The use of the situation, background, assessment and recommendation (SBAR) communication technique in interprofessional communication is widely seen in practice. Several hospital systems have successfully integrated SBAR communication into the daily workflow resulting in improved patient care. The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) states that pharmacy students must be able to effectively communicate in a meaningful way as part of an interprofessional team. Several pharmacy programs have adopted the SBAR communication technique as a means to meet this standard.

The clear benefit of the SBAR technique demonstrates a need to ensure long range student retention through the curriculum. The aim of this study was to determine if students utilized the SBAR communication technique during an interprofessional skills assessment one year following initial instruction.

Second year pharmacy students were trained in the situation, background, assessment and recommendation (SBAR) communication technique as part of the pharmacy care lab series. Initial instruction was done through the TeamSTEPPS method. One year later, these students participated in an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) focused on communicating a medication error to a prescriber. The OSCE was a graded assessment, worth 2.5% of the overall grade, in PHA 521, Pulmonary Pharmacotherapy.

Sixty nine (100%) students completed the simulation. The mean score for the SBAR skill set was 3.65. 85.5% of students completed the simulation using all four components of the technique. Those students that received a zero used other methods of communication such as concerned, uncomfortable, safety (CUS) method. These methods were taught during the second year but not to the extent of SBAR.

Students were able to demonstrate retention of the SBAR technique one year after initial instruction. Consideration should be given to teaching this communication style earlier in the curriculum with regular intervals of assessment.