

# Promoting Critical Thinking During New Nurse Transition to Practice

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# Session Objectives

- Discuss evidence based preceptor strategies to promote critical thinking in new nurses.
- Identify effective strategies to evaluate the critical thinking skill of the new nurse.

# Background - Condition of Traditional Clinical Experiences in Schools of Nursing

- Faculty-student interactions (Wang & Blumberg, 1995; Polifroni, et al., 1995)
  - Time spent
  - Types of interactions
- Impact of clinical learning environments on experiences (Myrick & Yonge, 2004)
- Impact of schools increasing enrollments
- Anecdotal reports of time spent on tasks

# Preceptor Preparation – Our Lived Experience

- Three Programs
  - Student Preceptors
  - New Graduate/New Employee Preceptors
  - Advanced Preceptors
- Based on literature and experience
- Nine Years of Programs

# Sample Agenda – Precepting New Graduates: Not Just Another Day on the Job!

Components of Effective Orientation Program

Effective Communication

Teaching/Learning Principles

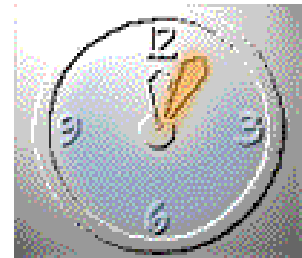
Promoting Critical Thinking

Planning for Reality Shock

Providing Proactive Feedback and Evaluation

Addressing Difficult Situations

Expectations of New Graduate and Preceptor



# What the Literature Tells Us About Preceptor Preparation....

- Many studies of student/new graduate outcomes do not report information about preceptor preparation
- Some studies report little to no preparation
- How many of us have been placed in positions without preparation?

# Preceptor Preparation to Promote and Support Critical Thinking – Reported in Literature

- Cognitive Skills
- Feedback/Evaluation
- Impact of Work Environment

# Cognitive Skills



# Cognitive Skills of Critical Thinking

- Divergent thinking
- Reflection
- Creativity
- Clarification



- Instructional Paradigm – Cognitive Apprenticeship

# Divergent Thinking



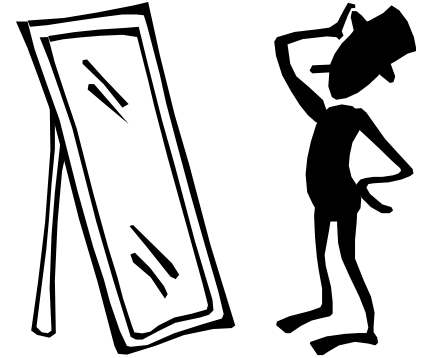
- Defined:
  - The ability to analyze diverse opinions and judgment
- Suggested questions:
  - Of the data, which are the most relevant to the care of this client?
  - How do you know this intervention is effective? Ineffective?

# Reflection



- Defined:
  - To ponder, contemplate, or deliberate
  - Recognizes that critical thinking is not linear
  - Integrates new ideas or insights
  - Integrates past experiences
  - Explores potential alternatives
  - Draw relationships - “if...then”

# Reflection



- Suggested questions:
  - What are your main concerns in this situation?
  - How can you test the appropriateness of your interventions?
  - What evidence supports your conclusion?
  - What do you think you should do next?
  - What can wait until later?

(Nelson, Apenhorst, Carter, Mahlum, & Schneider, 2004)

# Creativity

- Defined:
  - Produce ideas and alternatives
  - Consider multiple solutions
- Suggested questions:
  - What are some alternative solutions?
  - What is a new way to do this?



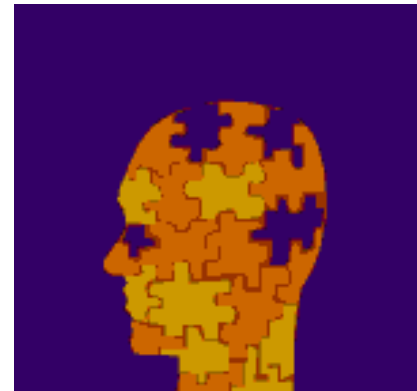
# Clarification

- Defined:
  - Involves skills of noting similarities and differences, identifying assumptions, and defining terms
- Suggested Questions:
  - Compare and contrast concepts
  - What are the assumptions?
  - What are the meanings of the terms?



# Cognitive Apprenticeship

- Modeling
- Coaching
- Scaffolding
- Articulation
- Reflection
- Exploration
- Fading



Collins, Brown, & Holum, 1991;  
Taylor & Care, 1999

- Modeling
  - Preceptor performs a task
  - New nurse observes – builds conceptual model
- Coaching
  - Preceptor offers hints, support, & feedback
  - Aimed at bringing the new nurse's performance closer to expert's behavior



- Scaffolding
  - Preceptor uses many types of support
  - Provides ‘just enough’ support/guidance
- Articulation
  - Student describes knowledge, reasons, or thinking processes
  - In this way knowledge and processes can be observed, understood, shared

- Reflection
  - Compare practice to previous practice or with the practice of expert practitioners (i.e. preceptor)
- Exploration
  - Preceptor helps find opportunities for new nurse to pose and solve real problems

- Fading
  - As new nurse becomes more competent, preceptor gradually withdraws
  - New nurse moves from 'other' to 'self'-regulation

# Impact of Feedback/Evaluation on the Development of Critical Thinking

# Feedback/Evaluation

- Skills that need to be explicitly taught and practiced
- Skillfully done, feedback can help new nurses in their thinking processes
- Consider generational issues
- New nurses report wanting more feedback
- Frequently cited as an important skill in effective precepting

# Impact of Work Environment on Critical Thinking

# Relational Process – Impact on Critical Thinking

## **Inhibits**

- Role conscious
- Constraining
- Closed
- Unsafe
- Unquestioning

## **Promotes**

- Respect
- Flexibility
- Openness
- Trust
- Skepticism

(Myrick and Yonge, 2004)

# Learning in Practice – Situated Learning

- Reflection in action
- Legitimate peripheral participation
- Communities of practice
- Authentic activities

Lave & Wenger, 1991;  
Taylor & Care, 1999



# Evaluating Critical Thinking

# Instruments to Evaluate Critical Thinking

- Tools specific to nursing are not readily available (Simpson & Courtney, 2002)
- Watson-Glasser Critical Thinking Assessment
- California Critical Thinking Test

# Other Methods to Evaluate/Assess Critical Thinking

- Clinical simulation rating critical thinking (Todd, et al., 2008)
- Clinical decision making via computer (Finke, et al., 2001)
- Nurse Competence Scale (Meretoja, Isoaho, &Leino-Kilpi (2004)

# Other Methods to Evaluate/Assess Critical Thinking

- Analysis of journaling regarding situation analysis (Sorrell, et al., 1997)
- Reflective contextual learning intervention (CLI) (Forneris & Peden-McAlpine, 2007)
- Context dependent items (Oermann, et al., 2000)