

**Synthesis of Evidence Substantiating an Intervention**

## Synthesis of Evidence Substantiating an Intervention

Nurses are expected to advocate for quality care provided to patients in every care setting of nursing practice. Nurses fail to achieve quality care provision due to the underlying theory-practice gap in nursing. For instance, the complex nature of end-of-life care has been a problem, especially for nurses who face the challenge of theory-practice gap (Lai et al., 2018). Theory-practice gap is caused by insufficient educational preparation, lack of exposure to palliative practicum experiences, and lack of professional mentorship for new nurses. Consequently, nurses encounter problems with decision-making or develop negative attitudes toward the clinical care of dying patients. In most cases, the nurses usually lack competencies like; effective communication, cultural sensitivity, or symptom management in clinical palliative care. My PICOT question is: **For the staff caring for the palliative care patients (P), how does the implementation of learning (I) as compared to current practice (C) affect the confidence level of decision-making in caring for the dying patient (O) over 12 weeks(T)?**

## Critical Review of Literature

Brown's (2019) study sought to discover the theory-practice gap from the views of graduate nurses based on experiences. The author also aimed to determine nurses' viewpoints on simulation during prelicensure programs to bridge the theory-practice gap. The study employed a qualitative phenomenological design to explore the practical experiences of 13 graduate nurses with at least two clinical experience years. Keywords used include; theory-practice gap, nursing, scenario-based learning, simulation, and graduate nurses. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed through an inductive and iterative process, following Moustaka's modified version of the Stevick-Coalazzi-Keen's method of data analysis. The

study findings reveal that participants confirmed the essence of simulation technology by integrating theoretical knowledge into practice to solve the theory-practice gap.

Gillan et al. (2021) recognized that undergraduate nursing students still encounter the theory-practice gap when transitioning into care settings, regardless of the attempts to curb the situation. The study aims to report on undergraduate nursing students' transformative learning through end-of-life care simulation. Keywords used in this study are; theory-practice gap, end-of-life care, transformative learning, simulation, and undergraduate nursing students. A qualitative research design was used with narrative inquiry to collect data through semi-structured interviews. Data collected was analyzed using Clandinin and Connelly's three dimensions of narrative inquiry. 18 third-year students were enrolled in an Australian university's mandatory hospice care unit and participated in an immersive end-of-life care simulation. Study findings present three main transformative learning dilemmas; 1) care delivery to a dying patient, 2) perceiving death for the first time, and 3) approaching difficult discussions. From the study, practical knowledge gained by nurses through simulation aided in improving end-of-life care and medications. Experiencing the first death during the simulation makes it easy to prepare for the practical nursing settings effectively. Nurses gain sympathy, empathy, and proper communication skills, improving the transition of theory-practice when approaching difficult discussions with dying patients during simulation.

Another research by Newton & Krebs (2020) aimed to provide an example of a recognized theory-practice gap in a chronic care medical-surgical nursing course and explain the process used to teach nursing students and bridge the gap through simulation. The study used a standardized simulation design to offer a framework for establishing operative simulation-based practices. 54 students in a nursing course were actively involved in the simulation project for

improving care for patients with disability. The aspects of simulation considered in the study are; proper orientation, use of cues, and paperwork. Meeting the simulation standards required; conducting a needs assessment, developing quantifiable objectives, aligning simulation practice with the general goal, planning a simulation case with appropriate context, and maintaining a facilitative style that is participant-centered and driven by purpose, participants' competence, and the expected result. It is determined that integrating simulation in nursing education is an effective strategy for bridging the theory-practice gap in nursing.

A research study by Saifan et al. (2021) aimed to find solutions for bridging the theory-practice gap in nursing education. The study followed a qualitative descriptive design, where 25 Emirati nursing students were sampled and interviewed. The results showed two main themes stood out; 1) the reformation of the nursing education curriculum and 2) the creation of a clinical culture. The study findings reveal that reforming the nursing education curriculum and creating a clinical culture in nursing schools effectively bridge the theory-practice gap. The authors suggested further studies be conducted to demonstrate the outcomes of mixed-method approaches.

Lastly, Vosoughi et al. (2022) aimed to describe an innovative model for creating an integrated and structured relationship among educational and healthcare provider organizations for nursing. The Teacher, Patient, Student, Nurse (TPSN) model was developed to enhance collaboration between nursing schools and nursing healthcare facilities to bridge the theory-practice gap. The study employed a collaborative action research methodology in four phases; problem identification, planning, action, and reflecting. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires and later analyzed through qualitative content analysis. The study findings produced positive results by applying the model

to improve collaboration between healthcare institutions and nursing schools. The TPSN model enhanced collaboration between healthcare providers, faculty members, and nursing students which is expected to bridge the theory-practice gap. However, further research is required to ensure maximum empowerment of nursing students, healthcare providers, and faculty members.

