Creating a Positive Learning Environment

| Purpose | The topic, Creating a Positive Learning Environment, provides a conceptual approach for reviewing a variety of strategies to enhance active learning, critical thinking and clinical reasoning for clinical students. This conceptual approach also helps to summarize many of the points made throughout the two-day workshop. |
| Time | 90 Minutes |
| Outline | Objectives  
Model as Initial Coaching Guide  
Critical Thinking  
Clinical Reasoning  
Active Learning  
Stories and Cases  
Using Questions  
Reflection  
Writing to Learn  
Technology Tools  
Feedback: Affirming and Challenging |
| Materials Needed | □ PowerPoint Slides 10-1 through 10-27  
□ Small pad of paper or sticky notes for students to use for group exercises |
Opening
PPT 10-1
This is an opportunity, as the presenter, to reflect on and share a brief story of a favorite teacher and how that teacher influenced you. Ask participants to jot down their memories of a favorite teacher as well. Then ask participants to consider, as the session progresses, if their teacher used any similar teaching strategies.

Objectives
PPT 10-2 and 10-3
Introduce the objectives for the session and the specific active learning strategies that will be explored.
Model as Initial Coaching Guide

PPT 10-4
Styles (2008) suggested that professions should be able to conceptualize components of their practice. Three conceptual areas that can be considered by clinical educators are shared on this slide. Ask participants to self-reflect on what each item means to them as you discuss each point. Suggested questions to generate reflection and/or discussion include:

- **Naming your product:** What is it that we do as clinical educators?
- **Using best practices:** Where do we access information about best practices in our clinical educator role?
- **Using your resources:** What will be in your lab coat pocket the first clinical morning?

Critical Thinking and Clinical Reasoning

PPT 10-5

What do we already know about critical thinking and clinical reasoning? What do we need to know about them? Ask participants to complete the self-reflection activity on the bottom of page 1 (Tab 10) in their participant notebook. This self-reflection provides an opportunity to meld personal experiences with theory based perspectives from the literature.

Critical Thinking Concepts

PPT 10-6

After asking several participants to share their comments about what critical thinking means to them, ask the group as a whole to compare their responses to some of the more common concepts/considerations noted by Alfaro-LeFevre (2017) that are incorporated within critical thinking.
Clinical Reasoning and Clinical Judgment
PPT 10-7
To summarize this discussion, a simple descriptor I like to use is: “Critical thinking allows us to solve problems in context.” Share the analogy of taking the written care plan and then crumpling it up; it still will be used, but students have to think about how they use it in the continuously changing context of the clinical environment.

Active Learning
PPT 10-8
This slide continues the participant self-reflection activity completed as a part of the critical thinking and clinical reasoning activity (page 1, Tab 10, participant notebook). Again, this is an opportunity for participants to meld personal experiences with theory based perspectives from the literature that is provided.

Active Learning Concepts
PPT 10-9
After requesting several participants to share their comments about what active learning means to them, a summary statement such as the following can be provided: Active learning approaches help students engage with the content and make learning their own. Active learning incorporates application of concepts and leads to increased mastery and retention of content.

Active learning examples that will be discussed include the following: Stories and Cases; Using Questions; Building on Reflection; Writing to Learn; Using Technology Tools; and Feedback (Affirming and Challenging).
Stories and Cases, Benefits and Examples
PPT 10-10 and 10-11

Sample benefits specific to narratives include comments such as the following: Narratives such as stories and cases provide participants opportunity to share their experiences and learn from others. Stories and cases can engage students, convey information, promote connectedness, and promote problem solving (i.e., by asking *What next?*)

Examples for selected points on this slide can be provided as time allows. Examples might include:

- **Student stories**: Participants can be queried about their personal experiences (even prior to clinical) with someone with a chronic illness such as Alzheimer’s disease. This helps faculty identify beginning assessment data about what students know and do not know about a topic.
- **Cases**: Cases can be used to extend perspectives about certain illnesses. For example, a scenario could be provided of two different patients, one with early Parkinson’s disease and one with late stage Parkinson’s disease. Students are then encouraged to think about the various nursing needs at various stages of a disease.
- **Difficult scenarios**: Stories can begin discussions about difficult scenarios. For example, a scenario about late stage feeding issues for a patient with Alzheimer’s disease might be shared to begin discussions of ethical issues.
- **What’s wrong with this picture?** Actual visuals can be shared as a different approach to helping students identify and discuss clinical problem solving in a safe environment.

Using Questions
PPT 10-12

Questions are a key tool for learning and serve as a great strategy for engaging and extending learning situations. Questions are also useful when starting post conferences or discussions to stimulate student interest. It may be helpful to provide an example of a favorite question with application to many situations. A favorite question I like to share is, “What if?”
General Question Guidelines
PPT 10-13
Discuss theory-based perspectives relevant to questioning. Broad categories of learning provide direction in questioning and evaluation. The example of a teenager learning to drive a car provides an example of each of the learning categories: the need to know driving rules (cognitive learning); demonstrating actual driving ability (behavioral learning); and ethical responsibilities with driving (affective learning).

