Case Studies and Role Plays to use with your Preceptors

P101 Administrators – AORN is providing these exercises from the Preceptor Course for your use in helping preceptors understand their role in preparing novice nurses.

CASE STUDIES

1. Using the information included in “Instructional implications of adult learner characteristics” found in this module, list the techniques that you might use to orient the following nurse to your department. Choose all that apply.

MS is a 42-year-old nurse returning to work after staying home for several years. She worked for 10 years before she left O.R. nursing. She has been out of school for a long time and is nervous about returning to work. She has just completed the classes required for nurses returning to practice after absences of greater than two years.

The following techniques will be helpful when orienting MS.

   1. Provide emotional support
   2. Opportunities for practice
   3. Emphasize relevance of content to job
   4. Opportunities for contributions
   5. Share goals and objectives

Answers: The nurse is experienced but out of work for some time now. In such a case, providing emotional support, opportunities for practice and opportunities for contributions would help the nurse immensely.

2. Using the information included in “Instructional implications of adult learner characteristics” found in this module, list the techniques that you might use to orient the following nurse to your department. Choose all that apply.

JB is a 35-year-old nurse with many years' experience in ICU. She wanted a change and has transferred to your department. JB is highly motivated to succeed and is a very capable person.

The following techniques will be helpful when orienting JB.

   1. Encourage discussions
   2. Share goals and objectives
   3. Provide emotional support
   4. Provide for overlearning
   5. Encourage self-evaluation

Answers: The nurse is experienced and self-motivated. For such a nurse, encouraging discussions, sharing goals and objectives and encouraging self-evaluation are appropriate techniques.

3. Using the information included in “Instructional implications of adult learner characteristics” found in this module, list the techniques that you might use to orient the following nurse to your department. Choose all that apply.
KF is 21 and is a newly graduated and licensed RN. He is eager, and excited to finally be practicing as a "real nurse." However, he is unsure of his abilities and is uncomfortable when told to do something and is not closely supervised.

The following techniques will be helpful when orienting KF.

1. Encourage learner to evaluation their own performance
2. Foster a sense of achievement
3. Provide for overlearning
4. Establish the need to know
5. Provide frequent reinforcement

Answers: The nurse is inexperienced, fears failure and expects to be supervised. In such a case, fostering a sense of achievement, providing for overlearning, providing frequent reinforcement will help.

4. Using the information included in "Instructional implications of adult learner characteristics" found in this module, list the techniques that you might use to orient the following nurse to your department. Choose all that apply.

WD is 55 years of age. She has had experience in many different work settings because she has moved around the country a lot with her husband who is in the military. She likes to do things her way and finds it difficult to change.

The following techniques will be helpful when orienting WD.

1. Encourage discussions
2. Allow learner to participate in setting the pace of the instruction
3. Foster a sense of achievement
4. Stress the "need to know" information
5. Show respect for the learners age

Answers: The nurse is experienced, self-directed, but resistant to change. In such a case, encouraging discussions, allowing learner to participate in setting the pace of instruction and stressing the "need to know" for new information would help the nurse immensely.

ROLE PLAYS

Problem #1: The learner who cannot understand what has been explained several times.

There are several nurses from a critical care unit (CCU) and Stepdown Unit attending a class about interpreting 12 lead EKG's. Among the attendees, there are nurses with all levels of experience from new graduates up to several years' cardiac experience. Some of the nurses seem to be having a hard time keeping up with the instructor; others seem to be keeping up easily. The instructor is becoming frustrated with one nurse in particular. That "blank look" has not left her face since the class started two hours ago. She is struggling with remembering what a P wave and QRS intervals are. She is unable to differentiate what is normal or abnormal for a simple EKG. The introduction that the instructor gave for 12 lead EKG really confused her.

1. What is the problem?
   a. Lacks confidence in the ability to learn
   b. Resistant to change
   c. Fears failure
   d. Anxious in new situations
2. What might the instructor do to resolve this problem?
   a. Provide opportunity for much practice
   b. Stress the “need to know for new information
   c. Foster a sense of achievement
   d. Provide frequent reinforcement

Participants in this role play should identify the following as primary reasons for the student’s difficulty in assimilating this knowledge. The learner may either lack confidence in their ability to learn or have a fear of failure. The instructor or preceptor may need to provide opportunities for practice, foster a sense of achievement, and/or provide frequent reinforcement.

Problem #2: The learner is unable to retain previously learned material.

Several nurses are attending a critical care course for the first time. The pharmacology instructor lectures for eight hours on various cardiac drugs covering mechanisms of action, anticipated effects, and side effects for each drug. The nurses stay up late studying for the unit test scheduled for the next morning. All pass the test; however, a week later on the final exam, they are unable to remember the information.

1. Why can’t the nurses remember the information a week later?
   a. No learner participation
   b. No practice time
   c. Learner is not physically/mentally ready
   d. Same strategy used all the time

2. What could the instructor do to improve retention of the information?
   a. Provide opportunity for practice
   b. Stress the “need to know for new information
   c. Increase learner participation
   d. Discuss the questions and answers

Participants in this role play should identify the following as primary reasons for the inability to remember the information a week later. The learner has not participated in the learning. Eight hours of lecture has provided too much information to be retained for any period of time. In addition, no practice time has been provided that would have helped the students “set” the information in their memory. It is hard to say if the nurses were physically or mentally ready, but this could certainly be another reason. The eight hours of lecture did not work because only one strategy, ie lecture, was used exclusively. The instructor needs to “change up” the method of presentation frequently to engage the learners.

Alternate response:

These nurses have been bombarded with eight hours of lecture. They need to have some interactivity and perhaps some practice time. The instructor needs to vary the strategy by either providing opportunities for practice or incorporating other participatory activities appropriate to the subject.

Problem #3: The learner is able to explain how to use a new piece of equipment but is unable to make it work.

A surgeon who practices at hospital "X" has just returned from a seminar at which she learned how to do a new procedure, which is a better treatment option for a particular condition. She has requested that a new piece of
equipment be purchased for the procedure. The surgeon is a good customer, so the hospital purchases the
equipment. A representative from the company comes to the OR and gives an inservice demonstration to all of
the OR staff. However, it is several weeks before the surgeon actually performs the procedure.
The first case is a disaster. Despite the inservice demonstration, no one knows how to operate the equipment.
The surgeon ends up using another piece of equipment and doing the "old" procedure. She is furious and
complains to the OR supervisor about the lack of knowledge of the staff members in the room.

1. Why weren't the staff members able to operate the equipment?
   a. Enough practice was not provided to the nurse
   b. The OR staff was not able to comprehend the information
   c. The OR staff had to wait for someone to use the new information
   d. The new information was irrelevant

2. What should the staff members and OR supervisor do to remedy the situation?
   a. Provide practice and repetition
   b. Provide for simulated learning
   c. Provide for testing the learned knowledge
   d. Provide for more demonstrations

Participants in this role play should identify that a variety of answers are appropriate for this scenario,
depending on your facility and its capabilities. In general, the reason staff were not able to operate the
equipment was because they had to wait some time to apply the knowledge they had acquired and sufficient
opportunity for practice was not provided. The OR manager and staff should arrange for more demonstration
and opportunities for practice and repetition. If you facility has the capabilities for simulation, this is an excellent
response.

Problem #4: Staff was required to attend an inservice and then take a written test on what they learned,
but once back to work, they did not follow the new policies and procedures learned in the inservice.

All staff members received inservice instruction on new isolation policies and procedures and were instructed to
follow them when caring for patients diagnosed as being colonized with resistant microorganisms (MRSA, VRE).
To ensure that the staff members understood the changes in the isolation policies and procedures, they had to
pass a written test at the end of the inservice.

Once the staff returned to work, however, they followed the new procedures only some of the time. The rest of
the time, they either ignored them or overcompensated and used more than the required precautions.

1. Why aren't the staff members following the new policies and procedures? (Assuming that the
   staff has the necessary supplies and equipment readily available to them.)
   a. Enough practice was not provided to the nurse
   b. No mental readiness to learn
   c. Enough practice not provided
   d. No learner participation
2. What should the instructor do to get the staff members to follow the new policies and procedures?
   a. Provide practice and repetition
   b. Encourage discussion and learner contribution
   c. Provide for overlearning
   d. Foster a sense of achievement

A variety of answers are appropriate for this scenario, depending on your facility and its capabilities. In general, the reason that staff did not consistently follow the new procedures were that they did not have time during the class to practice the procedure and may be resistant to change the way that they have done thinks in the past. The instructor should stress the need to know for this new isolation procedure and encourage discussion and learner contributions.