BIO: Chassity Washburn MSN, RN, CNE is the Associate Degree Nursing Program Director at Stanly Community College in the piedmont region of North Carolina. She has been in nursing education since 1999, first in the LPN education arena, then continuing education, and finally landing in the associate degree program full-time in 2004. She has been the ADN Program Director since 2013. Her bedside practice includes medical/surgical, ICU, and ER experiences. She is a Certified Nurse Educator through the National League of Nursing since 2013. She has demonstrated leadership abilities as a mentor for future nursing faculty, worked with a doctoral student and other allied health programs in developing inter-professional educational experiences, and other innovations in nursing education, such as virtual simulated experiences. Most recently she has worked on accreditation, as Stanly Community College is pre-accredited with the Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation. She has been a member of NCLN since 2018, and currently sits on the Board of Directors and is an active member of the membership committee.

**An Approach to Infusing Virtual Care Clinical Into Nursing Curricula**

***BACKGROUND***

Have you ever called a customer service number only to end the call in disgust, wishing to speak with a live person? People generally want to talk directly with someone while having a pressing issue, even in the digital age we live in today. Healthcare is no different. People seek medical services to satisfy their healthcare needs quickly. Promotion of telehealth has made this a reality in healthcare over the last few years, as healthcare systems advertise applications on highway billboards to find ED wait times, virtual visits for the flu, etc. The following depicts how a pre-licensure program infused telehealth into their curriculum in order to train future nurses.

***RESEARCH & PLAN***

Nursing faculty at a NC community college positioned just outside of the Charlotte area recognized the trend of telemedicine as a need in nursing education. Research on the topic, virtual care in nursing education, was limited to computerized virtual simulation using avatars. The inability to perform a literature review perpetuated the need for virtual nursing care to be investigated. Numerous meetings were held. Initially these meetings in were between nursing faculty and staff from an area virtual critical care (VCC) center, followed by nursing faculty with college stakeholders (administration, technology staff), and finally meetings with the primary decision makers for the project from both sites (virtual care and the college). The support from all entities was overwhelmingly positive and remains constant today. Participant buy-in was crucial for this project, as well as a timeline for all parties to follow. The relationship with the virtual care site became invaluable as a plan to pursue this effort was created.

***OBJECTIVE***

The overall focus in planning centered around the primary objective: to educate future nurses through the use of telehealth. A student learning outcome was that by the end of the experience nursing students will recognize virtual care’s positive influence on patient outcomes. It is worth noting that an undocumented barrier was discovered by virtual care staff and nursing faculty which involved seasoned nurses viewing virtual care as intrusive and “big brother” like. Therefore, it became our desire through this project that educating future nurses using this technology would supersede this barrier. Nurses entering the workforce having the education are more likely to use the technology as a positive resource within their practice.

***IMPLEMENTATION***

Atrium Health’s Virtual Critical Care (VCC), or tele-ICU, provides care to critically ill adult patients through real-time, two-way, audio and high-definition video communication. VCC is located in Mint Hill, NC where nurses practice around the clock, in an office environment monitoring 330 beds across the state. VCC was used as a clinical site for senior-level nursing students two semesters prior to graduation. Clinical learning objectives addressed recognizing the role of VCC nurses through observation and teaching from the nurses at the computer side of care. In the capstone course just prior to graduation, students participated in the simulation hospital of the college utilizing telehealth technology. Students were required to give rounding reports to the primary care provider virtually using Zoom technology to dial into the primary care provider, which happened to be a nursing faculty member. Clinical learning objectives of this exercise were related to reporting and communication with interdisciplinary team members while applying knowledge of telehealth. Anecdotal student feedback was affirmative to planned objectives. Future plans for this project involve the students using an “easy button” located on the wall of each simulation hospital bed to virtually remote into the VCC site. Grant funding is being sought for this endeavor.

***FUTURE IMPLICATIONS***

Further implications of using virtual care in nursing education mandates research on the topic. Specifically, research to identify effectiveness of the teaching methodology with respect to student outcomes. Other avenues necessary to research include, but are not limited to: the impact on digital native faculty versus digital immigrant faculty using this teaching methodology; relating the methodology to quality and safety standards (i.e QSEN); how/if this methodology propels interprofessional education.

***CONCLUSION***

The given depiction is only a starting point for nursing education programs to infuse technology, such as remote nursing care, into all types of nursing curricula from pre-licensure to advanced practice. Nursing education needs to remain up-to-date, which is difficult in this dynamic profession. However, nursing faculty are generally known to rise to the challenge. After all, simulation, adaptive computerized testing, electronic health records were all once just a thought that are now mainstream in nursing education.