Assessing Cognitive Knowledge (Bloom’s Taxonomy)
PPT 10-14 and 10-15
Blooms taxonomy provides a broad guideline for leveling questions to be asked of students. The six levels of Bloom’s taxonomy and a sample question for each are outlined in the participant notebook (page 3, Tab 10). Provide examples of questions that can be used to assess students’ knowledge. Use a medication such as Coumadin for showing a progression from repeating facts to knowledge of situations. Another example could be preparing a patient with stroke for discharge.

Using a Handout to Learn about Questioning
PPT 10-16
Handouts can be useful teaching tools in the clinical setting. Worksheet 1 (page 7, Tab 10) provides opportunities first, to consider different ways to use questions in the clinical setting and second, a simple way that new faculty can use a handout to guide clinical discussions. For example, use this worksheet to ask participants to review and identify their favorite three questions. Then survey the class. Participants gain knowledge of varying question formats as part of this survey process. As time allows, participants can form groups for a discussion of the cases provided in Worksheet 2 (page 8, Tab 10).
Further Tools for Active Learning
PPT 10-17
This slide serves as a preview of the additional strategies to be explored: reflection, writing to learn, technology tools, and feedback.

Reflection: Benefits
PPT 10-18
Review the benefits on the slide. Reflection provides opportunity to engage one’s thinking specific to experiences and to learn from these experiences. It relates as well to opportunities to use positive imaging to help achieve future goals.

Reflection: Examples
PPT 10-19
Share examples for selected types of reflection as time allows. Examples could include:
- Mental rehearsals and cognitive framing: helping students positively visualize and mentally practice a clinical skill.
- Hindsight 20/20: helping students reflect on a problem area (or a positive incident) and reflect on what has been learned.
- Self-assessments and goal setting: asking students to clarify how self-assessments of their clinical days’ activities match up with their clinical objectives for the day and what further goals might be needed.

Ask participants to complete the affirming and challenging each other questions in their notebook (page 5 Tab 10) as part of this learning activity. Remind participants they were introduced to reflection as a component of clinical evaluation (Reference Tab 6 – presentation manual).
Ask participants to complete a brief writing activity (even 1-2 minutes) where they summarize the top two things they have learned or want to remember from the workshop. This activity and accompanying slide provides opportunity to make the points that writing is a form of thinking; that it involves a reflective component to help discover and shape meaning; that it helps us build on what we already know; and it helps us to remember and process information.

Provide examples for selected points on this slide as time allows. Selected tools and strategies to be shared could include Benner’s (2009) strategies for narratives. This writing activity in particular can help students see the good things they are accomplishing. Worksheet 3 provides examples of prompts to help nurses and students share their stories. Sample vignettes are provided. Benefits of written portfolios might also be addressed including narratives written at the beginning and end of a rotation to help students document progress over time.

Benefits to be shared are listed. Rote memorization is no longer adequate for learning. As students are bombarded with more and more information, technology can be a tool to help them stay organized. Technology can also serve as a tool for the instructor in promoting student/faculty communication and enhance clinical learning.
Technology: Selected Tools and Strategies
PPT 10-23
Ask participants to provide examples (and share your own) for selected points on this slide as time allows. Sample strategies for using technologies include: clinical learning labs with the benefits of high fidelity patient simulators in promoting safe student learning; Personal Digital Assistants with opportunities for promoting student organization in the clinical setting as well as the efficient use of resources; and web-based conferencing as a tool for discussions including both pre- and post-clinical strategies.

Feedback: Affirming and Challenging
PPT 10-24
Use this slide to make the following point: that one useful definition specific to the role of feedback is to communicate information that assists students to reflect/interact with the information, to construct self-knowledge relevant to course learning, and to set further learning goals (Bonnel).

Feedback: Sample Strategies
PPT 10-25
Provide examples for selected points on this slide as time allows. Sample strategies for providing and promoting use of feedback might include: coaching students to seek and use feedback; challenging student to self-reflect and set further learning goals; and using qualitative tools to synthesize data for feedback (multiple sources such as interview, observation, and document review). Remind participants that feedback as a component of clinical evaluation was introduced in the Tab 5 and Tab 6 presentations.
Summary: Facilitating Learning in the Clinical Environment

PPT 10-26 and 10-27

Use these two slides to summarize the listed objectives and the active learning tools to promote critical thinking. As the session concludes, instruct participants to select one of the tools that were discussed and set a goal for using it with an upcoming clinical group.

- Integrate active learning best practices to:
  - Facilitate critical thinking in clinical settings
  - Stimulate learning
  - Create a positive learning environment

Active Learning Strategies to Consider
- Stories and Cases
- Using Questions
- Building on Reflection
- Writing to Learn
- Using Technology Tools
- Affirming and Challenging (Feedback)