right corner of the slide frame.

Individual Assignment:
In your specific course, how
do you plan to incorporate
the information learned in
this training?

As we close out this training, I want each participant to be able to leave with a potential plan for what they are going to do differently in their classrooms. This will be their opportunity to individualize what has been learned in all of the presentations and group discussions and apply the information to their individual courses.

Slide 55



During this time, I will just do a short overview of my observations from the group discussions. I will also open the floor for any questions. I will conclude by thanking everyone for their attendance and their participation. I will leave my contact information for any who may desire to have it.

Appendix B: Description of Study to Participants

Recipient Name

Street Address, City, ST ZIP Code

Dear Recipient,

My name is Karla Sanders and I am a doctoral student working on my project study at Walden University. You may already be familiar with me as a former nursing instructor at a southeastern technical college but this letter is in no way connected to my employment there nor am I acting on their behalf.

I am performing a research study entitled “Nursing Graduates’ Strategies for Success on the NCLEX-RN exam.” In this study, I am seeking to speak with recent graduates of FDTC’s associate degree nursing program. There will be no personal identifying information. The only personal information I will ask is your gender and how many semesters it took you to complete the program. There are a few qualifications that you must meet to participate in this study. First, you must identify yourself as a traditional or a nontraditional student. A traditional student is one who graduated from high school, entered college, and then entered into the nursing program without any breaks. A nontraditional student is one who has either never been to college or is returning to college after some years to obtain their nursing degree. This also includes LPN’s who have returned for their RN degree. And the second qualification is that you must have passed the NCLEX-RN Exam on the first attempt. If you meet these qualifications and are interested in participating in my study, I would like to schedule an interview with you to discuss your perceptions on what helped you to be successful on

the NCLEX-RN exam. The interview should take about 35-45 minutes and will be conducted on the main campus of FDTC in a private room of the library. Due to the current pandemic of COVID-19, I will be available to meet with you through an online format such as Skype or Zoom.

Please note that I have already gained permission from both my university as well as FDTC to perform this study. All information provided to me will be protected and no personal identifying information will be connected to your interview. After the interview, I will send you a detailed summary of what we discussed to verify accuracy. Again, all information will be protected, and your participation will be greatly appreciated in helping me to complete my research study.

If you are willing to participate, please respond to me by email or phone by October 31, 2020. Please be sure to indicate if you are a traditional or nontraditional graduate.

Warm regards,

Karla L. Sanders, MSN-Ed, RN

Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Traditional and Nontraditional Nursing Graduates

1. In your career as a student nurse, please describe the activities that were done in the classroom and the clinical setting by faculty that were **MOST** helpful in assisting you to successfully answer NCLEX-RN style questions? RQ1 & RQ2

2. In your career as a student nurse, please describe the activities that were done in the classroom and the clinical setting by faculty that were **LEAST** helpful in assisting you to successfully answer NCLEX-RN style questions? RQ1 & RQ2

3. When you graduated from your nursing program, describe your feelings on how prepared you were to take the NCLEX-RN Exam immediately after graduation? RQ1 & RQ2

4. What resources did you use to prepare for the NCLEX-RN exam between graduation and sitting for the exam? RQ1 & RQ2

5. There are four major evidence-based learning strategies: active learning classroom, clinical setting, pre and post lecture quizzes, reflective papers & concept mapping. Were any or all these strategies used during your

time as a nursing student? If yes, describe how these strategies were effective or ineffective in preparing you for the NCLEX-RN Exam? If not, how could these strategies have been used to help you be successful? RQ1 & RQ2

6. During your **first** semester of nursing school, describe your first experience with NCLEX-style questions and how you were able to make the transition from memorization to critical thinking? RQ1 & RQ2

7. Describe other strategies that could have been used to help you be successful in the nursing program. RQ1 & RQ2

8. Did you use HESI throughout your entire nursing school career? If yes, how was HESI effective or ineffective in preparing you for the NCLEX exam? RQ1 & RQ2

9. If not, do you feel that HESI could have been more helpful to you? Please explain your answer. RQ1 & RQ2

10. What was the school's policy on HESI during your time as a nursing student? RQ1 & RQ2

11. Were there significant policy changes to HESI during your time as a student? Describe those changes focusing only on your first semester and your fifth semester (senior semester)? RQ1 & RQ2

12. Do you feel that HESI helped you to be successful on the NCLEX-RN exam? Please explain your answer. RQ1 & RQ2

13. Based on the above mentioned evidence-based strategies, how do you believe these strategies helped you as a traditional or a nontraditional student to be successful on the NCLEX-RN Exam? RQ1& RQ2

14. What could have been done to help you feel more successful as a traditional or a nontraditional nursing student? RQ1& RQ2

Appendix D: Coding of Data Collection

Open Codes	Axial Codes	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case scenarios • Clinical (assisted with application) • Clinical packets time consuming and not helpful • Limited clinical experience (1 instructor to 8 students) • Having PowerPoint presentations read to us • Avoiding long, boring lecture • more application in clinical setting • hands-on experience • Draw or “map” out a disease process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case scenarios • Clinical experience • Avoiding Lecture as the primary means of teaching information • Concept maps • Practice NCLEX-RN style questions • Hands on Technique 	Effective Classroom Techniques
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept maps helped to “map” out nursing concepts • Practice NCLEX-RN style questions • YouWorld • HESI • Nervous for the exam but felt prepared • All strategies used and effective • Wanted more practice questions and more case scenarios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding time-consuming work that is not helpful such as clinical packets • Practice NCLEX-RN style questions • YouWorld • HESI 	Resources to prepare for the NCLEX-RN exam

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HESI 1st semester: was not a part of the grade: assignments and questions were just given for practice • HESI 5th semester: required to do weekly practice quizzes that were incorporated into the grade; 2 attempts given for the EXIT exam to score at least a 900 and was 25% of the final grade (had to pass the Exit in order to pass the course) • Changes with HESI occurred every semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsure of how HESI would be incorporated during each semester • Went from being an additional resource to becoming high stakes testing 	Consistent HESI policy
Open Codes	Axial Codes	Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have practice quizzes to identify what I did not know prior to the class • Not taught how to answer NCLEX-RN style questions • Wanted more faculty availability • More feedback on exams as to what was missed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire for faculty to be available for questions • Desire for faculty to teach test taking strategies • Desire for faculty to provide a more thorough exam review 	Consistent faculty guidance