

Background

The Surgical Scrub Bootcamp is a hands-on immersive educational program designed to strengthen the clinical readiness of new perioperative nurses. It bridges the gap between foundational OR residency training and department specific surgical competence.

Challenges addressed include:

- Inconsistent precepting practices, which can lead to knowledge gaps, variation in skill acquisition, and confusion when orientees rotate between multiple preceptors
- Variability across service lines and hospital sites including differences in workflow, instrumentation, specimen management, and patient transfer processes
- Need for deeper, site-specific procedural knowledge resulting in insufficient exposure to complex procedures, equipment, and specialty-driven expectations

Scrub Bootcamp provides a structured, psychologically safe learning environment where learners can reinforce essential concepts, ask questions without hesitation, and develop the confidence required before transitioning into the high-acuity operating room setting.

Objectives/Purpose

Surgical Scrub Bootcamp aims to:

- Standardize foundational perioperative knowledge while advancing department and service-line-specific technical skills
- Develop service-specific scrub competency, ensuring readiness for specialty procedures, instrumentation, and workflows
- Enhance confidence, communication, and situational awareness within the dynamic operating room environment
- Promote consistent, high-quality onboarding across OR teams by reducing variation in orientation experiences
- Minimize knowledge gaps and skill variability associated with inconsistent precepting practices

Methods

Learners participate in guided technical skills training that includes service-line specific:

- Table setup
- Equipment handling
- Instrument identification
- Case reviews such as CABG and AVR procedures.

Scenario-based practice allows participants to refine their skills under time constraints while receiving direct feedback from educators. The program incorporates anatomy and physiology refreshers to help bridge the gap between textbook learning and actual surgical visualization. Additional instruction focuses on essential perioperative concepts such as medication and specimen management, workflow practices, and OR-specific terminology.



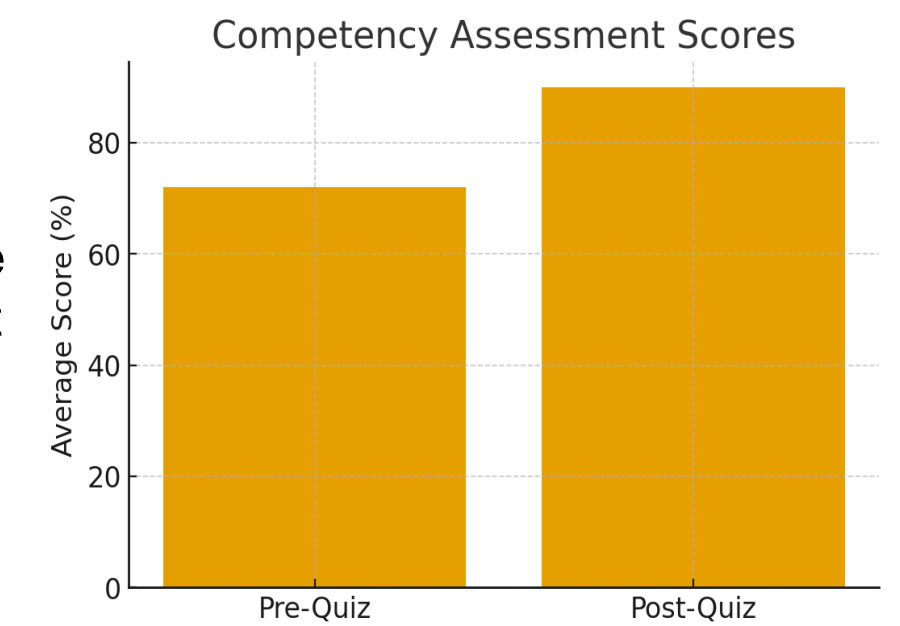
Mock Cardiac Table for Learning

Cardiothoracic Example: Instrument Fast Pass

- The facilitator will quickly ask the orientee for a variety of instruments from a mock cardiac table, taking note and correcting if an item is passed incorrectly.
- Give each caregiver at least 10 to 15 minutes to practice passing.
- Have available on the sterile table a variety of instruments and supplies including ESU, suction, clips, knife blades and sutures.

Outcomes

- Learners consistently report increased confidence as they transition into the operating room environment. They describe a deeper understanding of surgical procedures, instrumentation, and workflow, noting that the Bootcamp provides a strong foundation before encountering the pressures of real OR cases.
- Learners feel more comfortable and better prepared after having dedicated time to practice service-line, specific skills, reducing the intimidation often associated with stepping into the OR for the first time.
- Educators observe improved baseline competencies, based on a pre/post Cardiothoracic service line quiz, pre-quiz scores average at 72%, post quiz scores average 90%
- The Bootcamp also supports more effective preceptor matching by offering insight into orientees' learning styles and personalities.



Conclusion



The Surgical Scrub Bootcamp significantly elevates new OR nurses' competence, confidence, and comfort in the perioperative setting. By providing structured, hands-on, service-line-specific training, the Bootcamp strengthens both individual performance and overall team readiness.

The model is scalable and adaptable, offering a practical framework for other specialties and hospitals seeking to build skilled, confident surgical teams. Bootcamp training enhances the foundational OR residency experience, diving deeper into specialty needs and standardizing onboarding processes across diverse OR settings.

References

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- Nijkamp, N. (2024). Transition support arrangements to support new graduate perioperative nurses: A review of support programs and their components. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e23316>