

Clinical Questioning

Description: Active dialogue between clinical faculty and students, as well as among students that examines unique clinical situations with the intent of developing critical thinking skills (Phillips & Duke, 2001). Questioning can be an effective teaching strategy that encourages student reflection and exploration of assumptions to develop clinical judgment (Tanner, 2006; Brookfield, 2007).

Background: Socrates is often viewed as the originator of using the questioning technique to promote understanding. Research suggests clinical faculty tend to focus on factual questioning and recall information, rather than critical thinking aimed at analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. Faculty need to be coached in higher level thinking since inquiry and questioning are now viewed as essential for reflective practitioners (Phillips & Duke, 2001).

How Does Questioning Help Students Think Critically?

- Integrates knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a critical thinker
- Encourages students to move toward higher level thinking
- Assists students to view a situation from different perspectives and explore assumptions
- Encourages students to recognize, value, and respect thinking
- Stimulates reflections on action and thinking

How Does Questioning Become More Effective in Facilitating Critical Thinking?

- Clinical Teacher asks a question and then is quiet to give the students time to think
- Creation of Dialogue among faculty and student
- A faculty-student climate of support, openness, and trust
- Faculty role model and share aloud how they are thinking
- Clinical faculty reflects on their own questioning techniques
- Questions that focus on the thinking rather than task mastery
- Encourage students to keep questioning by praising their inquiry
- Start where the learner is and offer challenges that incite the next level of thinking
- Develop questions that correspond to students' level of development
- Moving towards analysis, synthesis and evaluation questions

Questioning Strategies that Encourage Critical Thinking

- Consider Intellectual Standards
- Use Divergent Questioning Techniques
- Incorporate Questioning techniques that encourage reflection and exploration of the Context and Diverse Perspectives
- Clinical Conference Techniques

Resources:

- Brookfield, S. (2007, February 28). *Talking about Teaching and Learning: Developing Critical Thinking Skills for Students*. Conference presented at Minnesota State University Mankato.
- Phillips, N., & Duke, M., (2001). The questioning skills of clinical teacher and preceptors: a comparative study. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 33(4), 523-529.
- Sellepah, S., Hussey, T., Blackmore, A.M, & McMurray, A. (1998). The use of clinical questioning strategies by clinical teachers. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 28(1), 142- 148.
- Tanner, C.A. (2006). Thinking like a nurse: A research-based model of clinical judgment in nursing. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 45(6), 204-211.
- Weber, S. (2005). Promoting critical thinking in students. *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*. 17(6), 205-206.
- Whei Ming Su, & Masoodi, J, & Kopp, M. (2000). Teaching critical thinking in the clinical laboratory. *Nursing Forum*, 35(4), 30-35

Intellectual Standards

Clarity	Could you elaborate further? Could you give me an example? Could you illustrate what you mean?
Accuracy	How could we check on that? How could we find out if that is true? How could we verify or test that?
Precision	Could you be more specific? Could you give me more details? Could you be more exact?
Relevance	How does that relate to the problem? How does that bear on the question? How does that help us with the issue?
Depth	What factors make this a difficult problem? What are some of the complexities of this question? What are some of the difficulties we need to deal with?
Breadth	Do we need to look at this from another perspective? Do we need to consider another point of view? Do we need to look at this in other ways?
Logic	Does all this make sense together? Does your first paragraph fit in with your last? Does what you say follow from the evidence?
Significance	Is this the most important problem to consider? Is this the central idea to focus on? Which of these facts are most important?
Fairness	Do I have any vested interest in this issue? Am I sympathetically representing the view points of others?

