Integrating Simulation into Advanced Practice Education: Weighing the Costs and Benefits
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### Purpose
With ever-increasing concerns about optimal Advanced Practice Nursing (APN) education and patient safety, as well as competition for appropriate clinical sites, faculty must consider creative strategies to achieve desired goals. Simulated Learning Experiences (SLE) provide opportunities for the development of creative advanced practice nursing educational activities. However, integrating SLEs into graduate nursing education requires significant investments of resources—both monetary and faculty time. The purpose of this presentation is to encourage dialog discussions about the costs and benefits of incorporating Simulated Learning Experiences into APN education.

### Background
- Simulation has been used in medical education since the 17th century.
- Simulation Learning Experiences have been integrated effectively into undergraduate nursing education.
- Simulation is currently being incorporated in clinical experiences in Advanced Practice Nursing educational programs.

Questions to consider:
* How can SLE be used to strengthen APN education?
* How can SLE be used to fulfill clinical hour requirements in ways that are as good as or better than traditional clinical experiences with live patients?
* Do the benefits of implementing SLE in APN education outweigh the costs?

### Requirements for Success
- **SLE Development**
  - Goals clearly defined
  - Philosophy of academic program incorporated into SLE
  - Course requirements used to guide development of SLE goals
  - Scenario created or refined
  - Evaluation plan and tools developed or refined to be consistent with goals
- **Simulated Learning Experience Implemented**
  - Simulator programming
  - Student assignments
  - Simulation enacted
- **Evaluation**
  - Post simulation de-briefing
  - Student evaluation of simulation experience based on previously developed goals
  - Faculty evaluation
  - Student achievements
  - Simulation experience
  - Clinical evaluation outcomes
    - students, faculty, preceptors

### Benefits
- Opportunities for the development of increased faculty skills and knowledge through the development, implementation, and evaluation of Simulated Learning Experiences (SLE)
- Opportunities for creative educational experiences for APN students leading to increased knowledge in a safe, controlled environment
- Opportunities for students to participate in the creation of APN learning strategies using advanced technology
- Increased patient safety, since clinical experiences will take place with simulated patients
- Opportunities for the development of more complex learning strategies
- Opportunities for student development of increased assessment and management skills in a mentored environment
- Opportunities for more thorough assessment of student knowledge and skills
- Opportunities for increased clinical experiences requiring decreased preceptor resources
- Opportunities for simulation use outside of academic environment as a means to offset costs

### Costs
- Purchase of simulator(s)
- Annual maintenance fees for simulators
- Commitment of designated secure space for simulation learning experiences
- Commitment of designated secure space for simulator storage
- Simulation supplies
- Faculty support

### Evaluation
- Post simulation de-briefing
- Student evaluation of simulation experience based on previously developed goals
- Faculty evaluation
- Student achievements
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- Clinical evaluation outcomes
  - students, faculty, preceptors