

# Virtual practice = Evidence-based, statistically significant benefits

Research shows students' use of HealthAssess increases self-efficacy and preparedness — attitudinal constructs predicting behavior that can translate into the practice setting.

The small campus of the Jefferson College Bi-Level Nursing Program (Hillsboro, Mo.) has proven to be a valuable testing ground. A survey of the community college's nursing students who used ATI's HealthAssess showed just how impactful this online, virtual, practice-based product can be in preparing them to perform health assessments on diverse clients. Plus, they learn to assess key body systems while building clinical judgment skills.

## Discovering the multiple benefits of HealthAssess

Jefferson College's nursing program began using HealthAssess in 2021 to supplement clinical assignments and in Fundamentals didactic for teaching head-to-toe assessments.

The reaction from students was a big thumbs up.

Sarah Akridge, MSN-Ed, RN, Assistant Professor/PN Coordinator, says students value HealthAssess as an "exceptional resource" in providing system-assessment videos and explanations to improve their cognitive and tactile learning. "The students love being able to read a short blurb about the skill/system assessment and then watch an immediate demonstration of that [assessment] in the video," she adds.

HealthAssess was designed to be engaging and eliminate the teaching of nonessential assessment skills.

Limiting lessons to essential skills is a big plus for students overwhelmed by the rigors of nursing school. Clinical Coordinator Maggie Rola, BSN, RN, CPN, says HealthAssess gives students "more time to actually practice the skill instead of spending time searching other platforms for reference material."

Plus, she adds, "The virtual simulations are extremely beneficial for our clinical assignments. These simulations help supplement what is being taught in didactic and seen in the clinical setting. It is a fantastic teaching solution."

## What is HealthAssess?

HealthAssess is a simple, single solution to teaching health assessment. It:

- prepares nursing students to complete health assessments
- builds clinical judgment skills in a virtual learning and practice experience
- offers a combination of learning modules, authentic practice simulations, and active EHR documentation
- emphasizes knowledge, techniques, and scenarios most applicable to today's nurses in a safe learning environment
- drives consistent student learning outcomes across cohorts.

An even bigger benefit to focusing on need-to-know skills? Research shows that using essential assessment skills when encountering or caring for a patient improves a nurse's ability to observe and recognize subtle cues, interpret or gather additional information or data, and respond to the patient's healthcare needs<sup>1</sup>.

Rola is encouraged by her students' knowledge of those essential skills. After using HealthAssess, she says, "Student feedback and improved comfort with the skill of head-to-toe assessments has seemed to improve." In fact, a survey confirmed Rola's evaluation. In several areas, those skills had definitively improved.

**Maggie Rola, BSN,  
RN, CPN, Clinical  
Coordinator**



**Sarah Akridge,  
MSN-Ed, RN,  
Assistant Professor/  
PN Coordinator**



### Researchers dig in and review students' skills

ATI researchers assessed a sample of Jefferson College's PN students using HealthAssess. The research team assessed the students before and after completion of each module on their self-efficacy and preparedness to perform focused client health assessments.

The results showed statistically significant increases in both confidence and preparedness in six areas:

1. performing health assessments
2. determining the right tools needed to perform an assessment and how to correctly use them
3. differentiating between expected and unexpected findings
4. eliciting information using open-ended questions
5. engaging in collaborative conversations with the client's healthcare team
6. entering data into the EHR.

Students said they were thoroughly satisfied with the training; 100 percent rated HealthAssess from "good" to "excellent," and 96 percent reported that the preparation provided relevant client examples. More than 90 percent reported an increase in empathy after completing the modules.

The results reinforce that HealthAssess modules provide a single teaching solution offering authentic practice simulations that improve students' self-efficacy and preparedness. Both attitudinal constructs are drawn from major theories of motivation that can translate into the practice setting.

### Additional benefits that ease faculty's workload

At Jefferson, Akridge says HealthAssess has provided faculty with "consistency in assignment utilization for supplemental clinical assignments," adding, "It has streamlined the process for providing the students with real-life clinical scenarios that they previously wouldn't have had access to."

Read an in-depth article with more details on the research into HealthAssess's impact at <https://www.atitesting.com/educator/blog/knowledge/2023/06/29/nursing-health-assessment>

Additionally, she says, "Health Assess has saved us a lot of time when creating clinical assignments because everything is ready to go! It has eliminated the need for the traditional case study-type assignment and given us the opportunity to expand on the students' clinical judgment skills."

HealthAssess also provides the opportunity for students to build their clinical judgment through simulated scenarios and cases. "This platform is a great supplement for in-person clinical and helps to build upon the material covered in lecture," Akridge adds.

Rola called HealthAssess "the most well-rounded product." "It allows students the feeling of hands-on skills in addition to exceptional rationales on why those skills are being performed," she says.

### An overall view of Jefferson's success

Akridge says Jefferson uses many different aspects of ATI solutions, including Skills Modules, Video Case Studies, Engage Fundamentals, and proctored standardized assessments.

"We are actively working to ensure we utilize the ATI solutions in all of our courses because we have seen improved student outcomes with the implementation of ATI," she explains.

How much have student outcomes improved? "Our pass rates have been stellar!" Akridge says. In 2018, NCLEX-PN pass rates were 97.63 percent, while NCLEX-RN pass rates were 78.79 percent. "Our current 2022 NCLEX-PN pass rate is 100 percent," Akridge says, "and our current 2022 NCLEX-RN pass rate is 94.6 percent."

<sup>1</sup>Zambas, S. I., Smythe, E. A., & Kozoil-McLain, J. (2016). The consequences of using advanced physical assessment skills in medical and surgical nursing: A hermeneutic pragmatic study. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 11(Sep 6). doi: 10.3402/qhw.v11.32090. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5015639/>

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