

Transcript of Dr. Jennifer Lapum, RN, PhD Podcast

There are many considerations when making decisions to embed virtual simulations in curriculum. In two of the courses that I teach, our teaching team made the decision to embed a couple of virtual gaming simulations. One of the courses focuses on health assessment, and another focuses on professional communication. These courses are both in year one and year two of a four year undergraduate nursing degree program. Ultimately, then, we made the decision to embed virtual gaming simulations, because they provide opportunities for knowledge application, and for students to engage in active clinical judgment, based on a scenario that resembles what they might see in their clinical practice.

Knowledge application and clinical judgment are important learning outcomes of both courses, and a driving force of why we chose this pedagogical approach of virtual gaming simulation. These simulations are also an important complement to the students clinical placements in both years of the program. The next decision we made was about how we wanted students to play the simulations. Considering the simulations were virtual formats, we had several options. They could play the simulation individually in an asynchronous format before class, or they could play the simulation synchronously in pairs or a larger group in class. We made the decision to have them play the simulations asynchronously, because it allows them to apply their knowledge without being influenced by their peers. We felt this was important in order for them to critically think through a situation and test their own clinical judgment before they come together in a group setting to discuss it.

In the communication course, we required them to complete a written self debrief based on a series of questions. As part of this course they submitted the debrief and received a small participation mark. In this course, we expanded the format of the debrief to include audio or artistic mediums, so that they could also consider reflecting by speaking as opposed to writing or creating poetry, a painting or other art formats. In another course, we made the decision to deduct 1% from their final grade if they did not complete the simulation and the associated debrief. This decision was made because the simulation is considered their lab activity as part of the health assessment course. Participation in lab activities is mandatory in this course, and essential to their learning and to ensure they have developed certain skills as they enter clinical practice. In both cases, we engaged in group debriefs during class time. This allowed them to further reflect on their simulation experience and also expand their nerve learning their knowledge and critical thinking by being exposed to their peers and their instructors clinical reasoning and decision making. We had students bring their summary report in one course. In the other course we had students bring their self debrief as well. This allowed them to further reflect on their own reflections and share them with others.

As you can see, there are many ways to embed virtual gaming simulations and curriculum based on the learning outcomes of the specific course.