

Assessing foundation pediatric nursing knowledge and critical thinking ability of the registered nurse before orientation: A case study

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Critical thinking is a cognitive process in which the registered nurse (RN) must have a secure foundation of knowledge in a specific domain. The process of thinking critically at the bedside includes a rational analysis of that knowledge to engage in clinical reasoning so as to make appropriate clinical judgments and bedside clinical decisions impacting patient care. An exam evaluating the critical thinking ability and foundation knowledge in pediatric nursing concepts has been discussed in the literature and implemented in various formats at children's hospitals in the United States. This instrument, Pre-Requisite Exam for Pediatrics (PREP), is an internet based exam specifically aimed to determine the strengths and weaknesses in various pediatric concepts of a RN in order to structure the clinical orientation to improve the knowledge foundation of necessary concepts. Consistent use of the PREP results to meet the educational needs and subsequent critical thinking processes has met resistance. This case study discusses the impact on the orientation and assimilation of an experienced RN newly hired into a pediatric hospital when the results did not structure the orientation process. Specific knowledge weaknesses negatively impacted the RNs ability to assimilate into the unit culture, acquire support and respect of colleagues and more importantly patient safety. Implications for practice and the evidenced based practice outcomes for structuring an orientation to meet specific needs of a new nurse will be discussed.

Biography

Christina Ryan-Scott received her MSN in Nursing Administration at Armstrong Atlantic State University and her BSN at Mount Saint Mary's College in Los Angeles, California. Her 26 year consists of pediatric ICU nursing and nursing education. Ms. Ryan-Scott has been an assistant nursing professor at Brenau University and Auburn University. Her work as a Nurse Researcher and Education Coordinator at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and currently as a Clinical Education Specialist at Phoenix Children's Hospital has focused on improving the transition to practice for nurses. Ms. Ryan-Scott has publish in peer-reviewed journals and presented nationally on topics related to nursing education.

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