On the Horizon: Envisioning a New Role for the NPD Practitioner

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Background:
Nursing Professional Development (NPD) practitioners know how to teach, but often lack the design skills needed to translate content into interactive, engaging, and effective online learning modules for placement in the learning management system (LMS). With limited hours available for face to face educational offerings, and competing priorities vying for the NPD practitioners time, online learning has become a sought-out method for disseminating education. Faced with an ever-growing demand for online learning, one organization recognized the need for greater collaboration between organization development, the department housing the LMS administrator and training specialist, with NPD practitioners.

Purpose:
Show how one organization leveraged the NPD practitioner role to enhance internal collaboration and meet a growing need for high-quality online education.

Method:
An internal partnership was formed by embedding NPD practitioners as instructional designers and co-administrators of the LMS within organizational development in the division of human resources. The strategic placement of this new role allowed the NPD practitioners to become attuned with the instructional design (ID) needs of hospital-based services, ambulatory services and advanced practice providers in order to develop clinically relevant and interactive, scenario-based online learning. In addition, the NPD practitioners connected with patient experience to become assimilated into the leader rounding structure to connect with clinical nursing staff on personal experiences with the LMS and online learning needs.

Description of Role:
NPD Practitioners as instructional designers are trained in the use of an e-Learning authoring tool and spend a significant amount of time building courses within the program. Functioning in the consultant role, they offer ideas on how to bring interactivity and life to content with both the ID and clinical lens as they meet with subject matter experts (SME's) throughout the organization who are interested in providing education through the LMS.

As co-administrators of the LMS, they manage the placement of course offerings (face to face, online, and blended), create and share reports, and manage the shared mailbox for troubleshooting issues with the system. This past year, they led the organization through a transition to a brand new LMS and moved over 200 courses from the old system to the new one, updating and archiving courses throughout the process.

In addition to developing education for placement in the LMS, NPD practitioners in this role sponsor and teach a variety of offerings, aimed primarily at the NPD practitioners in the organization. Topics have included: Microlearning, Gamification, Instructional Design Workshops, and Standards for Online Learning.

Through involvement with organizations within NPD, Nursing, and Talent & Development, they stay current on industry standards and are well-informed of approaching trends.

To stay connected throughout the organization, the following means are utilized:
- Huddle Participation with Center of Nursing Professional Practice (CNPP) and Ambulatory Education Structure
- CNPP Monthly Forum
- Workgroup and Shared Professional Governance Participation
- Quality Summit
- Monthly Touchdowns with the Director of Nursing Professional Practice
- Weekly email progress updates to Director of Nursing Professional Practice and Director of Organizational Effectiveness and Transformation
- Leader Rounding

Findings:
The increasing presence of NPD practitioners as organizational development leaders within the clinical space proved successful in building meaningful connections and increasing visibility of a traditionally unseen role. NPD practitioners functioning as instructional designers have been able to build on their expertise and influence in the clinical and education realms by developing skills in online instructional design, maximizing the value they bring to the organization through online educational offerings.

Table 1- Examples, Level I Evaluation Summary

	Comfort Positioning, n=1293 (% Positive)	Acute Frostbite Injury, n=102 (% Positive)	Inpatient Falls, n=1467 (% Positive)
The education was relevant to my work.	82.4%	96.1%	88.9%
The learning interactions allowed me to apply the knowledge I was given.	85.1%	96.1%	90.7%
As a result of this education, I will be able to perform my job.	81.7%	98.0%	88.3%

The NPD practitioners in the ID role have been able to implement strategies to collect data to measure the quality of the online learning experience. Using Kirkpatrick's model, a three question Likert-style evaluation was put into place to measure staff engagement and intent for behavioral change related to e-learning initiatives. The optional questions are frequently answered by the learners, some modules with greater than a 90% response rate. In addition, the NPD practitioners can monitor for trends in pre- and post-assessments across all online education, specifically with education that is offered on an annual basis to ensure quality of the learning event. In late 2016, the first NPD practitioner was recruited to enhance the quality of online education. The average number of attempts to obtain a passing score on post-assessments for both annual blood transfusion education and procedural sedation education have decreased by 61.1% and an 83% over the past four years, respectively.

