

CASE STUDY

On-Demand, Cloud-Based Microlearning Improves Efficiency for Nurse Educators

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INTRODUCTION

In my 36-year career as a NICU Nurse and 12 years as the NICU Nurse Educator at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, Oakland, in California, I have trained hundreds of nurses. Delivering effective training and ensuring that everyone understands new procedures and protocols efficiently is the biggest challenge in my position.

Traditional methods such as skills days and classroom education are no longer adequate to train staff properly. In order for nurse educators to successfully do their job, new tools must be implemented and utilized in order to keep pace with the exponential growth of information. Cloud-based microlearning web application, Elemeno Health has been instrumental in providing a tool to increase efficiency and effectiveness for nurse educators while improving knowledge retention and engagement among my staff.

Challenges In Nurse Education

Health care knowledge, from best practices to new technologies, is growing exponentially. Nurse education in the 1980's meant training nurses on dozens of tasks. Nurse educators now deliver education for hundreds of tasks. Traditional methods of training include skills days, pre-shift huddles, paper reference guides, and monthly staff meetings. Each of these methods have pain points and have proven to be inefficient in today's healthcare setting. Although these methods worked decades ago, they are no longer effective in preparing nurses to execute today's plethora of procedures with confidence and accuracy.

The Problem With Traditional Skills Days

Traditional in-person skills days are particularly ineffective. Occurring only once or twice a year, the format involves eight hours of in-person training divided into four hours of didactics and four hours of demonstration. For the nurse educator, preparing presentations and training materials is time-consuming and labor intensive. Conflicting nurse schedules mandate multiple training sessions. However, as the perceived value is additionally questioned, staff attendance is limited unless mandated by the department manager. And finally, knowledge retention in classroom settings is limited.

COVID–19: Moving Nurse Training Methods Forward

The onslaught of COVID–19 accelerated rapid changes in regulations and protocols, coupled with restrictions to in-person learning opportunities such as classes, huddles, and in-services, revealed the need to adapt the methods of education for the professional nurse. More than ever, staff needed a way to easily access information, propelling a turning point in nurse education from traditional methods to utilizing innovative, cloud-based microlearning as the primary teaching and learning tool. This approach provided nurse educators a tool to deploy updates and information in real-time. Staff could log onto the hospital workstation, or simply reach into their pocket for their mobile device, and access all of the new information on-demand, whether in the hospital or at home. Rapidly changing protocols could be updated and accessed all in one place, greatly minimizing stress and increasing efficiency for nurse educators and frontline staff.

The Solution: On-Demand Cloud-Based Microlearning

Cloud-based microlearning proved to be especially valuable when in-person training for the annual NICU Skills Day Class was limited, given the risk of COVID–19 transmission. Training materials and assignments were packaged and disseminated online through the application. Knowledge retention was directly measured through pre-tests, resource views, and post-tests. Critically important, dissemination of bite-sized training on the cloud allowed staff nurses to subsequently pull relevant support at the point of care—reaccessing the same training in-context when they needed it most—for patient care. Data showed that the rate of usage greatly increased, which proved that the convenient, easy to access, on-demand information was valued by frontline staff.

In our 2020 presentation at the Association of Women’s Health Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses Convention (AWHONN), we compared the effect of the cloud-based microlearning web application, Elemeno Health to traditional in-person (pre-shift huddle and in-shift demonstration) methods. Efficiency was measured in the number of minutes required to create and execute education. Effectiveness was measured in staff nurse participation. We found that cloud-based microlearning significantly improved efficiency for the nurse educator, reducing time for content creation and implementation by 75 percent. Similarly, with the cloud-based approach, nursing staff participation increased 2.4 times.¹

Traditional vs. Innovative Education Efficiency and Effectiveness



¹Collinson, Tinkler, 2020



Conclusion

Nurse educators are increasingly stretched to provide rapidly evolving volumes of information to an ever-changing audience of frontline staff.

Traditional training methods were designed for the healthcare setting of the past, one with small volumes of information and minimal staff turnover. New healthcare challenges such as COVID-19 have underscored the need for better learning tools and methods. Elemeno Health has empowered educators to do their job with greater efficiency and effectiveness, and in turn, Elemeno has equipped our frontline staff to deliver higher quality and safer care. It is a game changer.

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