### **Synthesis of Literature**

From the study findings, one main point stood out: using an integrated learning approach in nursing education was an effective way of bridging the gap between theoretical teaching and practical nursing experience in various care settings. Brown (2019) concluded that the essence of simulation technology applied through integrating theoretical knowledge into practice is a pivotal solution to the theory-practice gap. Gillan et al. (2021) also support using simulation for transformative learning, which boosts a nurse's confidence in caring for a dying patient. From the study, practical knowledge gained by nurses through simulation aided in improving end-of-life care and medications. The study also revealed that experiencing the first death from a simulation makes it easier for nurses to prepare for the practical nursing settings effectively. Nurses gain sympathy, empathy, and proper communication skills, improving the transition of theory-practice when approaching difficult discussions with dying patients during simulation.

Another study by Newton & Krebs (2020) determined that integrated learning in nursing education effectively bridges the theory-practice gap in nursing. The study identified that the use of simulation enables nursing students to become competent in caring for patients and families in a diverse healthcare setting by advancing nursing knowledge and skills of clinical reasoning. The study findings by Saifan et al. (2021) additionally show that reforming the nursing education curriculum and creating a clinical learning culture in nursing schools effectively bridge the theory-practice gap. The reformation of the nursing education curriculum is in the sense that

school curriculums need to adopt an integrated simulation approach in nursing schools. Saifan et al. identified the integration of simulation in nursing education as an essential aspect of learning to foster effective transition into practice. In addition to integrated simulation, Vosoughi et al. (2022) recognized the vital role of collaboration between healthcare institutions and nursing schools. The TPSN model, which places the patient at the center of attention, effectively enhances collaboration between healthcare providers, faculty members, and nursing students. Such partnership is consequently expected to bridge the theory-practice gap in nursing.

## **Conclusion**

Caring for patients in palliative care requires sufficient end-of-life education and exposure by nurses (Lai et al., 2018). The theory-practice gap may make this a challenge, especially for new nurses without practical learning experience in caring for dying patients. Thus, Nursing education systems must ensure practical learning experiences for nursing students, which can be achieved through integrated simulation learning. With blended learning through simulation, nursing students will be able to graduate with both the theoretical knowledge and the practical nursing skills required to provide competent care to patients in various care settings effectively.

Citation	Conceptual Framework	Design/Method	Sample/Setting	Major Variables Studied and their Definitions	Measurement	Data Analysis	Findings	Appraisal: Worth to Practice
Brown et al., (2019)	Cognitive constructivism where learners construct understanding and hence knowledge through active involvement and participating in activities	Qualitative phenomenological design  13 graduate nurses with 2 years of less clinical practice were engaged in semi-structured interviews  Aim: To determine the viewpoints of graduate nurses on simulation during prelicensure programs as an intervention for bridging theory-practice gap.	13 graduate nurses with 2 years of less clinical practice were engaged in semi-structured interviews	Exploring the experiences of graduate nurses in the clinical area and their perception of the use of simulation technology in prelicensure programs in addressing and reducing the theory-practice gap.	Examining 13 graduate nurses' opinions of the gap between their knowledge and their clinical expertise and exploring their experiences and perceptions of the value of simulation in prelicensure programs in addressing their deficits	Data collected through semi-structured interviews  Manual coding was used for each interview using the Excel software  Iterative and inductive process analysis that follows Moustaka's modified version of the Stevick-Coalazzi-Keen's method of data analysis	Four themes emerged from the study; the transition period, preparation for practice, merging knowledge into practice, and simulation-based learning  The participants confirmed the essence of simulation technology applied through integration of theoretical knowledge into practice as a solution to theory-practice gap	<u>Strengths</u> - Explores first-hand experiences of participants  <u>Weaknesses</u> - Potential of bias in analysis - Focus was on a single instructional strategy  <u>Ranking</u> Level I Valid yes Reliable yes Applicable yes Overall rank: High

