The Reflective Clinician: Specific Reflection Techniques to Enhance Student Learning in the Clinical Setting

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Course Objectives

- The participant will understand the basic student skills needed to participate in reflective practice in the clinic.
- The participant will understand the role of the clinical instructor in teaching and demonstrating reflective practice in the clinic.
- The participant will understand Schon’s reflective model and how it relates to clinical practice.
- The participant will identify questions that trigger reflection in the clinic.
- The participant will use Schon’s reflective model on the case studies presented.
- The participant will understand how to use the model in daily practice with clinical students (and novice clinicians).
Schedule

- Introduction to reflective practice
- Clinical Instructor as reflective teacher
- Student skills needed for clinical practice
- Overview of general decision making process
- The reflective practitioner model
- Student process for using the reflective model
- The role of the clinical instructor
- Case studies
Introduction

- LM was a 40 year old black female
  - Referral stated "post surgical equinus varus left ankle"
  - Arrived in an oversized wheelchair with her left ankle and foot wrapped in an ace bandage and a poorly fitting surgical boot
  - On observation, she was morbidly obese (approx. 350 lbs.) with extremely oversized, log-like lower extremities
- Aaron was four weeks into a twelve week CE 1 placement – this was the first new patient scheduled to manage all on his own
- As the clinical instructor, how should I proceed (especially given the “deer in headlights” look on Aaron’s face as we approach our new patient)?
Introduction

- **Challenge**
  - Help the student learn from the situation
  - Provide for the patient
  - Develop a patient-student-CI relationship based on trust and competence
  - And do all of that within the 60 minute timeframe allotted for new patients

- **Options**
  - Stand back and watch as the student does the initial evaluation
  - CI does the initial evaluation
  - Collaborative effort depending on the findings
First and foremost, the Clinical Instructor must be a reflective practitioner. Is this situation truly an unusual/unique one? What needs to be accomplished in this time frame? What are the boundaries? Given all that, what is the right thing to do (whether or not there is some happiness in the decision)? Finally, when faced with a challenging decision, an honest debriefing should be done afterwards.
Reality in Today’s Health Care

- Challenges for the clinician, the manager, the facility
  - Time pressures
  - Competing demands – clinical/administrative/research
  - Productivity demands
  - Opportunistic rather than planned experiences
  - Increasing numbers of students
  - Changes in patient care
    - Short inpatient stays (acute care and rehab)
    - High deductibles/copays plus decreased numbers of outpatient visits allowed
Common problems with clinical teaching
- Lack of consistent expectations - different curricula/student levels
- Academic focus on factual recall given copious amounts of material
- Teaching pitched at the wrong level
- Passive observation versus active participation
- Inadequate supervision and provision of feedback
- Little opportunity for reflection and discussion
- Lack of respect for patient dignity, privacy, consent

Importance of Planning
The Reflective Practitioner
CI as Reflective Teacher

- Lenses needed for critical reflection as the teacher
- Provide multiple perspectives
- Student’s perspective: how is student experiencing learning
- Patients’ perspective: is there trust of you and the student to get high quality care
- Colleague’s perspective: are there people with whom to share/critique experiences
- Personal perspective: how you feel the experience is going
- Theory perspective: are you using updated models of teaching/learning
The Reflective Practitioner: Student Skills

- Metacognition
  - Higher order thinking that allows for understanding and analysis of one’s thoughts
  - Reflection on thoughts/decisions is an integral part of this

- Attitudes
  - Flexibility
  - Accepting of feedback
  - Openness to new things
  - Curiosity

- Educational skills
  - Use of hypothetical-deductive and inductive reasoning from classroom experience
The Reflective Practitioner: Student Skills

- Student skills needed
  - Self awareness for assessment of how situation affected the situation
  - Description for recognition and recall of salient events
  - Critical analysis for challenging assumptions/identify & explore alternatives
  - Synthesis for integration of new knowledge with existing knowledge
  - Evaluation for judgement about value of something
The Reflective Practitioner: Overview in the Clinical Setting

- Narrative reasoning with questioning
  - Obtaining and understanding useful information from patient
- Interaction with the patient
  - Gaining trust
  - Getting what you need from the patient
- Showing active listening
- Asking follow-up questions
- Teaching the patient about your findings
The Reflective Practitioner: Overview in the Clinical Setting

