



Nursing students learn needed skills in a hands-on environment with RealCare Baby

Dr. Kelli Smith, PhD, RN, is the nursing program chair at National American University in Bloomington, Minnesota. Smith first learned about Realityworks' RealCare Baby infant simulators while attending a professional development conference, and immediately started thinking about how hands-on simulation could better prepare her students for what to expect when caring for live infants.

"It was important that we addressed care for all ages across the lifespan," Smith said. "It made sense to include the infant experience."

Hands-on training in a clinical setting

An important part of nursing training takes place in skills laboratories. These settings provide realistic environments for working on nursing skills like CPR and drawing blood. Smith decided to incorporate RealCare Babies in one of her health promotion courses to provide students with true-to-life interaction with infants - just like they would eventually experience in a nursery. In addition to feeding, burping, soothing and diaper-changing, students also practice taking vital signs and measurements.

"These products provide a consistent, safe experience for students before going into a clinical setting," said Jessie Daniels, NAU skills lab coordinator. "They have the opportunity to handle these babies in different ways, to know what is safe, how to bathe and swaddle them, and how to approach them. When we are working on these skills, we

emphasize the normal infant."

Daniels puts Babies in various simulation modes depending on how each user will be working on infant care, and said she likes having an ample supply of infant simulators so her students can all work on skills simultaneously. In many cases, theory is presented through lectures and presentations, then students move into simulation during two-hour lab sessions.

"The learning is magnified when students see skills demonstrated and then they do it," said Smith, noting that newborn physical assessments can be studied from a video but come to life with infant simulators.

"We do the head-to-toe assessment, body systems, height, weight, visual inspection of eyes and nose," she said.

(continued)

Program Highlights

Goal:

- Provide training for nursing students to enter the workforce.

Topics Covered:

- basic infant care
- assesment simulations



Nursing students practice handling an infant and taking vital signs.

“Just maneuvering the tape around the head is a valuable experience when we do the head and chest circumferences and they gather actual data.”

Shaken Baby Syndrome Simulator makes significant impact

The NAU skills lab also employs the Infant Choking Manikin, Resucit® Baby CPR Manikin, Special Needs Infant, Drug-Affected Demonstrator, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Manikin, and Shaken Baby Syndrome Simulator. The Shaken Baby Syndrome Simulator has been particularly eye-opening for Daniels’ classes.

“They definitely have a reaction to it. They do not want to shake the baby but I require them to do it at least once,” she said.

Chaska, Minnesota resident Elyse Morrow is in her senior year as a student nurse. While she didn’t like to shake the baby, she said it was beneficial to experience what it feels like.

“I had no idea how hard these people can shake a baby. It’s a violent thing,” Morrow said.

Edina, Minnesota resident Amina Ibrahim said she was unprepared for the emotional aspect of caring for babies.

“When the baby wouldn’t stop crying, I felt anxiety,” she stated. “But I learned that you need to be patient and you can reassure the mother and show her ways to calm her baby.”

Success with simulation in a post-secondary setting

Smith is pleased with how well the infant simulators and demonstrators fit into the skills lab and facilitate hands-on practice of critical infant care techniques.

“We as educators like to think we have a great idea, but need to know that learning really did occur,” she said. “It’s good to hear from students that it’s working.”

“These products provide a consistent, safe experience for students before going into a clinical setting.”

Jessie Daniels
NAU skills lab coordinator



Nursing students get hands-on practice performing medical procedures with the Special Needs Manikin.



Lab instructor Linda Wlodyga uses the Shaken Baby Syndrome Simulator to illustrate the areas of an infant’s brain damaged by shaking.