

Clinical eLearning

Applying clinical eLearning to build a stronger global workforce

From knowledge to mastery: Driving education and building clinical confidence worldwide for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals.



ELSEVIER

Advancing human progress together

Foreword

Nurses, midwives and allied health professionals (NMAHPs) stand at the forefront of healthcare transformation, yet the formidable pace of innovation can make maintaining clinical excellence a challenge. As global pressures on the nursing profession continue to mount, the need for accessible, evidence-based learning has never been greater. Flexible educational models that foster leadership, resilience and practical mastery are essential to empower healthcare professionals to deliver safe, high-quality care in an evolving healthcare landscape.

Introduction

Nursing has always been a demanding profession, with ever increasing expectations on the role of NMAHPs in care delivery. It's a vocation that requires resilience, lifelong learning and a deep sense of purpose. Providing care across diverse settings, from the emergency room to palliative care, to homes and community-based clinics remains one of the most challenging yet deeply rewarding professions out there. Over the past decades, however, this dedication has been the only constant. A nurse trained 40 years ago would barely recognize today's digitally integrated, highly complex clinical environment. As technology reshapes care and clinical practices grow ever more intricate, the need for effective, adaptable educational resources has never been more urgent.

Yet this need is starkly contrasted by global workforce shortages that stretch capacity to its limits across all care settings, whether in hospital wards, primary care practices or long-term care facilities. NMAHPs have less time for professional development, and rigid schedules often make attending additional courses or conferences impractical and, at times, impossible. The result is a widening gap between the pace of innovation and the ability of those on the frontline of care delivery to keep their skills current.

“We’ve pushed our thinking to find what’s possible, where our education needs to go for now and the future, and how to keep it relevant, clear and flexible.”

Tim Morris

Vice President of Global
Nursing Solutions at Elsevier

This report brings together actionable strategies and expert perspectives to strengthen education and leadership development in healthcare delivery. Drawing on insights from global thought leaders and real-world examples, it explores how evidence-based eLearning, blended approaches and contextual adaptation can empower NMAHPs to deliver exceptional care, everywhere.

Clinical mastery beyond knowledge

NMAHPs need more than theoretical knowledge to excel in their roles; they need to master the ability to make confident, patient-centered decisions, often under considerable pressure. Achieving that level of clinical mastery calls for something beyond traditional or one-size-fits-all education: an approach that is adaptable, interactive and tailored to real-world challenges.

eLearning platforms deliver evidence-based, high-quality relevant content that meets NMAHPs where they are today. These platforms go beyond static information by integrating competency frameworks and structured certification pathways, ensuring that learning translates into measurable skills. By aligning educational content with recognized standards, digital learning reinforces clinical judgment, promotes accountability and empowers those delivering care the ability to apply new practices confidently at the bedside.

Excelling in clinical practice is the foundation for leadership growth. As NMAHPs develop expertise, many step into leadership roles that shape the next generation of professionals. One of the most common first steps into leadership is taking on the role of a preceptor, guiding and supporting new nurses and midwives, as they transition into practice. Learning the skills to become a preceptor benefits both the preceptors themselves, who gain confidence and clarity in their role, and the nurses they mentor. Preceptorship is the cornerstone of compassionate leadership, and it plays a critical role in helping new nurses and midwives transition successfully into practice and encouraging long-term commitment to the profession.

Clinical eLearning as a game-changer

Clinical eLearning is transforming the way NMAHPs learn by offering flexible, multimodal, digital modules that enable continuous learning without the restrictions of time or place. The term multimodal refers to an educational approach that combines multiple formats, such as interactive eLearning modules, short videos, gamified activities and simulation-based practice, designed to engage diverse learning styles and reinforce clinical decision-making through both digital and hands-on experiences. This approach empowers nurses, midwives and allied health professionals everywhere to participate in professional development and leadership programs, fostering a more connected and resilient global nursing community.

A more adaptable model of education reflects the neurodiversity and cultural diversity within the healthcare delivery workforce. For example, nurses preparing to transition between health systems can access tailored content that can complement their onboarding program and bridge practice gaps. A nurse relocating from India to Australia might use eLearning modules to better their understanding of local protocols and standards, reinforcing confidence and competence as they begin working in a new clinical environment.

