

## Sigma's 29th International Nursing Research Congress

### Improving International Educated Nurse's NCLEX-RN First-Attempt Pass Rates, Confidence, and Clinical Judgment

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### Improving International Educated Nurse's NCLEX-RN First Attempt Pass Rates, Confidence, and Clinical Judgment

The purpose of the research study is to describe the impact of implementing a 12-week online NCLEX online preparation guided by a master or doctoral prepared ATI nurse educator coach. The goal is to improve clinical judgment, confidence levels, and first-time pass rates for IEN.

The market opportunity for nurses educated outside the US has never been greater. The American Nurses Association (ANA) is projecting that 690,000 nurses will exit the workforce by the year 2024. These retirements, coupled with current nurse shortages, led the ANA to estimate a 1.2 million gap in nurses in 9 years. Thanks to strong cultural ties to the US, nurses from the Philippines have a unique opportunity to help fill the talent shortfall (ANA, n.d.)

This healthcare dynamic prompted ATI Nursing Education and a large multinational life sciences company to embark on a joint venture to accomplish three specific goals: 1) improve the probability of IEN passing the NCLEX on their first attempt, 2) improve the confidence levels of the IEN, and 3) improve clinical judgment for the IEN. Historically, these nurses' first-time pass rarely surpassed 40 percent. The goal of the partnership was to build up content knowledge so that the IEN could successfully pass the NCLEX exam with a first-time pass rate of at least 75% in 3 months or less.

The proposed solution was the Virtual-ATI International NCLEX Review Program. The Virtual-ATI International NCLEX Review Program is an asynchronous, 12-week online tutoring program in which an experienced ATI US nurse educator works directly with an IEN reviewing substantive content with an individualized approach in preparation for the NCLEX. Each ATI US educator possessed at least a masters or doctoral degree and five years' teaching experience.

In early July 2017, the first cohort of IEN took the NCLEX-RN and saw exceptional results: a 100% pass rate. These results led to a master service level contract between ATI and its partner to enroll multiple rolling cohorts of nurses (usually 20 per month) on an annual subscription model. The exceptional outcomes of increasing NCLEX pass rates has led to partnerships with other institutions seeking the same goal of increased NCLEX pass rates for the IEN. As additional cohorts have completed the online program, pass rates have continued to be in the 80% range. For example, the IEN using the Virtual-ATI International NCLEX Review Program were significantly more likely to pass the NCLEX on their first attempt at an 88.5% than were the IEN candidates not using the ATI NCLEX preparation program at a 39.2% (NCSBN, 2017).

This model is truly a win-win for everyone involved. After passing the NCLEX exam, the IEN can now support US hospitals with on-call nursing support/first level triage (Center for Connected Health Policy, n.d.). The rapid growth of telehealth for healthcare delivery has exposed the lack of support with nurses available in North America (Dimitrios, Shoshana, & Hollander, 2015). This telehealth model is a win for the hospital who can utilize the IEN to provide late night staffing at a more advantageous hourly rate, and a win for the IEN as they earn higher wages and it puts them onto a path to ensuing immigration should they choose. The non-US government benefits from finding opportunities for its abundant nursing talent, and the remittances received from nurses working outside the country. The US benefits by developing an accelerated pipeline to fill its nursing shortage.

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**Title:**

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**Keywords:**

Clinical Judgment, International Educated Nurses and NCLEX Pass Rates

**References:**

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**Abstract Summary:**

The purpose of the research study is to describe the impact of implementing a 12-week online NCLEX online preparation guided by a master or doctoral prepared ATI nurse educator coach. The goal is to improve clinical judgment, confidence levels, and first-time pass rates for IEN.

**Content Outline:**

**Title:** Improving International Educated Nurse's NCLEX-RN First Attempt Pass Rates, Confidence, and Clinical Judgment

**Research Question:**

Is an ATI nurse educator led online NCLEX preparation program effective at increasing general and specific confidence levels, clinical judgment and NCLEX pass rates of International Educated Nurses (IEN)?

**Purpose/Aim:**

The purpose of the research study is to describe the impact of implementing a 12-week online NCLEX online preparation guided by a master or doctoral prepared ATI nurse educator coach. The goal is to improve clinical judgment, confidence levels, and first-time pass rates for IEN.

## **Background/Rationale: ATI Nursing Education – Preparing Nurses for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Healthcare**

ATI Nursing Education (ATI) is a pioneer in development of psychometrically sound nursing assessments as well as using data analytics to drive better learning outcomes for nurses seeking to practice in the United States (US). A nurse practicing in the US must demonstrate competency in multiple content areas covering the full spectrum of human health and development. US nursing graduates must also pass a licensing exam called the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). Every year, more than 225,000 nursing students use ATI's web-based tutorials, simulations, assessments, and examination preparation services to achieve their goal of becoming a licensed nurse.

ATI's strategy is simple, yet difficult to mimic. ATI collects and analyzes hundreds of millions of data points on student's performances, every single year. ATI uses that data to create algorithms to help students understand exactly what they do and don't know, so students can remediate their weaknesses and predict their probability of success when taking their high-stakes licensing examination.

