



Capstone College of
Nursing

**“Exactly What Do We Do?”:
Perspectives of Pre-Clinical Nursing
Students’ First Experiences in Simulation**

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Background

- Constantly evolving field with increasing curricular demands
- Simulations link theoretical concepts to practical application in clinical settings
- The perspectives of pre-clinical nursing students are missing from extant literature.



Purpose

- Describe the perspectives of pre-clinical nursing students entering a simulation for the first time
- Present suggestions for strategies to prepare pre-clinical nursing students for simulation



Study Design

Theoretical foundation: Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

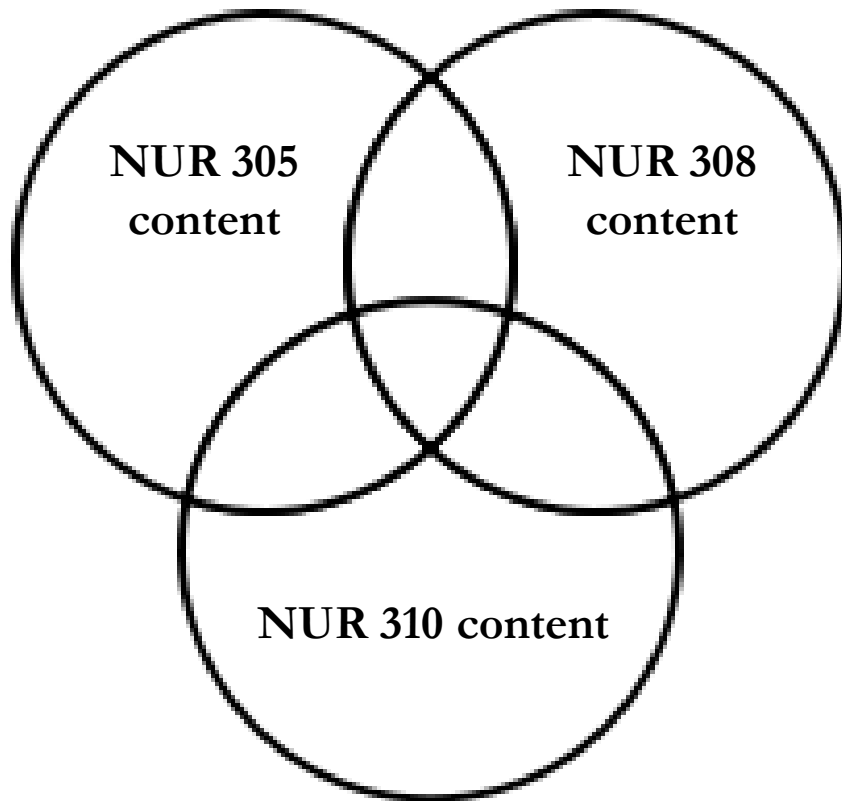
Design: Exploratory Qualitative

Sample: Students enrolled in first semester professional nursing courses (no prior simulation experience)

Data collection: Pre-simulation reflection

- Level of confidence prior to simulation
- Expectations
- Concerns
- Areas of confidence

Learning Objectives and Content Alignment



NUR 305: Pathophysiology

NUR 308: Concepts of Nursing

NUR 310: Health Assessment

Alignment across the semester

Simulation Design

Client with heart failure, pulmonary disease, social concerns

Teams of 4-5 students

Integrated material from all three courses



Faculty as Facilitators

Prioritization of assessment techniques and client care needs

Socratic questioning to promote critical thinking

Link assessment findings with pathophysiologic processes

Offer patient communication and education

Role model assessment skills

Debriefing

Personal reactions

Teamwork approaches

Assessment and safety
priorities

Take away points



Sample

- Junior level baccalaureate students
- Convenience sample
- Female (91.6%)
- White (86.3%) or African-American (4.2%)
- 20-21 years old (61.1% and 29.5%, respectively)
- First-degree students (94.7%)

Data Collection and Analysis

All students completed pre-reflection and simulation

Random sampling of pre-reflections analyzed Thematic analysis per Marshall and Rossman (2016)

Analysis continued until saturation achieved

Final sample: 23/112 (20/5%)

Four themes and three subthemes emerged



Themes

- Knowledge is Power
 - A Whole New World
- Strength in Numbers: A Safety Net
- Anxious but Excited
 - Fear of the Unknown
 - Performance Anxiety
- Uncertainty in Trust of Self or Others

Knowledge is Power

Sense of satisfaction with their understanding of the semester's theoretical content

- Recall signs and symptoms of disease
- Based pathophysiological processes
- General physical assessment techniques and findings

“I have a moderately high confidence level going into this simulation because I believe I know the information from the [physical assessment] portfolio extremely well after the last few weeks of practicing almost everyday”

Drew upon course-related experiences to project confidence in mentally preparing for the simulation.

- Practice time for physical assessment (on own and faculty-supervised)
- Successful assessment validation
- Passing exams

“I feel very confident going into [the simulation]. I studied long and hard for validations and saw very successful outcomes, so I know these skills will help me during simulation”

A Whole New World (Subtheme)

Simulation seen in a new light:

- potentially beneficial learning experience (57%)
- real-world applications for future nursing practice (52%)
- helpful in gaining experience for subsequent clinical courses (30%)
- prepare them for future simulation scenarios (13%)

Simulation expectations:

- hands-on
- Challenging
- interactive with faculty and peers,
- confidence boosting.

“I expect to be challenged but also feel successful using the help of my simulation team and the instructor. I feel this opportunity will really help me and put my knowledge to the test”

Strength in Numbers: A Safety Net

Sense of community among peers and faculty:

- increase participants' confidence
- decrease their anxiety related to the simulation experience
- shift from “evaluation” toward “mentorship”

“I am not too concerned because I know that this is only a sample experience... I feel grateful that we will have a faculty member to actually guide us so that we won't be totally lost in our stress to do well though”

Support from team of peers:

- teamwork and collaboration
- leadership
- communication

“I know this is going to be a learning experience for all of us, and I hope we can all work together to actively participate and learn from this... I believe I will do well with working with the students in my group to figure out what the patient is experiencing, as well as applying techniques that we have learned in physical assessment, pathophysiology, and concepts”

Anxious but Excited

- Sense of excitement and confidence
- Nervous about what to expect
 - Fear of the Unknown
 - Not sure exactly what to expect
 - Want to control for specific logistics

“I am feeling a little nervous because I am not sure exactly what to expect”

- Performance Anxiety
 - Being watched
 - Performing assessment incorrectly

Uncertainty in Trust of Self or Others

- Uncertainty or distrust that stemmed from multiple sources
 - Themselves, the simulation experience itself, the faculty, or a combination of these factors
- Performance Anxiety:
 - Nerves impair ability to perform
 - Need to master calming nerves
- Fear of the Unknown:
 - “Blind-sighted” or “Curveball”
 - Performance-related concerns

“I am concerned that I will not do well with it being my first time in the simulation lab as I tend to get anxious in these new situations”

Lessons Learned

- Better explicit orientation to simulation lab
- Clear instructions
- Adjust faculty presence to increase autonomy



Questions and Discussion



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