A Summary of Questions to ask in applying Intellectual Standards to Thinking

“Universal intellectual standards are standards which must be applied to thinking whenever one is interested in checking the quality of reasoning about a problem, issue, or situation. Thinking critically entails having command of these standards. To help students learn them, teachers should pose questions which probe student thinking, questions which hold students accountable for their thinking, questions which, through consistent use by the teacher in the classroom, become internalized by students as questions they need to ask themselves.” (Elder & Paul, 1996)

Elder, L., & Paul, R. (1996). Universal Intellectual Standards. Retrieved August 5, 2007, from Foundation for Critical Thinking. <http://www.criticalthinking.org/resources/articles/universal-intellectual-standards.html>

Examples of Questions Relating to Blooms Taxonomy

<u>Category</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Knowledge	What is insulin dependent diabetes mellitus? How should you assess pain? What is a normal pH?
Comprehension	What are some of the different signs? Can you tell me how this might be done? Why is it important to take blood glucose levels? Explain why the gangrenous right toe is a consequence of peripheral vascular disease and neuropathy?
Application	How would you care for this lady in regards to her activities of daily living? Apply what you know about fatigue in heart failure to her discharge teaching.
Analysis	What do you think the rationale for holding this analgesia would be at this point in time? What do you think this diagnosis means to him and his family?
Synthesis	How do you think you are going to teach her to care for this wound at home? Propose a plan of care for this patient and family at this point in time?
Evaluation	What do you consider to be the most important aspects of caring for this patient? How are you doing related to this priority? If we sent the patient home today, with his current level of understanding of his diagnosis, how would he manage his illness?

Adapted from:

Phillips, N. & Duke, M. (2001). The questioning skills of clinical teachers and preceptors: a comparative study. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 33(4), 523-529.

Sellepah, S., Hussey, T., Blackmore, A.M, & McMurray, A. (1998). The use of clinical questioning strategies by clinical teachers. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 28(1), 142-148.

Examples of Different Types of Questions To Encourage Critical Thinking

<u>Type</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Affective	How has this day been for you?
Multifaceted	What happens when your brain lacks oxygen? What can happened? What kind of symptoms do you see?
Probing	Would you like to go back to step one?
Contextual	What do you think might be happening in his environment to create this feeling?
Diverse Perspective	What would be a different way to view this situation?

Adapted from:

Sellepah, S., Hussey, T., Blackmore, A.M, & McMurray, A. (1998). The use of clinical questioning strategies by clinical teachers. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 28(1), 142-148.

Brookfield, S. (2007, February 28). Talking about Teaching and Learning: Developing Critical Thinking Skills for our Students. Paper presented at Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Minnesota State University Mankato.

Examples of Questions Directed Toward Development of the Student

<u>Student Level</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Novice or Beginning	How did you decide where nursing care should begin today? What happened during your intervention that you expected to happen? From the unexpected outcome what did you learn? How do you think this session was helpful to your patient?
Intermediate or Middle	What other approaches did you consider? Tell me factors that caused you to choose this choice? How would you support your action if questioned by someone in the patient's family?
Advanced or Ending	What new questions or thoughts do you have about your future care based on this experience? How do you think you would approach this situation differently next time?

Adapted from:

Weber, S. (2005). Promoting critical thinking in students. *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*. 17(6), 205-206.

Questions to Stimulate Student Thinking in Clinical Conferences

Developed by Minnesota State University Mankato Faculty

January, 2007

What one thing went well today?

If you had an opportunity to do something over what would it be?

What was your biggest ah-hah, light bulb, most comfortable, least comfortable?

How did you make a difference today?

What nursing practice that you witnessed was good? Needs improvement?

What stood out about the patient's family experience today that would you describe as suffering?

If you were in that person's body today what would you have needed the nurse to know?

How did you determine what your client needed most?

Were your priorities the same or different from your patient? Family?

What did you wonder about today?

How did the medications contribute toward or away from wellness?

What do you think is the most interesting /important thing to talk about?

What was the most important nursing you were doing for the patient today?

Questions to Stimulate Thinking in Preconferences

- On what evidence have you reached your conclusions?
- How do these pieces of data relate to each other?
- How did you validate each piece of evidence?
- What other data do you think you need?
- What factors may alter the accuracy of your data?
- What are the gaps in your supporting data?
- What are the different possibilities for clustering this data?
- What relationships do you see in the data?
- What other possibilities or views can you see in this situation?
- What additional data do you need to rule in / out these possibilities?
- How might the client/family perceive this situation? How might they see it differently from each other? from you? What thoughts do you have about why they may see it differently?

Adapted from:

Whei Ming Su, & Masoodi, J, & Kopp, M. (2000). Teaching critical thinking in the clinical laboratory. *Nursing Forum*, 35(4), 30-35.