ATI facilitates partnerships between the Asian-Pacific region and the US by preparing nurses and nursing students to practice their profession in the US. To be successful, these students and nurses must not only pass their US licensing examination, but they must adapt to the cultural norms that affect their profession which includes demonstrating confidence and clinical judgment. Although nurses have been coming to the US for decades, the talent pipeline has been severely limited given the low international pass rates on the NCLEX (NCSBN, 2017).

## **ATI's Partnerships for Building an International Nursing Workforce**

The market opportunity for nurses educated outside the US has never been greater. The American Nurses Association (ANA) is projecting that 690,000 nurses will exit the workforce by the year 2024. These retirements, coupled with current nurse shortages, led the ANA to estimate a 1.2 million gap in nurses in 9 years. Thanks to strong cultural ties to the US, nurses from the Philippines have a unique opportunity to help fill the talent shortfall (ANA, n.d.).

This healthcare dynamic prompted ATI and a large multinational life sciences company to embark on a joint venture to accomplish three specific goals: 1) improve the probability of IEN passing the NCLEX on their first attempt, 2) improve the confidence levels of the IEN, and 3) improve clinical judgment for the IEN. Historically, these nurses' first-time pass rarely surpassed 40 percent. The goal of the partnership was to build up content knowledge so that the IEN could successfully pass the NCLEX exam with a first-time pass rate of at least 75% in 3 months or less.

## **The Solution**

The proposed solution was the Virtual-ATI International NCLEX Review Program. The Virtual-ATI International NCLEX Review Program is an asynchronous, 12-week online tutoring program in which an experienced ATI US nurse educator works directly with an IEN reviewing substantive content with an individualized approach in preparation for the NCLEX. Each ATI US educator possessed at least a masters or doctoral degree and five years' teaching experience.

An online classroom was created for the IEN to interact with their US nurse educator and to access the numerous ATI-developed NCLEX review materials. The classroom included a 12-week calendar and detailed checklist that covered an extensive and comprehensive variety of content for nurses to follow and stay on track with their NCLEX review. Each week on the calendar included a different topic to learn through activities that included reviewing content, taking assessments, spending time in online simulation,

and completing individualized remediation materials sent from their US nurse educator that targeted each nurse's specific needs.

Detailed progress reports were sent each week from the ATI US nurse educator to the partnering institution that contained information on their overall cohort results and each nurse's participation and performance with tracking towards NCLEX readiness. Pre and post comprehensive assessments were used to measure each nurse's NCLEX readiness. At the end of the 12 weeks, a recommendation for NCLEX readiness was sent to the partnering institution. In addition, the format and frequency of the weekly reports and the specifics of the overall online NCLEX review was continually refined to lead to the highest outcomes and client satisfaction.

### **Evaluation Process-Outcomes and Results of Virtual-ATI International NCLEX Review Program**

In early July 2017, the first cohort of IEN took the NCLEX-RN and saw exceptional results: a 100% pass rate. These results led to a master service level contract between ATI and its partner to enroll multiple rolling cohorts of nurses (usually 20 per month) on an annual subscription model. The exceptional outcomes of increasing NCLEX pass rates has led to partnerships with other institutions seeking the same goal of increased NCLEX pass rates for the IEN. As additional cohorts have completed the online program, pass rates have continued to be in the 80% range. For example, the IEN using the Virtual-ATI International NCLEX Review Program were significantly more likely to pass the NCLEX on their first attempt at an 88.5% than were the IEN candidates not using the ATI NCLEX preparation program at a 39.2% (NCSBN, 2017).

This model is truly a win-win for everyone involved. After passing the NCLEX exam, the IEN can now support US hospitals with on-call nursing support/first level triage (Center for Connected Health Policy, n.d.). The rapid growth of telehealth for healthcare delivery has exposed the lack of support with nurses available in North America (Dimitrios, Shoshana, & Hollander, 2015). This telehealth model is a win for the hospital who can utilize the IEN to provide late night staffing at a more advantageous hourly rate, and a win for the IEN as they earn higher wages and it puts them onto a path to ensuing immigration should they choose. The non-US government benefits from finding opportunities for its abundant nursing talent, and the remittances received from nurses working outside the country. The US benefits by developing an accelerated pipeline to fill its nursing shortage.

Now that a sustainable path has been cleared to bring more IEN talent to overseas markets, ATI and its partners have accepted the challenge to create a global nursing workforce – preparing nurses for the different cultural norms impacting their profession. This problem isn't about "fitting in" to a foreign culture, it's about helping IEN understand that their professional obligations are different in US hospitals.

First Primary Presenting Author

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**Professional Experience:** Michele Steinbeck is currently the Director of Nursing for International and Provider Markets with Ascend Learning. She works with large multinational life sciences companies to support international educated nurses for preparation for NCLEX as well as preparation for transition to United States healthcare practice. Prior to the current role, Steinbeck was a faculty member and served as a nurse educator preparing undergraduate nursing students to take NCLEX and prepare for the

nursing profession.

**Author Summary:** Steinbeck is the Director of Nursing for the International and Provider Markets for Ascend Learning. She has over 25 years of experience as a RN in various healthcare areas. She received her master's degree in nursing from University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. She is NLN certified as a Nurse Educator. She has also served as a faculty member in Arkansas. Steinbeck is currently a doctoral student pursuing a DNP in Nursing Educational Leadership.