

Clarity & Safety in Communication for Nurses: The LEGO Challenge

Simulation Communication Activity

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Medical Professionals and Specialists



Introduction

Providing safe and effective care is identified by the **Quality and Safety Education for Nurses** guidelines as an essential competency (QSEN, www.qsen.org). The overall goal for the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) project is to meet the challenge of preparing future nurses who will have the **knowledge, skills and attitudes** (KSAs) necessary to continuously improve the quality and safety of the healthcare systems within which they work. First semester nursing students are challenged to evaluate their awareness of how their words impact **communication with colleagues and patients**. After formal teaching to present standardized tools for clear communication, students participate in a simulation activity.

Conclusion

Interpretation of the meaning of words may vary according to an individual's background and experiences. (Arnold & Boggs, 2020)

Inaccuracies in interpretation can lead to errors that translate to safety concerns for patient care outcomes.

Students learn that LEGO building has a specific language and understanding of that language results in enhanced outcomes with successful communication of the building process. Even without knowledge of "LEGO speak", students will utilize a measure of critical thinking to maximize communication success. This includes strategically combining mathematical concepts, color wheel descriptions and verbal descriptions for thought visualization.

Frustration with the process occurs when communication is challenged either by ineffective description or a language barrier. ESL students have found success with stating the communication in their native language and then translating it back to English.

Results

Student Comments

"The LEGO communication activity gave me a new perspective on how hard it is to effectively communicate with a patient and as the patient receiving from the nurse/doctor and how important it is to effectively communicate with one another."

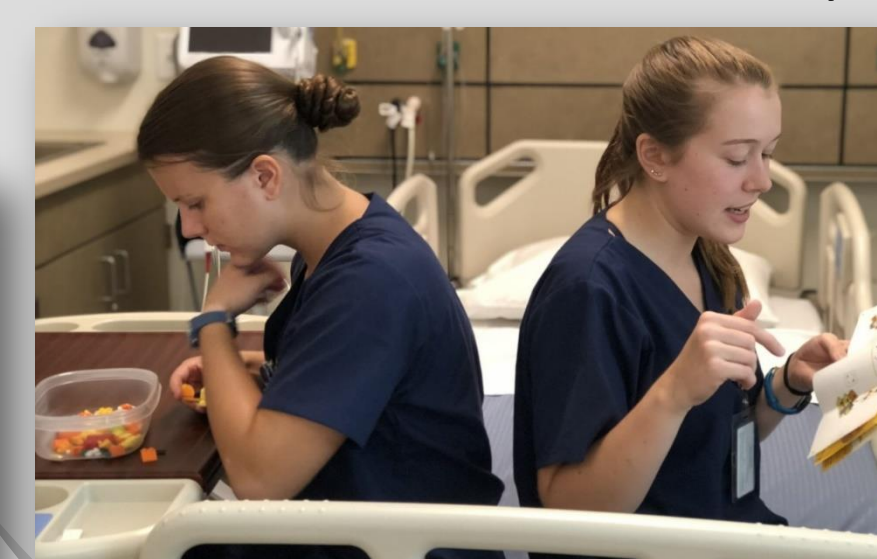
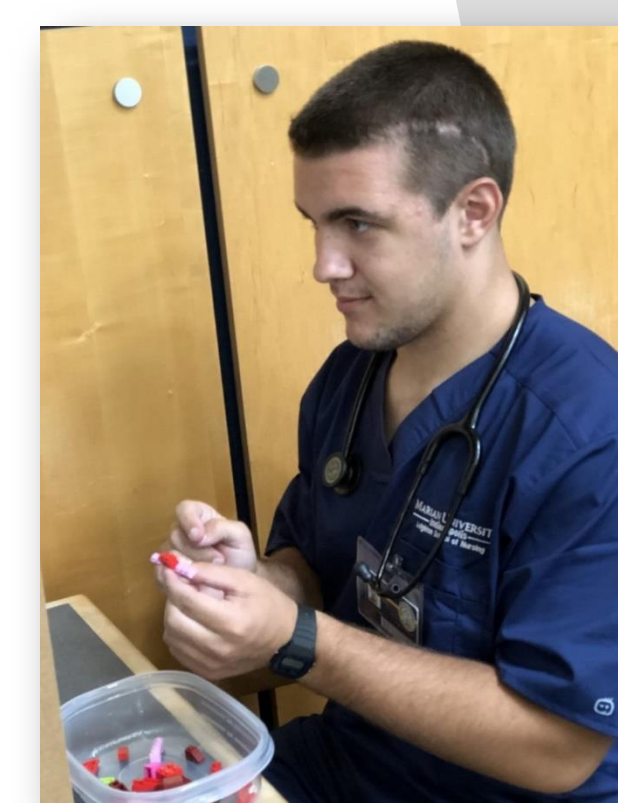
"It was a struggle at first since we both were seeing different things...I enjoyed the exercise since communication is always important and this situation of seeing two sides of things will happen. You must work it out with the people you are working with to do what is best for the patient."

"The Lego activity was good for practicing patience & good communication. It helped me realize that even if you think that you are communicating well, it still may not be clear to the other person."



Methodology

- Students are paired up and will sit back-to-back or sit at a table with a divider.
- Student A is the builder and Student B is the communicator.
- Each group is provided a container with Legos and a booklet of instructions.
- Student B removes the booklet and hands Student A the container of bricks.
- Students are given 1 minute to decide how to organize the bricks (Student A) and which object will be communicated to build (Student B).
- Timer is set for 5 minutes.
- No hand motions are allowed. All instruction must be verbal description.
- At the end of time, the groups rotate boxes and the roles are reversed.



Materials

