

Sim-Portant Conversations Podcast: An Approach to Professional Development

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Brief Description

Professional development (PD) had a renewed focus following its inclusion as a new standard with the Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice™ in 2021. Following this change, healthcare simulation centers were tasked with supporting professional development in an innovative way for simulationists in all roles. We created a podcast by and for our simulationists as a cost-effective means of providing professional development to simulationists across four separate locations with diverse roles and backgrounds.

Introduction

Professional Development was established as a new standard with the Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice™ released in 2021 (INACSL Standards Committee, 2021). This change required healthcare simulation centers (HCSCs) to think creatively about how to evaluate and support professional development for simulationists in all roles. Our HCSC is part of a Midwest land grant university in a rural state and exists at four different physical locations across the state. The HCSC was preparing to apply for full Society for Simulation in Healthcare (SSH) accreditation in Teaching/Education when the new Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice™ were issued. We needed to be innovative in meeting the new standard of professional development.

Our project was designed to create high quality professional development that was accessible and palatable for simulationists at all four locations. Prior to the implementation of this project, professional development within our HCSC consisted of webinars shared with the team via email. There were a couple of team members who attended conferences and provided informal presentations regarding key takeaways. Our solution involved utilizing traditional professional development modalities such as journals, brown bag presentations, Nursing Continuing Professional Development (NCPD), and webinars in addition to the innovative approach of creating our own podcast. This paper will discuss the professional development podcast created by our simulation team, for our simulation team, to ensure the learning content was optimally tailored to our specific needs. The podcast was originally intended to share information about the new Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice™, but it has since evolved into a platform where simulationists can create and engage with content aligned with their interests and the needs of our program.

Background

The professional development team, made up of the simulation director and two other simulationists, was tasked with creating a plan which met the professional development standard. An individual needs assessment had been completed in the spring of 2021, and the data was used to inform this project. The needs assessment identified three high priority topics: the role of the healthcare simulation technology specialist, debriefing, and simulation certification. A comprehensive professional development plan was created that would involve NCPD presentations for topics requiring interaction and demonstration. However, the professional development team identified the Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice™ to be a high priority item for the team in order to highlight the changes made in advance of our accreditation visit. After reviewing the literature for ideas and brainstorming solutions, the professional development team decided a podcast would be a novel solution for orienting the HCSC team to the new standards.

Podcasts are used to disseminate information to a wide audience, overcoming barriers of distance. Podcasts have been found to be valuable for helping learners access supplemental information and prepare for exams (Khechine et al., 2013). Utilization of podcasts for professional development draws upon Adult Learning Theory, recognizing that our simulationists are established in their careers. As adult learners, simulationists are assumed to be self-motivated, able to self-identify their learning needs, and seek out information connected to their roles and responsibilities. Podcasts support this self-driven learning by allowing content to be accessed at a convenient time for the learner and replayed as needed (Berk et al., 2020; Gorra & Finlay, 2009; Roy & Roy, 2007).

Several studies examine the use of podcasts for professional development, though few specifically address professional development in healthcare simulation. With medical educators, podcasts were found to be an effective tool for delivering professional development content, resulting in many participants adjusting or altering their education practices (Bernstein et al., 2018). The ability to provide on-demand content and succinct key educational messages contributes to the success of podcasting in professional development among educators (Dowhos et al., 2021).

At the time, most simulation organizations did not have their own podcast, but a literature review revealed they were being utilized in the medical community (Berk et al., 2020). Podcasting was chosen because it allowed the team to overcome barriers associated with synchronous professional development, such as time constraints and distance between sites. Simulationists face additional teaching and service obligations outside of simulation, creating further barriers to attending and staying motivated to engage in simulation-focused professional development material.

Podcast Content

As previously mentioned, a needs assessment identified three high priority topics which informed this project: the role of the healthcare simulation technology specialist, debriefing, and simulation certification. Our own simulationists were enlisted to create the podcast for our HCSC team, further increasing our professional development. Podcast creation leverages constructivist learning theory to support the learning and professional development of the content creators (Berk et al., 2020; Gorra & Finlay, 2009). To construct a meaningful podcast episode, the healthcare simulationists pursued topic experts to record the content.

In addition, the creators grew in their skills and abilities related to planning and creating the content. The podcast creation team needed to plan content that aligned with the needs of the audience while avoiding common podcasting dissatisfiers. Effective podcast content should: 1) avoid topics that require visual demonstration, 2) align with the audience's interests, and 3) not depend on discussion between the learner and presenter (Gorra & Finlay, 2009; Roy & Roy,

2007; Van Patten et al., 2022).

