



**Janice K. Brewer**  
Governor

**Joey Ridenour**  
Executive Director

## *Arizona State Board of Nursing*

4747 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200  
Phoenix, AZ 85732  
Phone (602) 771-7800 Fax (602) 771-7888  
Email: [arizona@azbn.gov](mailto:arizona@azbn.gov)  
[www.azbn.gov](http://www.azbn.gov)

### **NA TRAINING PROGRAMS SUGGESTIONS ON IMPROVING PASS RATES**

Identifying a problem (assessment) is the key to improvement. You cannot change if you have not identified what is working and what is not. Board staff would like to offer the following suggestions for improvement. These suggestions may exceed the requirements. See the Arizona State Board of Nursing website, [www.azbn.gov](http://www.azbn.gov), Nurse Practice Act/ Rules/ Article 8 for the complete rules.

#### **ASSESSMENT:**

A good place to begin assessment is with review of the Annual First-Time Pass Rates for approved Nursing Assistant Training Programs. This is available at [www.azbn.gov](http://www.azbn.gov), Education/ Educational Resources. The annual first-time pass rates are updated each January. They allow you to compare your program to the State average and to other programs.

More detailed information regarding your programs' testing results may be obtained on the D&S Diversified Technologies web site at [www.hdmaster.com](http://www.hdmaster.com). Program coordinators/instructors may obtain the Personal Identification Number (PIN) to access program results by sending request to D & S Diversified Technologies: fax: 1-406-422-3357; address: PO Box 6609, Helena, MT 59604-6609; or email: [hdmaster@hdmaster.com](mailto:hdmaster@hdmaster.com)

The Client reports that are available include the Training Summary, the Written Exam Details, the Skills Exam Details, and the Retake Summary. These provide cumulative program information based on a requested date frame. The Training Summary gives information for each student's test History for all test attempts: date training completed, test date/s, pass/fail for the written test and each skill. The Written Exam Detail report gives the cumulative pass rate for each of the 12 areas covered in the written test. It also gives a cumulative report of the probability of missing a question containing listed vocabulary words. The Skills Detail report gives the cumulative report of the number of students who were tested on each skill and the pass rate for each skill. It also gives a cumulative pass rate for each step of each skill. The Retake Summary gives the number and % who passed on the first attempt, second attempt, and all other attempts for written and skills. You can also access individual test results after 6:00 p.m. the day they are scored at [www.hdmaster.com](http://www.hdmaster.com), AZ, On-Line Test Results. You will need the social security number/test ID, test date, and birth date of the individual whose results you are accessing. Electronic testing results are available the next business day and paper test results are available 2-4 business days after testing.

#### 1. Review and assess the D & S Technologies Client reports:

- If you have multiple instructors, review results by students that had specific instructors to determine if there is a variance.
- If you have multiple sites, review results by site to determine if there is a variance.
- Review the 12 areas of the written test to determine areas of strength and weakness
- Review the vocabulary words to determine which topics cause the most difficulty

- Review the skills tested to determine which have the highest/ lowest pass rates
- Review the skills with the lowest pass rates to assess which steps are most missed
- Review the time allotted for skills, topics, and vocabulary words which have lower pass rates

2. Review the student and instructor evaluations:

- Do you have both students and instructors complete an evaluation?
- Does the evaluation assess the quality of the classroom and clinical experience during the training program?
- Do you ask the student/ instructor what they would change to make the program better?
- Is the evaluation process anonymous?
- Who reviews the results of the evaluation: Dean of Nursing, Program Coordinator, school Administration office, Quality Assurance committee?
- Do you take action if there were areas of concern or suggestions for improvement?
- Do you document the assessment and actions taken?

3. Compare the student roster of who has completed the course and who has tested.

- If there is a difference between those numbers, assess what are the factors involved
  - What is the availability of testing site/ testing dates?
  - Can the student afford to pay for the D&S testing? Some students receive aid for the price of the course, but may not get the aid for the cost of the test.
  - Is there a delay from the resource that pays for the testing e.g? Corporate office, aid source?

4. Review the student population:

- What is the reading and math skills level for the students? Does your textbook match up to the student reading level? The D&S Technologies test requires about an 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading and Math proficiency.
- Is English the student's second language? Can the student read English at the level of the textbook/ tests? Can the student communicate verbally and written in English?
- Are the students working part-time/ full-time while taking the class?
- Do the students have schedule conflicts, e.g. parenting, childcare, transportation, extracurricular activities?
- Do the students have the motivation to handle the study and clinical demands of becoming a nursing assistant?
- Do the students have the maturity to handle the study and clinical demands of becoming a nursing assistant?
- Do the students have the physical ability to perform nursing assistant tasks?

5. Review the instructors:

- Do you have a high turnover in instructors?
- Do you piecemeal to fill the class and clinical schedule with multiple instructors?
- Do the instructors receive an orientation to the NA training program and role of the instructor?
- Is the instructor experienced in classroom and clinical teaching?
- Do inexperienced teachers take a class in how to teach in the classroom and clinical setting?
- Are the instructors consistent in the material they teach?
- Have the instructors attended D&S Technologies Instructor training?
- Do the instructors attend the annual Board of Nursing Educator retreat?
- Do you regularly evaluate the performance of the classroom and clinical instructors?