Beyond learning style, eLearning also allows education teams and NMAHPs to customize their learning journeys. Pathways can be adapted based on existing knowledge and nurses are able to revisit certain modules to reinforce their learning. By supporting lifelong learning in this way and accommodating varying levels of experience, healthcare professionals can grow from novices to seasoned experts seeking leadership roles.

“We can deliver content that is synchronous, asynchronous, interactive, flexible and, importantly, we can tailor it to the evolving needs of our workforce.”

Greta Westwood

CEO, Florence Nightingale Foundation

Microlearning & engagement

Beyond addressing workforce diversity, clinical eLearning can also be tailored to meet the expectations of the next generation of NMAHPs. Younger learners, particularly Gen Z, often prefer short, highly interactive content. Microlearning modules, gamification and TikTok-style videos resonate strongly with this audience.

However, this approach is not universally effective. Striking the right balance is essential, as some may find the rapid, fragmented nature of short-form content challenging. Education is never one-size-fits-all; eLearning must offer a variety of formats that respect diverse learning styles and engage across all stages of their nursing careers, supporting lifelong learning throughout their profession.

Blended learning for real-world impact

While clinical eLearning can deliver fast-paced, multimodal content that offers flexibility to time-constrained healthcare professionals, true professional growth comes from blending these digital resources with offline experiences, such as simulations, preceptor guidance and educator support. This integrated approach teaches the nuances of local practice and helps to develop clinical competence.

It is the combination of learning opportunities that reinforces technical competence and cultivates leadership skills and resilience, qualities essential for navigating the long-term challenges of a career in care delivery.

For digital learning to truly succeed, it must connect what's on screen to the realities of clinical practice. This is where preceptors and educators play a pivotal role. While eLearning can introduce foundational principles, the nuances of practice require local expertise and hands-on guidance.



Complementary training techniques



Simulation & mentoring

Use simulation labs and bedside mentoring to reinforce eLearning concepts through practice and real-time feedback.



Preceptor engagement

Structured preceptor programs help NMAHPs apply theory to clinical scenarios and build confidence.



Role play & scenarios

Interactive case-based exercises develop critical thinking and decision-making under pressure.



Reflective practice

Encourage learners to reflect on how digital lessons translate into care for patients, individuals and communities through discussion or journaling.

“You can’t just set someone in front of a computer and expect them to take that knowledge and directly apply it to the unit. You have to have that link with the very important preceptor and an educator who knows the nuances of their own health system and then apply it at the bedside.”

Julie Miller

Clinical Practice Specialist,
American Association of Critical Care Nurses

“We have written this all up and published it because we wanted to be able to share with other non-English speaking countries that there are resources and tools, and strategies through which you can launch this type of process.”

Kathleen Vollman

Clinical Nurse Specialist, Advanced Nursing LLC

The program also demonstrated that most effective contextualization occurs when local education teams adapt foundational e-learning content to their own protocols whilst maintaining evidence-based standards. Facilitator-led sessions and peer teaching strengthen this process, creating collaborative environments where nurses apply learning to real-world challenges. Adding reflective practices, such as post-module debriefs, also helps connect digital lessons to daily care, while continuous feedback ensures training remains relevant and responsive.

Equally important is recognizing achievement along the learning journey. In the Vietnam pilot program, nurses received certificates during a hospital-organized celebration, an approach that reinforced accomplishment, boosted morale and encouraged ongoing engagement.

Contextualizing foundational learning

A blended approach to learning is the most effective way to translate knowledge into clinical mastery, but adapting content for diverse clinical settings can be challenging. In non-English-speaking, low- to middle-income countries, it might seem that eLearning courses designed in the US or UK have limited applicability.

A pilot program in Vietnam, however, proved otherwise. Led by Kathleen Vollman, Clinical Nurse Specialist at Advanced Nursing LLC, the initiative successfully rolled out the AACN's Essentials of Critical Care Orientation (ECCO) course within the Vinmec Healthcare System, with impressive results.