- Organize knowledge and skills to develop diagnosis, prognosis, and plan
- Recognize and address conflicts, ambiguity & uniqueness of each case
- Construct and reconstruct knowledge around surprises/unusual situations
- Experiment wisely and safely to address conflicts and surprises
- Reflect on results and then act
  - What did you expect to happen?
  - What actually happened?
  - As a result what would you change/do differently next time?
The Reflective Practitioner – Bias

- Bias interferes with clinical decision making
  - Cognitive bias – knowledge base
  - Availability bias – ease of recall
  - Confirmation bias – selectively accepting or ignoring data
  - Anchoring bias – defending position
The Reflective Practitioner

- Donald A. Schon
  - The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action
  - Educating the Reflective Practitioner
- Reflective Model
  - Knowledge in Action: application of knowledge for decision making
  - Reflection in Action: spurred on by surprise, analyzing response and experimentation with actions on the spot
  - Reflection on Action: thinking back on why the surprises happened, effectiveness of the responses, what was learned

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The Reflective Practitioner – Role of CI

- Model reflection
  - Analyzing and reframing an experience for the purpose of learning and improving practice
  - Identify reasons for outcomes
  - Question underlying beliefs

- Develop specific and consistent strategies to make it less intimidating and scary for student and easier for a busy CI

- Be transparent in your thinking process and share it regularly without being overbearing

- Allow challenges from the student and be open to alternatives
The Reflective Practitioner: Student Process

- Continually ask questions to explore knowledge base
- Understanding the emotional belief system
- Finding meaning in what was learned
- Acknowledge questioning process as a way to grow, learn, develop, rather than a challenge or insult
- Develop an ongoing process of clinical learning through reflection as a way of professional development
The Reflective Practitioner: Student Process

- Acquire, assess, apply, and integrate new knowledge
- Learn to adapt to change
- Establish foundations for life-long learning and professional development
- Keep a professional development portfolio
- Continually and systematically reflect on practice with translation into improvement
The Reflective Practitioner: Reflection In Action in the Clinical Setting

- **Planning**
  - Writing down plan for each patient
  - Include what might be out of the norm (things that might happen)
  - Include what to assess (questions plus tests and measures) as well as treatment techniques
  - Identify evidence based practice techniques

- **Direct observation**
  - Critical to observe student in action – helps assess areas needing work

- **Think aloud processing**
  - What does that tell you
  - Does that make sense based on your hypothesis – if not, why not
The Reflective Practitioner
Basic Outline for the New Student

Basic outline

1) What went well?
2) Did anything surprise you?
3) What could you have done better?
4) Did you walk away knowing how to begin your management of the patient? If not, what information were you missing?
5) What would you do differently next time?

Students often interpret this as a different process than one they may have used in the classroom (possibly due to actual patient in front of them?)

Students are also in fear of failure and this fear must NOT interfere with regular reflection (although it’s a great tool for remediation)
Noticing/observation

- What just happened?
- What were you thinking when…?
- Did you notice that….?
- What surprised us in that case?
- How does it make you feel?
The Reflective Practitioner
CI Questions that Trigger Reflection

- Processing
  - Are we doing this the right way?
  - Are there alternatives?
  - Is this applicable to our setting?
  - What does this mean?
  - Why does it make you feel this way?
  - What are the consequences of you feeling this way?
  - Are we the right people to address this?
The Reflective Practitioner
CI Questions that Trigger Reflection

Future Action

- What do we need (resources, knowledge, skills) to solve this problem?
- What will we do differently next time?
- What are the barriers to…?
- What can facilitate…?
The Reflective Practitioner: Reflection On Action

- **Regular discussions** between CI/student – both impromptu and planned
- **Journaling**, especially helpful for students early in clinical education experience and for those struggling with processing, understanding, reflecting on the spot
- **Weekly goals** as a way to promote self assessment and as progress in clinical decision making and critical thinking skills over the course of the clinical experience
- **Facilitation** of the process by the CI as mentor improves chances of success
- **Reframing a problem** (helping the student look at it differently) and then planning to experiment with one or more solutions

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Clinical Situations/Remediation

- Student issues
  - Two on one
  - High level
  - Challenged

- Setting issues
  - Inpatient
    - Red flags/appropriateness for care
    - Level of functional assistance/needs/capacity
    - Disposition/what & who are at home/what will rehab provide and the difference
  - Outpatient
    - Determining PT diagnosis
    - Function, function, function!
    - Clinical teaching and patient responsibility
    - Insurance constraints

Aronson, L. Twelve tips for teaching reflection at all levels of medical education. Medical Teacher. 2010; 1-6.


References
