



## 2026 PRE-CONVENTION NURSE EDUCATORS PROGRAM

### Teaching as We Practice: Strengthening Competence, Confidence, and Professional Identity Through Case-Based Learning

**March 25, 2026, 8:30 am – 4:15 pm  
Harrah's Resort, Longport Room**

#### Program Overview and Outcomes:

**6.5 Contact Hours**

Don't miss this opportunity to expand your educational toolkit to prepare the next generation of nursing professionals. Nursing education is at a pivotal moment, and educators play a critical role in ensuring that new nurses enter the workforce with strong clinical judgment, clear reasoning, and a solid professional identity.

This engaging workshop is designed for educators across all program types. Whether you are new to teaching or an experienced educator, you will leave inspired and equipped with case-based strategies you can apply in your teaching environment immediately.

Together, we will confront the systemic barriers that keep education tethered to test preparation rather than real-world readiness. You'll explore how active, case-based learning fosters clinical judgment and Professional Identity Formation (PIF)—a powerful buffer against burnout and a pathway to safer, more effective practice.

If you're ready to move beyond graduating students who are merely "test-ready" and begin cultivating nurses who are truly practice-ready, this session is your moment. Let's reimagine nursing education together.

- Define practice readiness, academic-practice gap, critical thinking, clinical reasoning, and clinical judgment.
- Explore how active, case-based learning fosters clinical judgment and Professional Identity Formation (PIF), including reductions in errors, strengthened decision-making, and more effective practice.
- Create case-based scenarios that integrate clinical judgment to support the development of practice-ready nurses.



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### **PROGRAM AGENDA**

7:30 am	Registration and Continental Breakfast – Pre-Function Area with Exhibitors ATI and Laerdal
8:30 am – 8:45 am	Welcome Introduction and Contact Hour Instructions
8:45 am – 9:15 am	The Reality Check: NCLEX Success ≠ Clinical Competence
9:15 am – 10:15 am	Speaking the Same Language: Core Concepts That Drive Practice Readiness
10:15 am – 10:30 am	Break
10:30 am – 12:15 pm	Why Case-Based Learning Changes Outcomes with Examples
12:15 pm – 1:15 pm	Lunch – Rum Point Restaurant
1:15 pm – 2:30 pm	Case-Based Learning in Action: Developing Clinical Judgment
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Building Your Own Practice-Ready Case
3:00 pm - 3:15 pm	Break
3:15 pm – 3:45 pm	Building Your Own Practice-Ready Case
3:45 pm - 4:00 pm	Integration, Partnership, and Call to Action
4:00 pm – 4:15 pm	Question and Answer Session / Evaluation



## Why You Should Attend This Pre-Convention Session

### Academic Nurse Educators / Faculty

#### **1. NCLEX Success ≠ Clinical Competence**

Graduates may pass the NCLEX, but only 9% demonstrate the clinical judgment needed for safe practice. Preparing students for real patients—not just exams—is an educator’s responsibility.

#### **2. You Shape the Future of Nursing**

The quality of bedside practice begins in your classroom. Your teaching strategies directly influence whether new nurses enter the workforce confident, competent, and ready to think.

#### **3. Retention Starts in Education**

Nearly one-third of new nurses leave within two years. Case-based learning and professional identity formation strengthen commitment, reduce burnout, and support long-term retention.

#### **4. It's Time to Teach Like We Practice**

We expect evidence-based care from nurses. Students deserve evidence-based teaching. This session equips you with modern, research-supported approaches that align with how today’s learners thrive.

### Clinical Nurses Educators

#### **1. You Feel the Gap at the Bedside**

New graduates struggle with prioritizing, thinking, and advocating—not because they’re unmotivated, but because the system hasn’t prepared them. This session addresses the root cause.

#### **2. Better Education Means Safer Workplaces**

Nurses with strong clinical judgment reduce errors, improve outcomes, and lighten the load on preceptors and unit staff. Your future colleagues are being shaped right now.

#### **3. Your Voice Drives Educational Reform**

Clinical nurses are essential partners in improving education. Preceptors, mentors, and clinical leaders help shape the next generation of safe, confident practitioners.

#### **4. Burnout Isn't Only About Staffing**

Nurses with a strong professional identity are more resilient and more likely to stay. The goal isn’t just more nurses—it’s better-prepared nurses who remain in the profession.



## Meet Our NJLN Pre-Convention Program Facilitator:

### **Maria Flores-Harris, DNP, RN, CNE**

Over the past two decades, Maria has taught at every level, directed nursing programs, and consulted with schools nationwide. Her mission has always been clear:

With a background in med-surg and geriatric nursing, Maria brings a deeply relational lens to everything she does — along with a fierce commitment to preparing educators to lead with clarity and purpose.



As KeithRN's Nurse Educator Consultant, she helps faculty move from survival mode to student-centered, clinically grounded teaching.

She specializes in:

- Active learning strategies backed by learning science
- Curriculum alignment that supports clinical judgment
- Practical support that meets educators where they are



## **BIOGRAPHY:**

**Dr. Maria Flores-Harris** is a registered nurse with extensive experience across clinical, academic, and business environments. She earned both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in nursing from Clemson University, where her loyalty to the Clemson Tigers remains steadfast. Dr. Flores-Harris received her Doctoral degree in Nursing Education Leadership from American Sentinel University and is a Certified Nurse Educator credentialed by the National League for Nursing (NLN).

She has held various roles throughout her career, including nursing faculty and director positions in practical and registered nursing programs and as a national nurse education consultant. She is the President and Founder of Academic Partners Consulting, an educational consulting firm, and currently works with KeithRN as their nurse education consultant.

Her expertise lies in evidence-based teaching strategies, learning science, and academic integrity. Dr. Flores-Harris is passionate about empowering educators to utilize research and evidence to nurture safe and competent nursing professionals. She travels extensively, sharing her insights at educational conferences and providing professional development for nurse educators.