The team identified nurses with stronger English skills to complete the ECCO modules first. After verifying their understanding, these nurses became facilitators for their peers, using translated materials to guide group learning sessions. To measure impact, participants completed a modified Basic Knowledge Assessment Tool (BKAT) to gauge their knowledge before and after the course. Initial scores averaged 60%. After completing 70 ECCO modules, scores rose to 85% and were maintained a year later, demonstrating long-term retention.

This success highlights two key lessons: eLearning can be highly effective across diverse settings, and collaborating with local nurses to adapt content is critical for ensuring cultural and clinical relevance. For example, subsequent rollouts in Vietnam omitted modules that did not apply to local practice, reinforcing the importance of contextualization.

“One of the comments on one of the evaluations was the nurse said, I really knew that ECCO was making an impact on me when I walked into my patient’s room. And instead of just looking at the one obvious alarm that was going off on the monitor, I glanced at that. And then I saw the whole picture. I saw the IV pump, I saw the ventilator, I saw the hemodynamics. I saw the patient. I saw the patient’s face. I saw their skin color and I thought that’s exactly what we’re hoping for.”

Julie Miller

Clinical Practice Specialist,
American Association of Critical Care Nurses

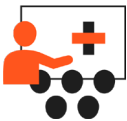
Future proofing education: Evolving to meet tomorrow's needs

The future of care delivery depends on accessible, evidence-based learning and leadership development that adapts to global challenges. NMAHPs need clinical mastery, not just knowledge, to meet the complex demands of modern care. Achieving this requires a commitment to continuous learning and innovation, pushing the boundaries of clinical expertise every day.



For organizations:

Invest in blended learning programs that combine digital flexibility with hands-on practice. Understand your workforce's learning needs and tailor content accordingly. By fostering a culture of lifelong learning and professional development, organizations can reduce early-career attrition and build a resilient workforce.



For educators:

Integrate microlearning and interactive content into curricula and ensure there is a clear pathway for applying theory in real-world settings. Linking digital lessons to bedside practice is essential for retention and confidence.



For leaders:

Champion education programs and actively recognize NMAHPs who embrace continuous learning. Celebrating professional growth not only motivates individuals but also strengthens team culture and patient outcomes.

Together, we can transform education and empower NMAHPs to deliver exceptional care across the globe. By embracing innovation and evidence-based learning, we move beyond knowledge toward true clinical mastery, strengthening decision-making and building a resilient global workforce prepared for the challenges ahead.

ELSEVIER



Contributors

The following experts participated in a global nursing webinar that informed some of the insights shared in this report. These discussions brought together a diverse group of global nursing leaders and clinical experts.

- **Tim Morris**, Vice President of Global Nursing Solutions, Elsevier
- **Greta Westwood**, CEO, Florence Nightingale Foundation
- **Julie Miller**, Clinical Practice Specialist, American Association of Critical Care Nurses
- **Kathleen Vollman**, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Advanced Nursing LLC

About Elsevier Health

A global leader in advanced information and decision support, Elsevier helps to advance science and healthcare, to advance human progress. We do this by facilitating insights and critical decision-making with innovative solutions based on trusted, evidence-based content and advanced AI-enabled digital technologies.

Elsevier's nursing solutions driving clinical excellence

Elsevier offers a suite of programs designed to strengthen nursing practice and leadership globally.

[Preceptor Plus](#), a program co-developed with the Florence Nightingale Foundation to standardize and strengthen preceptorship for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals in the UK and beyond. For many nurses, midwives and allied health professionals, preceptorship is their first real leadership role, and Preceptor Plus offers them the tools to build a culture of belonging and professional identity.

[AACN's Essentials of Critical Care Orientation \(ECCO\) course](#) bridges the gap between theory and practice by contextualizing learning for high-acuity care settings. It equips nurses with the knowledge to apply concepts confidently at the bedside. A key feature of the program is its integrated preceptor guides, which nurses can share with their mentors to translate online modules into real-world application, whether it's mastering the specifics of a hemodynamic setup unique to their hospital or adapting protocols to local workflows.

Elsevier also addresses generational learning preferences through interactive, microlearning-based courses, such as its [new stroke program](#), which incorporates gamification and short-form video to engage younger audiences.

Discover how Elsevier is using clinical eLearning to deliver consistent, high-quality patient care for nursing and healthcare teams by visiting the company's [website](#).



