

# Super Technical Teams!

- Continuing Professional Development to Support Sim Ops

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Crikey, mate!  
I'm late for  
my urinary  
catheterisation  
skills session!



Struth!  
I'm coming too!  
Medico-Techie  
Powers ...  
ACTIVATE!

## And so ... they developed professionally – TOGETHER!

As Simulation Centres become an established part of the medical training system, the professional development of all Centre staff will be increasingly recognised as fundamental to sim-excellence.

This poster outlines considerations for continuing the professional development of technical staff within the Sim Op setting.

### Description

Simulation Centres recruit staff from a variety of backgrounds - including people with distinct educational, clinical, technical and administrative skillsets. In practice, roles have been blended, and staff routinely find that they need to bridge multiple skillsets to complete their duties.

These circumstances and the demands of keeping the magic going<sup>1</sup> has seen individuals try to step up and address their individual needs with varying success or support. Circumstances force these staff to develop their missing knowledge in an ad hoc manner through trial and error and over time job satisfaction can decrease.

As Simulation Centres grow in size and complexity, questions of their long-term staffing needs come to the fore. Only through a strong cooperative and collegial inter-professional culture and a more formal system of professional development, particularly for staff from technical backgrounds, will future success be assured.

The author's experience across several organisations informs a basic taxonomy of approaches for guiding the professional development of Simulation Centre staff, including: following student learning; inter-professional coaching and cooperation; mentoring; and formal training offered by associated institutions. Differing approaches will be suitable for organisations with different needs and budgetary capabilities.

### Conclusions

It is paradoxical that Simulation Centres, which are entirely focused on the professional development of their 'customers', are often not conscious of the role that professional development must play in the long-term delivery of their services. As well as looking outwards, Centres must look inwards towards the skill set and skill mix of their staff.

### References:

1. Greenyer F. Connecting the Dots. [Online]. Available: <http://halldale.com/insidesnt/medical-simulation/connecting-dots#.UyYPwPu7330>. [Accessed September 27, 2013].

**Assess** the current technical position description(s) for your simulation technical environment. Reviewing these documents may highlight tasks that are important but aren't even mentioned and skill sets that are needed but have not been previously acknowledged. This usually is a great opportunity to re-write these documents - especially if your centre has grown quickly since their initial inception and drafting.

**Provide** the opportunity for the technical personnel to self-identify his or her skills, abilities, values, strengths and weaknesses. This can be done as a part of a performance assessment but it need not be. What is important here is to provide a safe environment where the conversation can take place so that a good understanding of what gaps need to be filled is clearly communicated. Good honest technical staff will readily volunteer what they believe would be constructive training to benefit the centre, no one wants to be holding the VGA cable and not know where to put it!

**Create!** Professional Development for your technical staff is not in the budget then plan to get it in or plan for alternative ways to meet your technical staff learning needs.

**Seek** a technical voice on larger planning days with other faculty and administration. These days highlight technical insights and communicate long term plans. It is vital for technical staff to participate in the program planning process so they understand what equipment and skills might be needed in the future.

### Even when there's no budget - think outside the box.

Send technical staff to the lectures with the first year students to learn more on anatomy and physiology to aid their positions as needed.

Organise for technical staff to shadow the clinical staff in the clinical skills centre to learn more about clinical procedures and develop a familiarity of consumables used.

Provide networking opportunities for technical staff to visit other centres and schools to learn how they provide technical assistance and learn other ways to technically amaze and astonish us all.

Support job rotation and secondments within the organisation as happy staff come back highly skilled and motivated!

Invite company representatives to showcase and demonstrate their equipment and consumables - it provides golden opportunities to ask questions and get the most up to date information.

Include technical staff on educational committees that are inter-professional and mix different aspects of the organization or network. This allows technical members to see simulation issues from different perspectives and facilitate learning

Co-write with technical staff standard operating procedures for equipment setup and pull down to ensure that these procedures are standardised and the resource allocation and risks are well understood.

Provide opportunities for technical staff to take advantage of free training on the web. Share resources with staff that benefit them and are readily available and free online - for example ([www.nhet-sim.edu.au](http://www.nhet-sim.edu.au)) modules and even some MOOC's are relevant

Write technical scenarios for critical technical events right at your own centre for all your staff to participate in. And - just like everyone else that would train in the centre - provide time for reflection and feedback.

### And if you've got budget – keep thinking!

Encourage technical staff to take leadership roles to co-deliver at simulation local forums and technical training events.

Encourage and aid technical staff to write and produce abstracts and posters and present and showcase these.

Rotate opportunities between your technical staff and encourage them to feedback and present to the others in the centre when they return.

Include technical staff on faculty development courses offered in the organisation and beyond including courses in simulator maintenance, information technology, management, education and moulage.

Sometimes it isn't money but time that technical staff need to attend self-paid and paced professional association events and forums.

### The Author

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