

TRANSFORMING NURSE EDUCATION



Full project name: Transforming Enrolled Nurse Education – From Conventional Learning to Situated Learning

Lead organisation: RMIT University

Collaborators: Northern Health

- Students do a minimum of 500 hours clinical experience, instead of the usual 400
- They are awarded “micro credentials” to recognise additional non-diploma accredited modules
- The project employs the 70:20:10 learning concept, which holds that students gain 70 per cent of their knowledge from job-related experiences
- Augmented reality is used to create true-to-life training scenarios.

LEARNING BY DOING – THE INNOVATION

This project shifts Diploma of Nursing students from the classroom to learning on the job. They are based at a health care service – in this case Northern Health – instead of at a university, TAFE or RTO. Several studies highlight a shortfall in the knowledge and skills of enrolled nursing graduates, and this project aims to change that by giving students hours of access to the know-how of experienced nurses. The partners hope this project will also lower the high attrition rate of enrolled nurses in their first year of employment.

PRACTICE OVER THEORY – A REVAMPED APPROACH

The move to situated learning is not the only fresh aspect of the course. Other innovative features of the new-look diploma include:

JOBS FOR ALL – THE OUTCOMES

The inaugural course finished in May and produced a stunning result: Northern Health offered jobs to all 17 graduates. It says these students are more job-ready than those from traditional courses, because they are already embedded in the organisation’s culture and processes. For RMIT, there is a higher conversion rate of students going on to apply for the Bachelor of Nursing, with all of those planning to combine work and study.

'IT'S THE CLOSEST WE'LL GET TO THE OLD HOSPITAL-BASED TRAINING MODEL'

Student case study: Sheree Costa



I was studying my diploma with a private RTO under a blended learning model that was mostly online. I wasn't happy with how the course was being delivered so I sought other options, which led me to RMIT.

Resilience was a big focus of our course and I learnt how to adapt and change depending on the circumstances. The extended placement rotations gave me time to find my feet, and then take advantage of all learning opportunities that were available. No two days as a nurse are the same, so all the skills I learnt are integral to my practice.

I would absolutely encourage others to do this course. In my opinion, most people learn more from practical experiences than they do from a book. So while the additional placement hours may seem inconvenient, it's the closest we'll get to the old hospital-based training model. This course will assist students to become confident, knowledgeable and employable nurses.

Since graduating, I decided to apply for my Bachelor of Nursing and received an offer in June to study with RMIT. I also received my letter of offer from Northern Health. I've accepted both offers.

LESSONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *"The industry training nursing model has superior features to existing models," says Debbie Reynolds, director of industry initiatives and engagement at RMIT. "These features include the clear relationship between theory and practice, which is consistently reinforced. A second clear advantage is the access to the skill and experience of the nursing and health care supervisors. Finally, the clinical placement structure is a clear strength of this program."*
- The pilot offered both project partners valuable insight into how they can improve the way they work together. *"As the pilot progressed, it became evident that slight improvements in the processes and procedures in this collaboration need to be implemented,"* Ms Reynolds says.
- The project has the potential to be replicated in other healthcare services for the delivery of the Diploma of Nursing, both in the Melbourne metropolitan area and in areas identified for regional development in Victoria.
- RMIT could also explore the option of licensing the learning resources to interested parties. *"From (our) perspective, it represents value for money as it increases enrolments while reducing the physical footprint on RMIT resources,"* Ms Reynolds says.

Founded in 2017, the Workforce Training Innovation Fund (WTIF) is a targeted *Skills First* funding stream. WTIF creates opportunities for partnerships between industry and the TAFE and training system and encourages them to explore bold, innovative approaches that challenge existing practices in skills development and training methods.

Ultimately, these new ideas and solutions aim to enhance workplace productivity, particularly in Victorian Government priority sectors. More than \$90 million of funding has been committed to date.

The next round of WTIF funding is now open for applications.

To find out more visit www.education.vic.gov.au/training/providers/funding/Pages/wtif.aspx or email the WTIF team at wtif@edumail.vic.gov.au