

# Thinking Skills Students Need to Excel in the Clinical Setting

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## ABSTRACT

Healthcare facilities are demanding that their workforce possess the ability to critically think in real-time at the bedside. Nursing programs must consider what dedicated and well-planned activities can be used to develop higher-level thinking in nursing students. The NCSBN Practice Analysis gives nurse educators clear insight into the information that nurses will need during the first twelve months of their professional practice. Carroll Community College has transitioned to evaluating student's thinking in the clinical area by asking high-level Socratic questions during the clinical day versus from the paperwork submitted after the clinical day has ended. The goal is to determine if the student has the ability to articulate what the patient needs at point-of-care. Clinical faculty use targeted questions and activities that reflect the NCSBN Practice Analysis as well as priority nursing care. This presentation will demonstrate clear direction to create targeted and embedded clinical activities that create and build student critical thinking and judgment skills.

## BACKGROUND

- Written paperwork takes precious time away from providing direct patient-care
- Grading written assessments post clinical leads to a delayed evaluation of student critical thinking skills
- The value of immediate feedback and correction of inaccurate thinking was lost due to delay in grading
- New graduate nurses lack accurate clinical judgement skills the time of point-of-care service
- Carroll Community College eliminated clinical paperwork beginning Spring 2019 to allow time for students and faculty to focus on Just-In-Time thinking

## OBJECTIVES

- Explore best practice in clinical nursing education.
- Identify clinical learning activities that promote critical thinking skills.
- Explain the need to reinforce the NCSBN practice analysis in the clinical setting.

## CLINICAL FACULTY TRAINING

- All full and part-time clinical faculty attend a four hour orientation and training session each semester
- These training sessions focused on Socratic questioning at the appropriate level for students
- During this session, robust discussion on: how to question students appropriately, types of questions to ask, and when that questioning should occur
- The clinical coordinator stayed in constant communication with all clinical faculty throughout the term to answer questions, role model questioning, and provide support

## CLINICAL TOOLS/SUPPORT

- Small portable binders were made for all clinical faculty containing training and support materials for easy reference
- All binders included a Clinical Instructor Toolkit. This toolkit links items in the NCSBN practice analysis with questions/activities that faculty can use to target areas of weakness for each student
- For these changes in clinical teaching to be effective, immediate and clear feedback from the instructor to the students is vital. Examples of constructive feedback were provided in the faculty binders.
- The clinical coordinator visited every clinical site to answer any questions faculty had, address student concerns, and if needed, model Socratic questioning

Related Activity Statements from the 2017 RN Practice Analysis: Linking the NCLEX-RN Examination to Practice	Sample Clinical Activity/Socratic Question
Integrate advance directives into client plan of care	Review patients advance directives, If they do not have one, google MOLST form
Assign and supervise care provided by others (e.g., LPN/VN, assistive personnel, other RNs)	Have students make a list of tasks that they could delegate throughout the day
Organize workload to manage time effectively	Have students fill out different time management tools during the day

## NEXT STEPS

- Surveys to all clinical faculty to see what went well/ what could be improved upon
- Clinical coordinator establishing a concrete plan to check-in formally with each instructor bi-weekly to discuss student performance concerns
- Creating weekly cards that instructors can have in their pocket with options for Socratic questioning for a consistent focus throughout the clinical groups
- Formal evaluation of clinical faculty to determine that Socratic questioning requirements with students are being met
- Track student and adjunct faculty satisfaction and retention



## REFERENCES

- National Council of State Boards of Nursing (2019). 2017 RN Practice Analysis: Linking the NCLEX-RN Examination to Practice. Retrieved from <https://www.ncsbn.org/12095.htm>
- National League for Nursing (2019). Shellenbarger, T. (Ed.) Clinical Nurse Educator Competencies: Creating an Evidence-Based Practice for Academic Clinical Nurse Educators. Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer