How To Guides

The 3D's of Simulation – Design, Deliver, Debrief

No: 1 – Designing a Simulation Based Learning (SBL) Scenario

Planning the SBL Scenario

Before running your SBL session you need to consider the following in your design.

Who are you teaching?
- What is the clinical background of your team participants/learners?
- What sort of environment do they normally work in?
- Do they normally work together?
- What is their level of expertise?

What are you trying to teach?
- All teaching sessions should be planned around intended learning objectives/outcomes (ILOs) for your learners.
- ILOs should be aligned to an appropriate curriculum or KSF for the learner group and their assessment or feedback.
- ILOs should reflect the needs of your learner group.
- Whether knowledge, skills, drills or performance is being learnt you can chunk your ILOs around several SBL scenarios.
- The SBL scenario design should be relevant to the working environment of your learners.
- All SBL scenarios should be designed to ensure that learning objectives are met.

How are you trying to teach?
- How to maximise effectiveness of the SBL scenario for all learners.
- What simulators are required to achieve the ILOs.
- Simulated patients will require scripts and training.
- The number of tutors will depend on the expertise of the learners and the ILOs.
- It is useful to identify the underlying educational theory that will underpin your SBL session.

Tips on planning an SBL Session

1. Start your planning with your intended learning objectives/outcomes (ILOs) not with a clinical scenario.

2. The same scenario may be used to achieve different endpoints depending on the learning objectives.

3. The number of scenarios you use and the number of times you use them in the same session will be dependent on the number of learners, the time available and ILOs.

4. Repetition of learning objectives between scenarios may be a useful way to reinforce key messages, e.g. demonstrating a systematic approach in the assessment of the critically unwell patient may be an important educational objective for each scenario.

5. Learning objectives may address knowledge, technical or non-technical skills or performance.

6. Depending on the time available limit the number of learning outcomes to 3-4.

7. Ascertain what simulator modality would be best to achieve the ILOs.

8. Use a scenario build template to develop the scenario.

9. Develop ground rules for your learners to ensure they feel safe.

10. If using video, organise consent forms.

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No: 2 – Delivering the Simulation Based Learning (SBL) Scenario

Preparation for SBL Scenario - What do I need to prepare?

Prepare the participants for engaging in a learning environment
- Clarify the intended learning objectives/outcomes (ILOs) with learners.
- Check SBL environment.
- Brief learners on roles and expectations.

Establish a "fiction contract" with the participants
- This is a joint agreement between the facilitator and the participant.
- The instructor acknowledges that the simulation cannot be exactly like "real life" but agrees to make it as real as possible.

Simulator orientation
- Explain limitations of simulator modality – what can and cannot do.
- Allow learners time to familiarise themselves with the simulator.

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Tips on Delivering an SBL session

1. Create a safe environment by identifying learner's previous experience of simulation. Share SBL scenario to identify performance gap and develop ground rules for SBL with learners. Set clear instructions on when activity will stop or can be stopped.

2. Ensure paperwork and any documents needed for the simulation are ready. A simple set of notes and related clinical documentation adds to the realism. Trying to make up information or results on the spot can lead to breaks in the scenario and pressure on the facilitator.

3. SBL scenarios flow better and participants engage more when they are clear on the ILOs (intended learning objectives/outcomes).

4. Clarify roles of learners in SBL scenario at the beginning as well as your role as facilitator.

5. Attend to logistics in terms of consumables and use of different simulation modalities. This avoids failing to meet participant's individual needs/challenges.

6. Orientation to the simulator is best done in a systematic way working from head to toe through ABCDE approach. This may also be a useful way to reinforce an approach you expect participants to demonstrate during scenarios.

7. Develop a time line for the brief immersion in SBL activity and debrief and inform participants.

8. Think of strategies to enhance participant's engagement - "as if" it were real.

9. If more than one learner is involved in the session allocate responsibilities as well as roles.

10. Create a FAQ sheet about each of the simulation modalities to help learners familiarise themselves with the different simulators.

11. Be precise in briefing.

12. Set clear instructions on when activity will stop or can be stopped.

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No: 3 – Debriefing the Simulation Based Learning (SBL) Scenario

What is the debrief in an SBL scenario?
Each SBL scenario consists of a brief, an immersion in the activity and then a debrief. The debrief is arguably the most important aspect in terms of learning and transfer into practice.

What is the role of the debriefer?
The debriefer's role is to facilitate learners to reflect on their performance in the SBL scenario, helping the learners debrief themselves.

What are the stages of the debrief?
 The Reaction Phase
- Encourage participants to express their reactions.
- Relate reaction to the goals, intended learning objectives/outcomes (ILOs) and significant events.
- As the candidates begin to discuss the events encourage them to continually analyse the events in depth as well as their feelings, thoughts and reactions to them.
- Recognise and facilitate release of emotions that can build up during simulation.

The Analysis Phase
- Allow participants to make sense of simulation events.
- Facilitate conversation toward accomplishing course objectives.
- If available, use 2-3 clips of video playback to cover the ILOs.
- Signpost clearly - "I'm going to show you a short clip of the video now and I want you to watch and look at or think about …."
- Explore their thinking and reasoning behind the observed behaviours of the SBL activity. "I noticed this and wondered what were you thinking there?"
- Link to the "Real World" (clinical practice) while acknowledging the unreality (if appropriate to their behaviour).
- Identify and explore the performance gaps. Often it is useful to help participants understand how their cognitive frames (such as assumptions, beliefs), or feelings contributed to their performance.

The Forward Action Phase
- Link what has been learned in the simulated session to potential occurrences in clinical practice and how to think and act effectively in similar situations.
- Ask what they feel they need to work on (personal development plan).
- In summary, suggest that these are the things you identified, i.e.
   o I saw improvement in these areas.
   o These are the things that you told me you need to work on (personal development plan).

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Tips on Debriefing an SBL Session

1. Debriefing is a critique of performance behaviours not of the person.

2. Adults learn and remember more when they participate actively and make their own analysis. (Duvall & Wicklund, 1972)

3. Learners who have the opportunity to explore and deal with the feelings they experienced during simulation will be better prepared to deal with them in real clinical situations. (Henneman, Cunningham, 2005)

4. Questioning techniques are helpful in encouraging learners to explore their experience without implying judgement or providing information or suggestions.

5. When using video remember your bookmark will be at least 30 seconds after the action you are wanting to focus on so start before this.

6. Let your participants do most of the talking.

7. It is best to debrief shortly after the SBL scenario but this may not always be appropriate.

8. Avoid intervening – silence can be a very effective way to make people talk.

9. In summarising for a way forward in terms of learning, the aim is to assist learner in looking at the overall experience and developing their own plan.

10. Occasionally, it is necessary (because of time constraints) or sufficient (because of course objectives) to focus only on correcting actions rather than helping participants rethink their frames.

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