6. Review the classroom and laboratory skills training areas:
- Is the classroom/ lab clean, well ventilated, uncrowded, distraction free?
  - Is all required equipment available and in good working condition?
  - Do you have multiple beds/ skill work stations so that all students are actively engaged during lab practice time?

## **PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

### **WRITTEN:**

1. Long classroom sessions
  - break up the classroom time with concurrent skill practice
  - do not have didactic over 4 hours per day.
2. Not utilizing the Candidate Handbook Vocabulary list
  - teach definitions for each word
  - focus on words that have high rate of being missed on written exam
3. English is a second language
  - have student take English as a second language course prior to starting NA training
  - have the student prepare the vocabulary list in English with a translation to their primary language. If this list is only the direct translation, e.g. house = casa, not the definition, the list can be taken into the State written test.
4. Cultural differences of students
  - sensitivity to cultural needs and difference in learning style
5. Low reading and/or math skills
  - provide tutorial in reading and math skills prior to starting training
  - provide textbook at student reading level
  - request oral English exam for State test
6. Students have low motivation
  - interview students prior to entrance to determine if they have motivation and maturity to complete this program
7. High turnover of instructors
  - determine if did due diligence at time of hire to ensure instructor qualifications, experience, teaching ability
  - determine if the schedule and salary of position are compatible with the applicant
8. Inexperienced instructors
  - have instructor take course in methods of teaching classroom and clinical training
  - have instructor attend D&S Technologies Instructor Training
  - provide adequate orientation
  - provide teaching tools and resources

9. Inconsistent teaching by instructors
  - provide lesson plans for each didactic class that are used by all instructors
  - provide opportunities for communication between instructors
  - regular faculty meetings to update staff on new developments
  - develop policies and procedures for conducting classroom and clinical training
10. Written exams are of lower difficulty than the State written exam
  - expose students to large number of multiple choice type questions
  - use textbook instructor handbook for test questions to write initial and make-up exams that have valid, reliable questions
  - purchase practice exams at the D&S website, [www.hdmaster.com](http://www.hdmaster.com) for use as teaching tool or for students to practice test taking.

### **SKILLS:**

11. Inconsistent teaching by instructors
  - use Candidate Handbook and mock skills step by step testing forms when teaching skills
  - have all instructors attend the D&S Instructor Training
12. The clinical training sight did not have the opportunity to perform required skills
  - need blocks of clinical time, preferably 8 hour
  - vary the clinical training schedule to include day, evening and weekend time
  - ensure that students perform direct care and not just watch instructor or staff do tasks
  - make frequent rounds to supervise students and observe what care needs are available for students to practice skills
  - change training site to facility with broader scope of care needs
13. Students learned “shortcuts” from the facility staff they were partnered with and no longer provided care based on classroom learning
  - educate staff to requirement for students to perform tasks as they learned in class.
  - give guidelines to staff for role of partner/ preceptor
  - take test soon after completion of course; longer exposure to staff “shortcuts” confuses student
14. The program has insufficient lab practice time or does not utilize the lab practice time well
  - intersperse skills practice with didactic learning
  - have multiple beds/ skills stations so that all students are actively engaged
  - have one bed per 3-5 students
  - have student perform the task, not just “pretend”, e.g. pull privacy curtain
  - emphasize indirect care at every skill practice and clinical session, including comfort, safety, infection control, and resident rights
  - have lab assistant who sets up room/ skills stations, checks progress in completion of lab competencies, and other non-teaching tasks

15. Not utilizing the Candidate Handbook

- give current Handbook to each student at the start of class
- handbooks are revised annually(April) and are available for free from D&S Technologies
- Candidate handbook can be printed at D&S Technologies website
- have students create study cards for each skill
- have students verbalize each step as written in the handbook as they are performing skill
- have students work in groups of three, changing roles of actor, student, and observer

16. Instructors are not stringent in assessing skill competency

- Maintain documentation on the skills checklist of practice in the lab, competency in the lab, practice in the clinical, and competency in the lab. All items should be checked off as competent in the lab. If you have a limited number of practice and competencies checked for clinical this is an indication that your clinical site is not providing adequate opportunities.
- do not rely on facility preceptors to verify competency in skills in clinical
- be precise when assessing skill competency – test observers will be
- give a skills test final exam in addition to the final theoretical exam

17. Delays in taking the certification test

- assist students to complete the test application to D&S Technologies and submit application for them
- schedule test to be given at training site as soon as possible after the end of class
- if test cost is paid by outside source request payment at start of class

18. Concerns related to the D&S test observers

- email concerns to D&S Technologies at [hdmastereast@hdmaster.com](mailto:hdmastereast@hdmaster.com) and [lvancuyk@azbn.gov](mailto:lvancuyk@azbn.gov)

19. Steps in Candidate Handbook skills do not match what is taught in class

- remember that the testing steps are not necessarily all inclusive of all aspects of “best practice” and not meant to be all inclusive for any given skill
- each Skill test is designed to test specific aspects of basic NA skills; a student will not be counted wrong if they do more, but they will be counted wrong if they miss any step

If the Board can be of further assistance to you in helping your students, please contact Pamela Randolph, RN, MS, Associate Director of Education & Evidence Based Regulation at 602-771-7803 or [prandolph@azbn.gov](mailto:prandolph@azbn.gov); or Lila Van Cuyk RN, BSN, Education Consultant at 602-771-7857 or [lvancuyk@azbn.gov](mailto:lvancuyk@azbn.gov).