Graph 1- Average Attempts to Obtain Passing Score
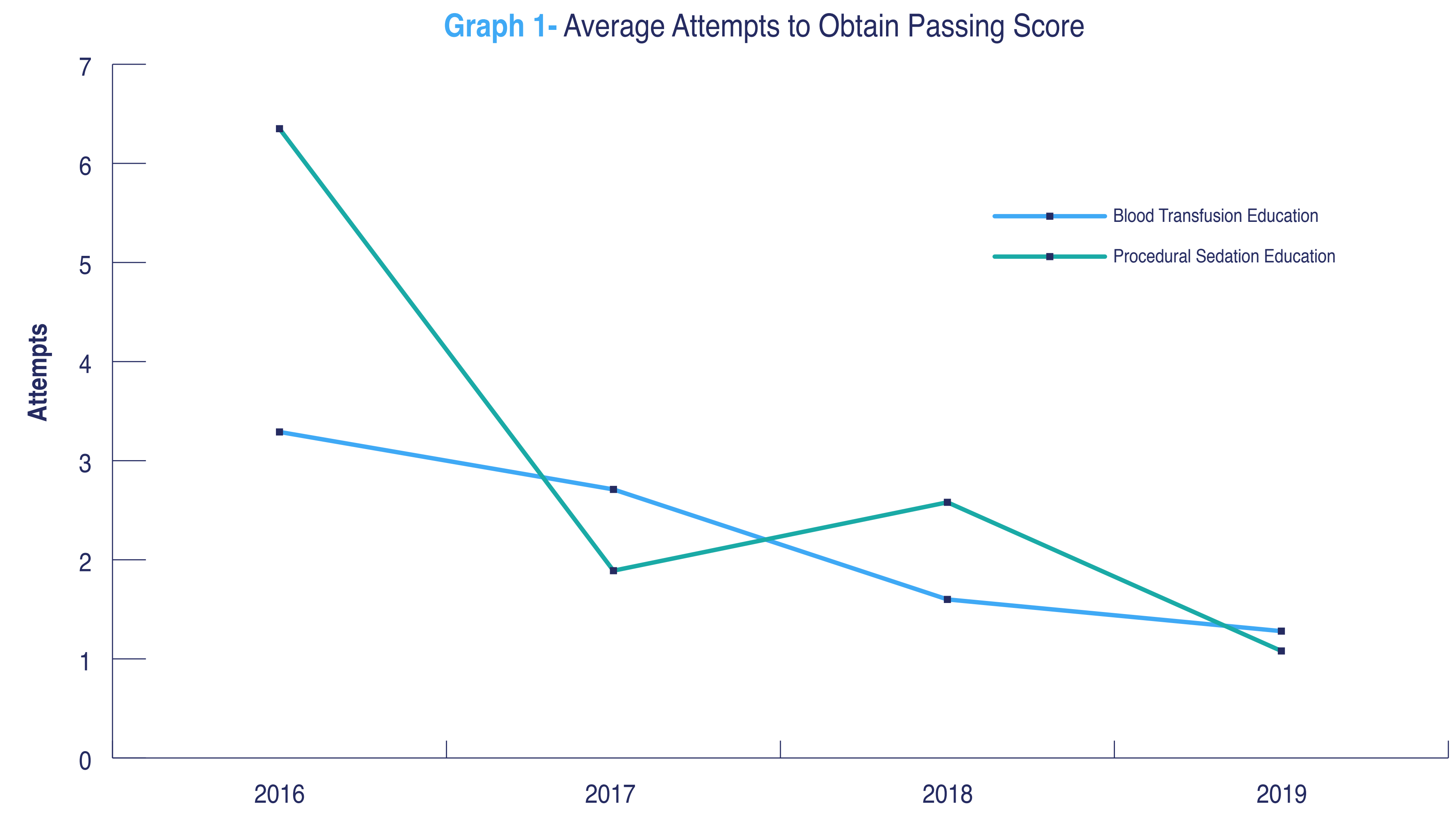
The Voice of the Customer:
Having a NPD practitioner supporting instructional design across the enterprise enhances the focus and quality of education built for the clinical staff. The NPD practitioner view all requests for education through the lens of NPD quality education standards. Consequently, their guidance and development of each project benefits from their expertise.
-Nancy Mosca, Director, Nursing Professional Practice

Having a clinical person assist with the instructional design and online learning planning was instrumental for our ventilator education project. Michelle understood exactly the message we were attempting to portray to the learner; she was able to design a clear and concise program quickly that held the attention of the participant. This was one of our best programs ever in my opinion.
-Kim Firestone, Neonatal Respiratory Outreach Clinical Liaison

Implications:
Organizations should consider the value and impact of NPD practitioners stepping into this emerging role of instructional designer. If an NPD practitioner is not currently in the role of instructional designer at your organization, the first step to take to enrich the quality and effectiveness of online educational offerings is to identify key stakeholders in the organization in which to partner.

Key Stakeholders:
- Organizational Development Team – Identify LMS administrator(s)
- NPD Leaders
- Ambulatory Leaders
- Electronic Medical Record (EMR) Training Team
- Professional Organizations with focus on Talent & Development

The NPD practitioner as an ID, through the familiar roles of learning facilitator, change agent, and leader, can bring tremendous value to the organization. This emerging role will raise the bar for what's possible in online learning through positive influence and collaborative partnerships across interprofessional teams.

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