Methods

The podcast was created using software and technologies already accessible and approved by the university. No additional equipment was needed, and thus no cost incurred. The content for each episode was planned using a shared document. The professional development team recorded the content for each episode with videoconferencing technology. Some additional editing software, licensed by the university, was utilized to compile episodes. Podcasts were shared with College of Nursing (CON) faculty and staff, and interprofessional (IP) partners via the university's learning management system (LMS). This ensured closed captioning and enhanced accessibility options were available.

Audience and Dissemination

The podcast was designed for a broad audience of simulationists, spanning diverse roles and varying levels of knowledge and experience. To ensure the content remained accessible to a wider audience, a non-simulation faculty member was recruited as a host. For podcasting to be a suitable professional development tool, the team needed to consider the method used for dissemination to learners. The platform should be easy to use and accessible for individuals with hearing impairment.

Originally, the professional development podcast was created by our simulation team, for our simulation team. The first podcast episode was made available on the university LMS in November of 2021. Following a two-episode series reviewing the Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice™, the professional development team produced additional episodes in early 2022, focusing on the role of the simulation technology specialist and certification. The podcast was received favorably by the HCSC team and continued past the original project date. Since then, episodes have covered other pertinent simulation topics based on the interests of the healthcare simulation team.

Dissemination via the internal LMS provided a better mechanism for tracking professional development involvement within our CON HCSC team. We used records for individual learners and/or our program needs, matching these to our needs assessment each year. In November 2022, our HCSC team achieved Full SSH accreditation in Teaching/Education. LMS tracking was key in demonstrating how our team met the Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice™ Professional Development.

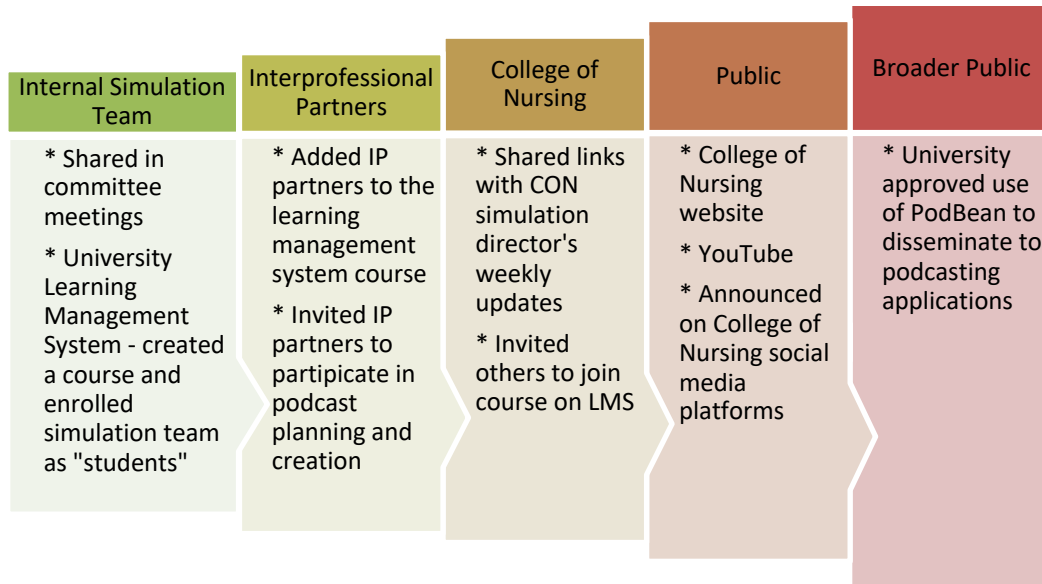
Evolution of the Podcast

As the professional development activity expanded, it shifted to a community focus within the university to include interprofessional groups and community members. In July 2022, after obtaining permission from the university media group, the podcasts were shared with the public on YouTube and the CON website. In the fall of 2022, additional simulationists expressed interest in being a part of the professional development team and assisted in content creation. The team grew to ten members, with several other members of our HCSC making guest appearances on the podcast.

In the summer of 2024, the university media group approved the use of PodBean for podcast dissemination, further expanding the content's reach to major podcast-listening applications. The first episode was shared to podcasting applications via PodBean in July 2024. Dissemination of the podcast on public websites has required new professional development tracking mechanisms; however, the LMS continues to be a valuable tool for alerting simulationists to available opportunities. Figure 1 outlines the evolution of the podcast's dissemination process and audience targets.

Figure 1

Flowchart of Audience and Dissemination Process



Note. LMS: learning management system; IP: interprofessional; CON: College of Nursing.

