For schools of nursing a common essential outcome for their programs is the ability to develop critical thinkers. The need for critical thinkers in the current healthcare environment cannot be overstated (Kramer, 1993), with some identifying, the need being essential to decreasing errors of judgment that can lead to patient death (IOM, 2004). In 2015, the National League for Nursing (NLN) identified the technique of debriefing as a strategy that has the potential to foster critical reflection further asserting that critical reflection is central to being critical. In the 2015 call to action the NLN declared the need to integrate debriefing across nursing curriculum for its potential to transform nursing education. Prior to NLN’s call to action the act of debriefing or engaging in critical reflection was predominantly used in simulation though clinical nurse educators would employ a type of debriefing strategy in their post-clinical discussions. Within the context of clinical learning, traditionally students and faculty engaged in face to face discussions with the intended outcome being that students engaged in critical reflection. The purpose of these post-clinical discussions was to permit students to reflect upon their day engaging in an exchange of ideas between themselves and faculty (Gaberson & Oermann, 2010). The concern for nurse educators however are issues of student fatigue, time constraints at end of day, lack of available clinical space to conduct face to face debriefings, and student’s own need for more time to process their clinical experience as barriers to full student participation in the reflection process (Neumeier & Small, 2014). The purpose of this study was to explore the use of active, varied, interesting, and open-ended discussion (A.V.I.D) questions (Pollack, 2017) as a debriefing method in an online environment in order to improve the critical reflection process and develop the skills and habits of the mind of critical thinking as defined by Scheffer and Rubenfeld (2000). By implementing post-clinical discussions online (Mahoney, Marfurt, daCunha, & Engebretson, 2005; Moran, 2005), it was anticipated that the identified concerns of a more traditional post-clinical format would disappear leaving room for improved student engagement in the debriefing process thus leading to increased critical reflection and critical thinking. Findings indicated that while students were satisfied with an online format, their ability to demonstrate increased skills or habits related to critical thinking remained essentially unchanged. Further research needs to be implemented using the A.V.I.D method with increased attention to integrating the skills and habits of the mind of critical thinking when developing discussion questions in order to more fully evaluate the method’s ability to provide a meaningful learning experience for the student.

Title:
Developing Critical Thinkers Through the Use of A.V.I.D. Discussions

Keywords:
Critical Thinking, Education Practice and Technology

References:


Abstract Summary:
As online learning becomes more common, a growing challenge is engaging students and developing critical thinkers through meaningful interactions. Active, varied, interesting, and open-ended discussions (A.V.I.D) in an online environment have the potential to promote the learning of skills and habits of the mind of critical thinking.
Content Outline:

Introduction:

Why do we need critical thinkers in healthcare?

Critical thinking defined (Scheffer & Rubenfeld, 2000).

What are current strategies for developing critical thinkers (CT) in the clinical setting.

Main Point #1

An inability to think critically has been linked to errors of judgment which lead to patient death (IOM, 2004). Face to face post-clinical discussions are meant to foster critical reflection that help a student link past learning to new situations (Brookfield, 1986).

Main Point #2

Face to face post-clinical discussions, while meant to improve critical reflection and thus develop CT, have issues such as student fatigue, time constraints at end of day, lack of available clinical space to conduct face to face debriefings, and student own need for more time to process their clinical experience (Neumeier & Small, 2014).

Main Point #3

Using an online post-clinical discussion strategy has the potential to promote the development of the skills and habits of the mind of critical thinking. Using the A.V.I.D. approach to creating discussion questions promotes increased student engagement since discussion questions can be developed using real life situations experienced by the students on the clinical unit.

Conclusions:

An online post-clinical discussion format indicated strong student satisfaction.

There is a need to link the skills and habits of the mind more purposefully to the A.V.I.D discussion questions.

First Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

Maria Young, PhD
College of Health and Human Services
Indiana University Northwest
Assistant Professor of Nursing
Gary IN
USA

Professional Experience: Have been in nursing 38 years overall, have worked as an ACNS-BC in cardiac care and have taught in both State and Private BSN programs for 8 years.

Author Summary: Dr. Young has been teaching in undergraduate programs for 8 years following 30
years in acute care settings. Her passion lies in helping her students transition into practice through facilitating critical reflection and learning critical thinking.