								<u>Strengths</u>
Gillan et al. (2021)	Narrative inquiry described by Clandinin and Connolly (2000) and underpinned by Dewey's (1938) criteria of experience; continuity, interaction and situation	Qualitative research design Narrative inquiry  18 3 <sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate nursing students enrolled into a mandatory palliative care unit.  Aim: To report on undergraduate nursing students transformative learning through end-of-life care simulation.	18 undergraduate nursing students selected from a convenience sample of the 128 invited to participate	Professional and clinical experiences of death and dying among the participants	Simulation experiences with 5 unfolding simulation stations, with students rotating through the roles of RN's, family members or observers.	Data collected through semi-structured interviews  Data analysis was done using Clandinin and Connally's three dimensions of narrative inquiry	Transformative learning took place through three disorientating dilemmas of: (1) Caring for a patient in palliative care; (2) Approaching difficult conversations; and (3) Witnessing death for the first time.  Knowledge of palliative care and clinical skills were also found to be transferred to clinical practice.	- Explores the first-hand experiences of participants  <u>Weaknesses</u> - The need for a broad understanding of the topic and subject's life experiences  <u>Ranking</u> Level II Valid yes Reliable yes Applicable yes Overall rank: High

Reference	Design	Intervention	Sample	Outcome	Conclusion			<u>Strengths</u>
						Methodology	Findings	
Newton & Krebs (2020)		Active learning approach to provide a basis for educating nursing students in delivering competent care to diverse and vulnerable populations	Standardized simulation design Plus-Delta Debriefing Method was used  Aim: To present an example of a recognized theory-practice gap, caring for the patients with disabilities, in a chronic care nursing course and the process utilized to educate students and bridge the gap through simulation.	54 students in a nursing class participated in the disability simulation project	Simulation- an active learning strategy based on theory, as a practical training style for preparing nursing students for the diverse, changing healthcare environment	Two simultaneous simulation experiences with one preassigned simulation day for all students	Simulations were videotaped and reviewed by the CHSEs for anecdotal observations and to determine recommendations for improvement in future simulations	It was determined that integration of simulation in nursing education is an effective strategy for bridging the theory-practice gap in nursing

Saifan et al. (2021).	Descriptive qualitative research methods to understand phenomena from the perspectives of nurses, to understand issues in their particular socio-cultural-political milieu, and to bridge the theory-practice gap in nursing	Qualitative descriptive design  Aim: To find solutions for bridging the theory-practice gap nursing education within the UAE context	Purposive sampling technique  25 female full-time nursing students at the FCHS were sampled and interviewed	Solutions to close the gap between theory and practice in nursing education through the eyes of nursing students	Interview of 25 nursing students who had attended at least two or more clinical courses	Computerized thematic analysis (NVIVo) was used to analyze data collected through interviews  Thematic analysis was used to deduce developing themes	Four main themes stood out; reformation of nursing education curriculum, creation of a clinical culture, learning by reflection and the instructor's approach  Findings reveal that reformation of nursing education curriculum and creation of a clinical culture in nursing schools is an effective way for bridging the theory-practice gap	<u>Strengths</u> - Cheap and easy to conduct - Applicable findings  <u>Weaknesses</u> - Use of homogenous group - Qualitative design prevents generalization of findings  <u>Ranking</u> Level II Valid yes Reliable yes Applicable yes Overall rank: High
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<b>Vosoughi et al. (2022).</b>	<p>A collaborative action research methodology to determine the role of full-time presence of nursing teacher in the clinical settings, the development of their role to improve the education of students and nurses, and the quality of nursing services</p>	<b>Collaborative action research methodology</b>	<p>The internal department of the Educational and Medical Center of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences</p>	<p>A comprehensive approach to bridging the theory practice gap in nursing using the TPSN model through three main components; mentoring component, preceptorship component, and integrated clinical education component</p>	<p>The first study cycle was conducted between January 2019 and July 2021 Qualitative data interviews of 40 minutes – 85 minutes</p>	<p>Quantitative data collected through questionnaires Qualitative data collected through interviews, focus groups and observation Data analyzed through qualitative content analysis and managed by MAXQD software version 10 software</p>	<p>TPSN model was established through four phases; problem identification, planning, action, and reflecting The TPSN model enhanced collaboration between healthcare providers, faculty members and nursing students which is expected to bridge the theory practice gap</p>	<b>Strengths</b>
		<p>Aim: To describe an innovative model to create an integration and structured relationship between educational and healthcare provider institution</p>						<p>- Large sample size <b>Weaknesses</b> - Potential of bias in analysis <b>Ranking</b> Level I Valid yes Reliable yes Applicable yes Overall rank: High</p>

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