

“To teach and precept with the hands on the back” - reflective questioning in clinical education

Reflective questioning is a strategy used by preceptors in clinical settings to support nursing students in their learning process. By relying on questioning rather than straight answers the students' critical thinking, which is the basis for problem solving and clinical reasoning, is promoted (Barnum, 2008). By being forced to think, reflect and express their own thoughts and knowledge, students achieve greater awareness of their actions (Lee & Barnett, 1994). Reflective questioning promotes students' independent learning, they grow in knowledge, learn to solve problems and adapt to complex challenges, which is fundamental to a professional way of working (Stoddard & O'Dell, 2016).

The aim of the study was to elucidate preceptors' experience of using reflective questioning in precepting undergraduate nursing students in clinical education. Ten precepting nurses in a Swedish hospital, all with experience of perception with reflective questioning, were interviewed individually. Content analysis was used for data analysis.

The findings showed that reflective questioning was considered an effective method in preception. The nurses were positive towards using reflective questioning but found lack of time and stress in the workplace challenging. According to the nurses, the method helped students realize that they knew more than they thought they did, and it impelled them to actively search information. Using reflective questioning in perception was beneficial in helping students interweave theory and clinical practice and get a better understanding of nursing care.

Given the benefits of the method, there is reason to educate nurses more systematically in using reflective questioning and thus facilitate students learning in clinical education.

References:

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