The expanded reach of the podcast created opportunities for a variety of HCSC team members to share expertise and invite guests related to their expertise. The team created an email for the podcast to solicit ideas for future podcasts, reaching out past our CON. A few episodes created through this feedback format were Episode 5 - Partners in Simulation and Episode 9 - Nursing Student Anxiety in Simulation (Schomberg, 2022; Schomberg, 2023).

The team collaborated with the school of design for a class project where the students created the HCSC podcast logo. This logo is a fun, creative demonstration of the professional development team's creativity and willingness to try something new through collaboration (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Podcast Logo Created by SDSU School of Design Team



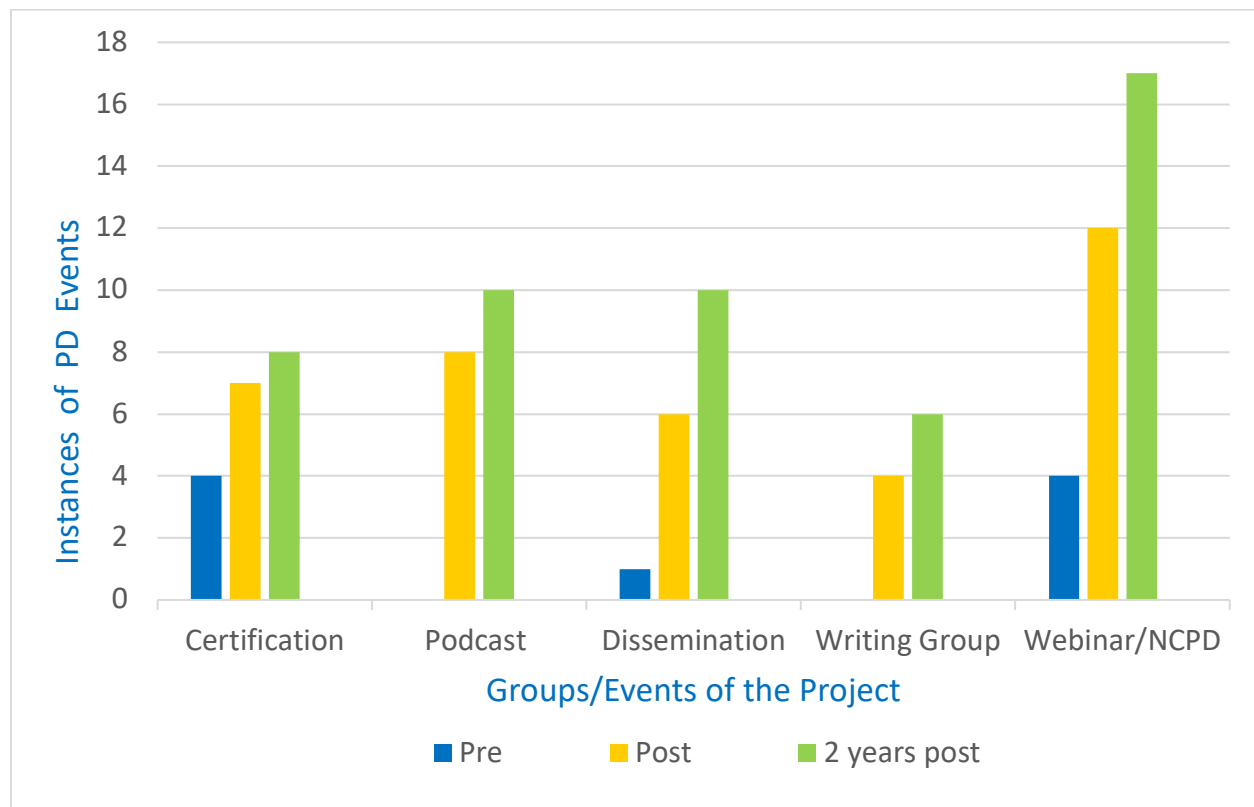
Results

Out of forty-four simulationists participating in professional development from November 2021 through November 2023, 73% (n= 32) were undergraduate nursing faculty, 11% (n=5) were graduate nursing faculty, 5% (n=2) interprofessional healthcare faculty, and 11% (n=5) were simulation staff or operation specialists. Ninety-three percent (n=41) of participants self-identified as females and 7% (n=3) as males. Eighteen percent (n=8) of participants hold certifications as a Certified Healthcare Simulation Educator (CHSE) or Certified Healthcare Simulation Operations Specialists (CHSOS).

Figure 3 shows data related to growth in professional development events from November 2021 through November 2023. The figure demonstrates the tremendous growth in podcast development, strategic simulation professional development opportunities, and the overall increase in certified faculty and staff within the CON HCSC.

