



Review

Apheresis education: One center curriculum design experience



Rosaleen Nemec

University Health Network, Advanced Practice Nurse Educator, Practice Based Education, Collaborative Academic Practice, Apheresis and Photopheresis;
University Health Network, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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ABSTRACT

There is little published in regards to apheresis education and curriculum for nursing. As more importance is placed on education, competency and skills for apheresis through accreditation processes, institutions are left to determine the educational requirements needed for nursing. Working with limited resources, one center has designed a comprehensive apheresis curriculum program that encompasses skills and theory for the novice to experienced learner. Utilizing existing hospital education and incorporating it into the apheresis curriculum was designed to meet the needs of the patient population, nurses and hospital.

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Apheresis is a highly specialized area that is rapidly changing in the healthcare system [1,2]. Apheresis patients appear on hospital doorsteps with complex health issues. The disease requiring the apheresis procedure is often secondary to other health issues and concerns. Apheresis patients come in during the acute phase, often requiring multiple services for their care [3]. Apheresis nurses have the ability to work within a multi-disciplinary team while maintaining evidence-based practice in a highly specialized area [3]. The role of the apheresis nurse is to provide the necessary treatment and to act on any adverse events that the treatment may cause [3,4].

An apheresis nurse must be equipped with the necessary education, resources, and skills. Most often, the focus is on the technical training of the machine and adverse events caused by the treatment [4,5]. A literature review found that the European and United States Joint Task Force had developed a three-day modular Apheresis Education program and certification [11]. The program and certification courses were designed for nurses and operators. As well, a small group of nurses and physicians in Asian countries participated in the modular program designed by the Joint Task Force [11]. Overall,

there is little published in the field of apheresis nursing education. This disconnect creates challenges for institutions around the globe to design and create a structured education program that encompasses the needs of the new learners and existing/senior staff. This article examines one center's experience in designing and implementing an apheresis curriculum from the ground up for new and experienced learners.

Background and prior education state

The apheresis unit is a twelve-chair unit, in a large teaching hospital. Over 5,000 therapeutic treatments and 600 stem cell collections are done each year. The apheresis unit travels everywhere including to the inpatient units, intensive care units (ICUs), and the operating room. As well, the nurses of the apheresis team travel to three other large hospitals within the hospital network. The treatments provided are Therapeutic Plasma Exchange (TPE), acute and chronic Red Blood Cell Exchange (RBCX), Stem Cell Collection (SCC), Photopheresis, and Granulocyte Collection (GC). The programs that the apheresis unit services are Nephrology, Neurology, Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT), Multi-Organ Transplant (MOT), Hematology, and Metabolic Diseases.

E-mail address: Rosaleen.Nemec@uhn.ca

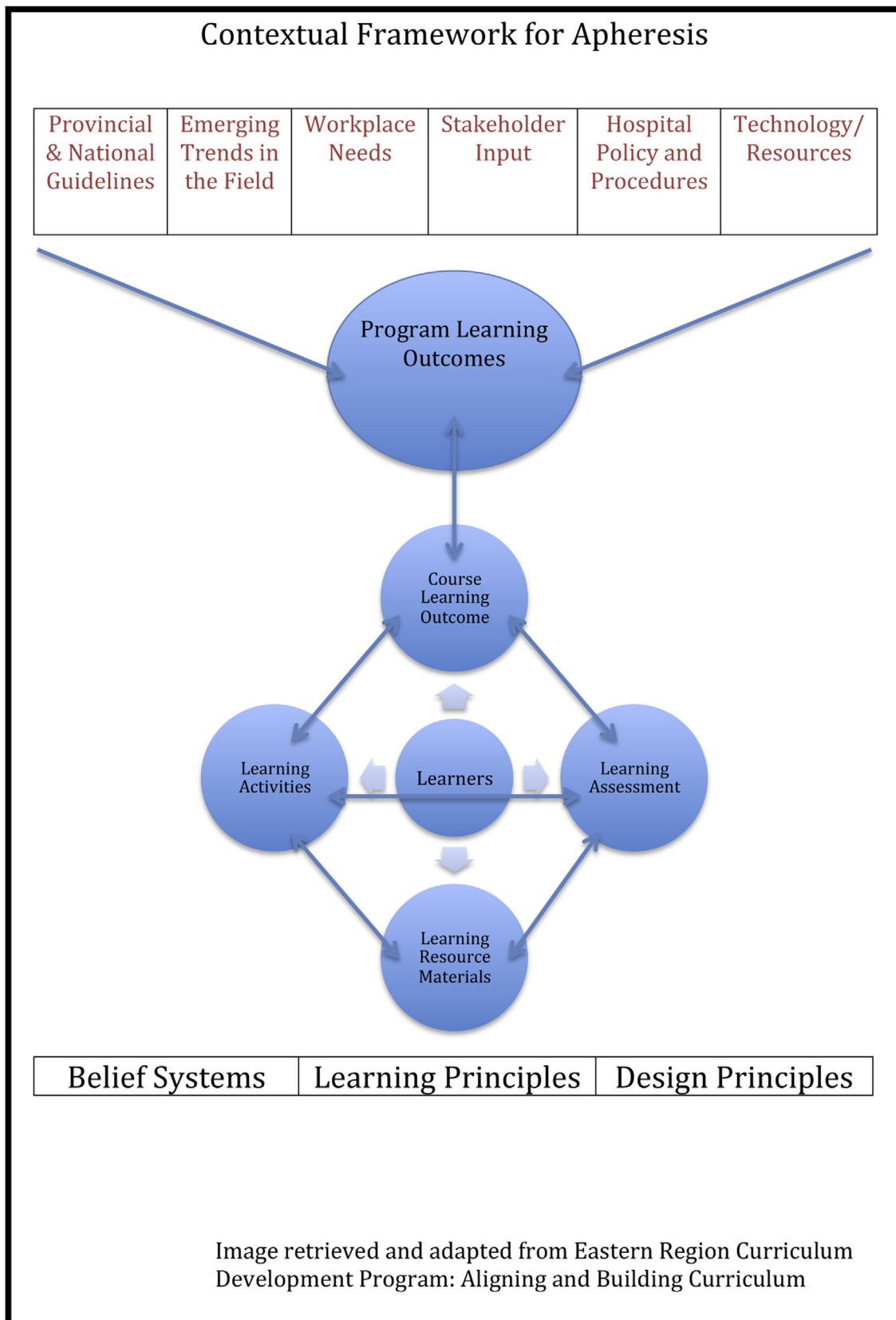


Fig. 1. Illustrates the adapted curriculum framework developed for the unit. This framework is in constant movement and interactive. It takes into account the learner, apheresis unit, institution, provincial, and national requirements. Advancement in technology will impact the framework at all levels and how the learner will receive and gain competency in the skill.

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