



Boosting Pass Rates with Active Learning

Case Study: Lake Superior College

Challenges Faced

Complying with State Changes While Preserving Accreditation

In 2010, Lake Superior College learned that the state of Minnesota would soon begin limiting community college programs to a maximum of 60 credits. At the time, Lake Superior's nursing curriculum required 69 credits. Lake Superior was able to secure a waiver that permitted the school to offer the program in 64 credits, but the school still needed to reconfigure the curriculum in order to meet the new requirements while maintaining the integrity of its program.

Adding to the challenge, the program's National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) pass rate was slipping, putting the program's accreditation at risk.

Nursing faculty also needed to rethink how they delivered the material within the context of the challenges. Many students were embarking on second careers and needed integrated and intuitive resources, with plenty of hands-on learning. The active classroom strategies also had to bridge that gap between clinical practice and the classroom setting so as to reinforce learning, help students build clinical judgment, and prepare students for practice.

On the horizon, COVID-19 would eventually close clinical sites and force the entire program online.

Institution

Lake Superior College
Duluth, Minnesota
14 nursing faculty
300 nursing students

Overview

Founded in 1995, Lake Superior College offers more than 90 certificate, diploma, and associate degree programs in career and technical fields. Nursing programs offered include LPN, ADN, LPN to ADN, and Military Medic to LPN.

Accreditations

The program is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing.

Nursing Student Demographics

Most of Lake Superior College's nursing students are in their late 20s and early 30s, though they range in age up to 60 years old.

31 Years Old

average age of a graduating RN in 2015 versus 24 in 1985

62.1%

of ADN program students are older than 25 years of age

64 Credits

Minnesota's max nursing program size, down from 69 credits*

* after waivers

"We wanted a more active learning model that bridges clinical and classroom. What I love about vSim is that students have to use their judgment to decide next steps, putting together what they've learned in CoursePoint+, DocuCare, and PrepU. vSim is very good at teaching that analytical reasoning and helping them build clinical judgment. Using the Lippincott suite, our NCLEX pass rates rose from 75% to 95.5% as of 2017. And we're giving students what they need in real-world practice."

—Jacqueline Semaan, MSN, CHSE, RNC-LRN
Nursing Skills Lab Coordinator, Simulation Coordinator
Lake Superior College

Solution Snapshot

For years, several Lake Superior College nursing educators had been using Wolters Kluwer's textbooks. When state regulatory changes required the program to reconfigure the curriculum, they pivoted to digital nursing education solutions to enable a more active learning model and a simulated clinical environment by integrating the Wolters Kluwer solution suite, including Lippincott® CoursePoint+, PrepU, Lippincott® DocuCare, and vSim® for Nursing.

The Solution

An Active, Integrated Curriculum that Emphasizes Clinical Learning

The combination of state regulatory changes, accreditation challenges, and student needs prompted Lake Superior College's nursing faculty to rethink the entire nursing curriculum. After examining every single course, they decided to institute a flipped-classroom approach to facilitate a more active learning model that emphasized the clinical. They agreed to use a single platform in order to keep things simple, uniform, and cost-effective for students and faculty.

Some faculty members had been using Wolters Kluwer texts for years and urged colleagues to start there. Students reacted positively to trials of DocuCare and vSim, quickly asking other faculty if they could use the tools for more classes. By 2016, Lake Superior College had adopted the entire Wolters Kluwer digital curriculum platform—CoursePoint+—which comprises PrepU, vSim, and DocuCare.

In the process, the Lake Superior College nursing faculty worked closely with one of Lippincott's nursing education consultants both (1) to customize the Lippincott resources to the college's curricular needs and (2) to ensure consistency. Together they revamped objectives, integrated all of the new resources, and incorporated vSim scenarios into the college's clinical teaching. Students are now guided to use DocuCare before beginning a vSim, and they then return to DocuCare afterward to debrief and confirm their learning.

Today faculty integrate Lippincott texts, case studies, discussion topics, animated concepts, adaptive quizzing, and other tools to introduce and reinforce concepts throughout the learning process. Faculty review the results of those integrated tools so they can pinpoint common errors or areas that may need additional discussion or remediation. They also use the feedback to continually improve the curriculum.



Higher NCLEX pass rates,
jumping from less than 75% to
95.5% by 2017



**Students are acquiring clinical
decision-making skills** through
an integrated approach that
fosters learning, reinforcement,
and independent thinking



**Digital tools ensured curriculum
continuity,** even when clinical
sites were closed by COVID-19

Results

Boosting student achievement and NCLEX pass rates: By 2017, Lake Superior College's NCLEX pass rate had jumped from less than 75% to 95.5%. The program even switched to competitive entry.

Building clinical judgment and independence: Faculty note that the new curriculum's structure engages students while prompting them to connect the dots through analytical reasoning, thereby ultimately building independence, intuition, and clinical judgment.

Driving student satisfaction and success: Students graduate from the program with the confidence and clinical experience they need to launch satisfying careers. In fact, more than 90% of Lake Superior's LPN graduates are employed in nursing one year after graduation.

Ensuring students gain clinical experience—even during COVID-19: When COVID-19 shut down campuses and clinical sites, Lake Superior faculty were able to build on their existing Lippincott platform. They used DocuCare to roll out unfolding patient experiences that aligned with vSim, embedding additional video clips and images that made the simulated patients more real. And even as clinical sites reopened, faculty planned to rely more heavily on vSim to deliver clinical teaching.

To learn more about our nursing education solutions visit:
www.wolterskluwer.com/solutions/lippincott-nursing-faculty

