Use of debriefing in concept-based learning activities: Optimizing integration of theory and practice in care of specialty populations

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GOAL: Optimize integration of theory and practice through skilled debriefing of Concept-Based Learning in the care of specialty populations

BACKGROUND
- The current clinical environment and demands on nursing practice require innovative, planned approaches to clinical education.
- Educator time is spent on task completion and monitoring patient assignments to ensure care is provided; significant student downtime exists (Ironside, McNelis, & Ebright, 2014).
- References to didactic learning or using this knowledge in clinical situations is limited (McNelis et al 2014).
- In concept-based learning, focus shifts from content and tasks to key concepts of care to enhance generalization to other situations (Getha-Eby, Berry, Xu, & Oo-Brien, 2014; Nielsen, 2016).

CONCEPT-BASED LEARNING ACTIVITIES (CBLAS) IN CLINICAL
- Students examine a key concept in patient care (such as fluid and electrolyte balance or cardiac output) without assuming responsibility for total patient care through:
  - Categorical preparation for study about the concept
  - Review of the patient records
  - Physical examination of the patient
  - Analysis of findings specific to the patient and care recommendations
  - Discussion with the educator and with student colleagues

STUDENT REFLECTION ON IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS
In focus groups, students consistently described time with the educator for discussion, educator questioning of students, and answering student questions as a key to in-depth understanding the concept. Nielsen, 2016

“I have learned so much from the debrief. It helped clarify and solidify a lot of my information and questions. I learned more from the debrief than the prep before.” (Student participant, Winter 2018).

“It makes the information accessible long-term, solidifies confusing concepts.” (Student participant, Winter, 2018).

DEBRIEFTING IN SIMULATION
“Debriefing, as a methodology supports movement of thinking from “knowing what” to “knowing how” to “knowing why.” (NLN, 2015)

METHODS SKILLED DEBRIEFTING
- Review relevant theory to ensure background knowledge
- Focus in-depth on clinical expression of concept in 2-3 patients having different diagnosis and/or ages
- Compare and contrast concept presentation among the different patients
- Articulate themes of how concept presents
- “Take home messages” in how to improve practice to integrate concept into student’s personal practice.

NEXT STEPS
- A research study of the impact of debriefing specifically to facilitate deeper learning from concept-based learning activities.

References