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**INDUSTRY WATCH: HEALTHCARE**  
A prescription for innovation

**Student nurses get realistic training**

By **Isabelle Chan**, ZDNet Asia  
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**Nursing education is going high-tech, at least for one group of student nurses in Singapore.**

Ngee Ann Polytechnic set up in July a Patient Simulation Center to enhance the learning experience of student nurses.

Built at a cost of S\$1.4 million (US\$918,639), the new facility includes two intensive care units, two emergency rooms and four manikins costing S\$80,000 (US\$52,499) each. It also houses an operating theater complete with gases typically used in surgeries, a gerontology unit, and a neonatal intensive care unit.



Students get a dose of reality

Dr Phang Chiew Hun, director of Ngee Ann's School of Health Sciences, said in a statement: "The Patient Simulation Centre is a vital component of our nursing curriculum. We can simulate all kinds of scenarios, including rare situations which the students may not encounter during their clinical attachments."

Emphasizing the importance of realistic nursing training, Phang added: "The manikins are life-like, they can do everything except eat and sweat. In perfecting their skills on these 'patients', our students will get over any fears of handling different medical conditions, including critical ones such as respiratory failure and cardiac arrest."

**At a glance**

Ngee Ann Polytechnic's final-year student nurses can now access course materials on PDAs. The pilot runs between August 2006 and February 2008

**Objectives**

To enhance students' learning experience during their clinical attachments, as well as boost the image of the nursing profession.

**Budget**

S\$387,000 (US\$253,967)

**PDAs**

Acer N300 series

**Application features**

**Mobile Translator**  
 Developed in-house, the mobile

**Handy helpers**

Ngee Ann has also embarked on a pilot project with the aim to foster a new generation of tech-savvy nurses.

From August 2006 to February 2008, the polytechnic's final-year student nurses will be able to access course materials using Acer N300 personal digital assistants (PDAs).

Study materials have been reformatted for the small palm-sized devices, and thanks to the use of

**Video**



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translator allows students to check the correct pronunciation for commonly used words and phrases in Malay, Mandarin, and Chinese dialects Hokkien and Cantonese. Students listen to the sound-bites recorded by their lecturers before speaking to their patients.

**Benefits:**  
Students can improve their communication skills, which translate into quality patient care

**Mobile Clinical Reference**  
This includes disease and drug databases, as well as a feature which lets students follow step-by-step procedures needed to perform physical checks for various health conditions.

**Benefits:**  
Quick touch of a button to important medical information.

**Mobile Nursing Assessment**  
This includes an electronic logbook, and students will be pre-tested using the PDA before performing tasks, such as inserting a nasogastric tube into the stomach, during their clinical attachments.

**Benefits:**  
The electronic logbook feature also makes it easier to track the skills student nurses mastered during the course, and since information is also updated in the polytechnic's server, students do not have to worry if they lose their logbooks.

shortage in this area."

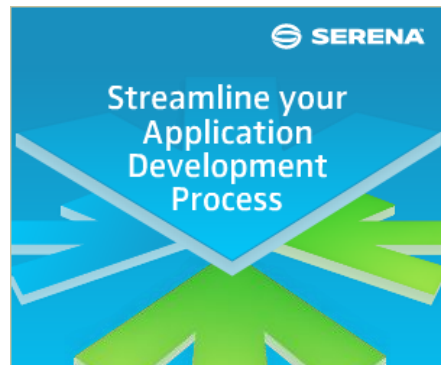
The polytechnic plans to review the project at the end of the pilot trial to fine-tune the system, before extending the scheme to all course students.

animation and video, students can look forward to more vivid illustrations and explanations of complicated concepts and processes.

Several applications have also been specially designed to enhance student learning. These include the Mobile Translator, which allows students to check the pronunciation of commonly used words in various Chinese dialects, and an electronic logbook which helps keep track of the skills they have mastered.

Ngee Ann is confident the new PDA project, partly funded by the [Lien Foundation in Singapore](#), will boost the image of the nursing profession.

Phang said: "We hope this interesting high-tech approach will induce more young Singaporeans to take up nursing as a career, thus easing the manpower



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