

Response to Integrating Simulation Into a Foundational Gerontological Nursing Course

To the Editor:

Older adults comprise the largest cohort of patients in need of nursing care in our health care system. Their care before, during, and after illness is complex and involves many significant life transitions. We at the National League for Nursing (NLN) were pleased to see the report by Sheets and Ganley (2011), which discusses the use of simulation to teach care of older adults to nursing students, in the December issue of the *Journal of Nursing Education*.

We want nurse educators to be aware of gerontological teaching resources available through the NLN's Advancing Care Excellence for Seniors (ACES) project, a partnership of the NLN and Community College of Philadelphia, supported by the Hartford Foundation, the Hearst Foundation, the Independence Foundation, and Laerdal Medical. The ACES project provides curriculum tools such as unfolding clinical cases, simula-

tions, and teaching strategies that can be used in a variety of teaching-learning environments to stimulate student interest in care of older adults.

An unfolding case is one that evolves over time in a manner that is unpredictable to the learner. New situations develop and are revealed with each encounter. Unfolding cases combine the power of story telling with the experiential nature of simulation scenarios. They are intended to create a robust, meaningful experience for students, one that provides a simulated experience of continuity of care.

Specifically, unfolding cases and simulations of four older adult patients and their families (Millie, Red, Julia and Lucy, and Henry and Ertha) provide opportunities for students to follow these individuals through a series of complex illnesses and life transitions in a variety of different settings, such as hospitals, rehabilitation centers, assisted living residences, and homes. The unfolding cases and simulations include professionally developed monologue recordings, a variety of settings and scenarios, suggested read-

ings, evaluation instruments, and suggested assignments.

These materials, available free to educators in an effort to increase student exposure to the health care needs experienced by older adults, can be accessed online at <http://www.nln.org/ACES>.

Reference

Sheets, I.W., & Ganley, B.J. (2011). Integrating simulation into a foundational gerontological nursing course. *Journal of Nursing Education, 50*, 689-692. doi:10.3928/01484834-20110916-01

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