



Better Together: A Model for Standardization of Clinical Assessment Tools in Respiratory Therapy Education

Presenters: Yvonne Drasovean, RRT, BSc, MEd, FCSRT; Connie Syvier, RRT, FCSRT, MASc; Felita Kwan, Ba, RRT, MA; Sandra Walsh BSc, RRT; Candace Murray Norton, RRT; Jennifer Barton RRT

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Session Abstract

The publication of the National Competency Framework in 2016 prompted curriculum revision within Respiratory Therapy Programs across the country. In August 2017, the Respiratory Therapy Programs from Algonquin College, Canadore College, Conestoga College, Fanshawe College, Michener Institute of Education at UHN, and St. Clair College and formed a working group with the goal of creating assessment tools that evaluated clinical respiratory therapy students in Ontario in the same manner and to the same standards. The group created clinical assessment tools and rating scales that aligned with the NCF 2016 expectations for knowledge, skills and attitudes. Two subgroups worked respectively on developing a clinical logbook with assessment rubrics for competencies as well as daily, midterm and final performance assessment.

Overcoming challenges such as individual professional and personal schedules, geographical location, differences in clinical program delivery and evaluation platforms between programs, the group met via online platforms and completed the project priorities to meet national implementation deadlines.

The new standardized assessment tools, including a new clinical logbook, was successfully launched in May, 2019. A follow up survey will be distributed to clinical partners closer to the one-year mark of the introduction of the new standard tools to evaluate clarity, user-friendliness and adherence.

We hope the results of this project will be helpful to other programs in the country when revising clinical student assessments amid changing professional standards. It is our belief that sharing our experience is an example of how provincial collaboration leads to improved educational experiences for students and clinical partners. We feel confident that this project will be a model for collaboration between health education programs at both the provincial and national level.

Session Objectives

1. To discuss the benefits of standardizing clinical competency evaluation tools in a regulated profession
2. To share the steps involved in creating standardized assessment tools for clinical Respiratory Therapy Students
3. To discuss the challenges of implementing standardized assessment tools for clinical Respiratory Therapy Students
4. To discuss differences in the implementation and use of standardized assessment tools by the various Ontario RT programs, taking into consideration the impact of standardization on program autonomy.

Speaker Biographies

Yvonne Drasovean graduated from University of Western Ontario with a BSc in Biology in 2000 followed by an Advanced Diploma in Respiratory Therapy in 2003 and a M.Ed in Adult Education from Yorkville University in 2016. She is currently a full time professor at Fanshawe College, London, Ontario, since 2013 and casual bedside RRT at London Health Sciences Center.

Connie Syvier is a Fanshawe grad (1989), has been a front-line RRT for 22 years, including Clinical Practice Manager for 4 years. Connie left the hospital to start the program at St. Clair.

Felita Kwan graduated from the Michener Institute of Education at UHN (formerly the Toronto Institute of Medical Technology) with a diploma in Respiratory Therapy in 1990. She received a BA in Psychology in 1997 from the University of Western Ontario followed by a MA in Adult Education from Central Michigan University in 2001. Felita has been a full time professor and the Clinical Liaison Officer at the Michener Institute of Education UHN in Toronto, Ontario since 2001.

Sandra Walsh graduated from the University of Guelph with a BSc in Biology in 1992 followed by a diploma in Respiratory Therapy from Michener Institute (UHN) in 1996. Sandra has been a full time professor at Canadore College, North Bay, Ontario since 2007 and Coordinator of the Respiratory Therapy Program since 2015.

Candace Murray Norton graduated from the Algonquin College Respiratory Therapy program in 2012 with an Advanced Diploma in Respiratory Therapy. She is currently working towards her Certified Respiratory Educators certificate. Candace began her career at The Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and then transitioned into Pulmonary Diagnostics and Respiratory Education. She has been a part-time faculty member, since 2015, as well as clinical and program coordinator in the Algonquin College Respiratory Therapy program, since 2017.

Jennifer Barton is the Clinical Competency Attainment Specialist for the Respiratory Therapy Program at Conestoga College in Kitchener, Ontario. In 1997, she completed her undergraduate degree in Kinesiology at Wilfrid Laurier University and continued on to graduate from the Respiratory Therapy Program at Fanshawe College in 1999 (last of the two-year program!) Since then, Jennifer has served as a staff therapist at both the Brantford General Hospital and the Hamilton General Hospital. The majority of her career has been spent at the Hamilton General Hospital where she held roles in leadership, education and Hyperbaric Therapy before moving into a full time position at Conestoga College in 2015.