Figure 3

Professional development growth from November 2021 through November 2023



Note. Professional development events from November 2021 through November 2023. This data was collected before project implementation (Pre), 1 year post project implementation (Post), and 2 years post project implementation (2 years post). *PD:* professional development; *NCPD:* Nursing Continuing Professional Development.

Implementation

For programs considering this approach, the authors have outlined some benefits and key considerations identified throughout the planning and implementation phases. Our team noted podcasts as being cost-effective, available on demand, and adaptable to the wants and

needs of the team utilizing it. Podcast creation benefits the hosts as well as the listeners. For example, time committed to podcast development elements may count as time towards professional development, service, scholarship of teaching and learning, and meeting standards for certification and/or re-certification.

For a smaller team, further discussion may be needed to define necessary roles such as creation, editing, and dissemination of podcast content. Depending on available resources, programs may consider keeping the content internal rather than disseminating to the public. An additional consideration is the amount of time and effort that goes into podcast creation. A rough estimate of various elements and time of podcast development can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Podcast Development Breakdown

<u>Elements</u>	<u>Time</u>
Commitment of guests/speakers	2 hours/episode
Podcast “directing” (planning, scripting, coordinating, etc.)	2-4 hours/episode
Editing	1-2 hours/episode
Development of online platform (PodBean)	2-3 hours (one time)
Dissemination/website maintenance (posting of content)	15 minutes/episode

Podcast development can be successfully executed by small or larger teams with various disciplines and/or stakeholders involved. For programs that do not currently have access to software or an LMS system through their institution, the authors would recommend utilizing platforms such as GoogleDrive, OneDrive, Microsoft Stream, Google Classroom, and Moodle. Our HCSC podcast speakers have been internal to the University by either direct involvement or a connection to the College of Nursing. Programs with a different team composition may be able to recruit a broader range of speakers. Examples of former speakers include College of Nursing faculty, interprofessional faculty/staff, students, and simulationists. As of now, these speakers have received no monetary compensation.

Discussion

The simulation professional development team used current university resources, making this innovative project a cost-effective and creative response to program needs. We did have restrictions at the university level related to publishing our podcasts; therefore, we were limited to YouTube publications originally. The professional development team found within our university and in the current literature there were limited guidelines for development of podcasting for professional development. The ability to measure impact of this project was limited to the metrics collected via the internal LMS and the scholarly activity by simulationists such as presentations and certifications. The available measures demonstrated the podcast, as part of our professional development initiative, has been acceptable to the simulationists and resulted in an increase of scholarly activity. In the spring of 2024, university-level approval was received for use of PodBean for dissemination and the podcast expanded to ten available episodes with several more in production (South Dakota State College of Nursing, 2023-present). This growth will allow the podcast to reach a wider listening audience. The expansion beyond the LMS created new challenges for data collection regarding professional development but also presented an opportunity to develop a system for more detailed data. The professional development team created a tracking form for HCSC team members to log engagement in professional development activities as well as the knowledge gained from those activities.

The team used creative and engaging ideas to adapt to the needs assessment and

current Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice™: Professional Development. As the team evolved, we included other colleges within the interprofessional healthcare realm such as the school of pharmacy and allied health partners, engineering collaborative projects, and the school of graphic design. The interprofessional initiatives and development of a more structured tracking system for professional development activities has led to a creative, engaging, accessible, and high-quality professional development plan for simulationists and healthcare partners at all four campus locations.

Limitations

Limitations of this project include the lack of learning outcome measurements to quantify knowledge gained through the podcast and other professional development endeavors. Although the podcast has moved beyond dissemination using the internal LMS, we are still limited to LMS metrics for measuring the effectiveness of this project in meeting learning needs. Although the newly implemented professional development form allows team members to submit requested professional development activities, this data does not represent the expanded audience of the podcast, such as the demographic data from listeners or listener impressions. Adherence to university policies and procedures limited where we could publish the podcast. Initially, the ability to produce episodes was limited by the small size of the professional development team, which restricted time and personnel available to learn the topics and create the episodes. Interest in the podcast allowed the production team to grow and produce more diverse episodes more efficiently.

Conclusion

In conclusion, podcast creation proved to be an engaging, cost-effective method to meet the HCSC's professional development needs. The podcast project gave our team new opportunities for innovation and creativity. It also provided a more accessible professional development format for faculty and staff within the simulation center and CON. As the podcast evolved, there were opportunities to engage interprofessional and clinical partners as well as develop new partnerships. The project resulted in increased professional development opportunities as well as a more structured professional development tracking system for our HCSC. The small professional development taskforce grew to an interprofessional team. The team continues to create innovative ways to provide professional development content and support healthcare simulation within our HCSC as well as the larger healthcare simulation community.

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