**Application of Mezirow’s Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) to Simulation in Nursing Education**

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### Problem

- Nursing is one of the largest and fastest growing occupations worldwide (AACN, 2017).
- Nearly 3 million nurses currently working in the US (AACN, 2017; Grant, 2016).
- Growing concern that this will remain an inadequate workforce to provide quality care in the very near future (AACN, 2017; Juraschek, Zhang, Ranganathan, & Lim, 2012).
- 700,000 nurses are expected to retire by 2024, leaving 1 to 1.2 million vacant positions (AACN, 2017; Grant, 2016; Juraschek et al., 2012; Richardson, 2011).
- Schools of nursing challenged to increase numbers of students; turning to simulation to fulfill clinical requirements (Hayden, Smiley, Alexander, Kandorg-Edgner, & Jeffries, 2014).
- Simulation standards and best practices exist (Jeffries, Rodgers, & Adamson, 2015, September/October; NACSL Standards Committee, 2016), yet there is a gap in the literature regarding how students learn through simulation.
- TLT, when juxtaposed with a simulation-based learning experience (SBLE), provides insight as to how nursing students may be learning through simulation.

### Purpose

- The purpose of this presentation is to explain how the 10 phases of TLT apply to SBLE; prebriefing, simulation, debriefing, and repeat simulation.

### Assumptions of TLT

- Educational shift from classical “stimulus-response theory” towards a “more progressive constructivist/transformational” approach (Keating, 2006, p. 50).
- TLT is a constructivist theory.
- Adult learners utilize past life experiences as a reference when constructing new meaning (Mezirow, 1995).
- New experiences open the door to learning and greater self-understanding and, in the process, transform learner’s personal paradigm (Mezirow, 1991).
- Transformation is a change in the way a person views a problem (Kitchenham, 2008) and/or how a person thinks, feels, and behaves (Christie, Carey, Robertson, & Granger, 2015; Nohl, 2015).
- TLT assumes learners are adults (Mezirow, 1997).
  - Adults gain a greater sense of accomplishment and knowledge by performing hands-on tasks and seek practical application of new knowledge in their everyday lives (Keasey, 2010).
  - Assumes learners are capable of rational thought and discourse (Merriam, 2004; Mezirow, 1997).

###Definitions

- **Frames of Reference:** “structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. They selectively shape and delimit expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feeling” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5).
- **Habits of Mind:** “broad, abstract, orienting, habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting influenced by assumptions that constitute a set of codes.” These codes may be cultural, social, educational, economic, political, or psychological (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5-4).
- **Points of View:** “the constellation of belief, value judgment, attitude, and feeling that shapes a particular interpretation” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 4).

###Limitations of TLT

- Assumption that all learners are capable of rational discourse during the debriefing stage of simulation cannot be met for every SBLE, due to individual student ability.
- Simulated learning environment is not exactly the same for every learner, based on the students actions and the facilitator’s response; this may influence learning outcomes.
- Phases 8-10 may not occur; repeat simulation is not always possible, given facilitator and curricular time constraints.

###Recommendations for Future Research

- Explore how repeated simulation experiences effect transformation in nursing students’ habits of mind and points of view.
- Utilize TLT as a framework to investigate how and where learning occurs within nursing SBLEs.
- Incorporate TLT in designing educational nursing research to further determine its applicability to a wide variety of nursing topics.

###Support of TLT from the Literature

1. Humans have a natural tendency to reinforce their existing points of view;  
2. Points of view will only change when challenged;  
3. Humans seek out new experiences in order to challenge their points of view;  
4. Repetition of experience, self-reflection, and discourse with others transforms points of view and habits of mind, resulting in a paradigm shift for the learner (Brock, 2010; Grabeve, 1997; Mezirow, 1997; Nohl, 2015).

###References

References available upon request.