

Continuing Competence- A Reflective Practice Approach



A B C D

What is Continuing Competence?

Continued Competence is the on-going acquisition and application of knowledge and the decision-making, psychomotor, and interpersonal skills expected of the licensed nurse resulting in nursing care that contributes to the health and welfare of clients served.

Why is continuing competence important to the Board of Nursing?

The Board is responsible for protection of the public through the regulation of safe, effective nursing care. In order to become licensed, all licensed nurses have demonstrated initial competence by successfully passing the licensure exam. Because nursing practice changes rapidly, initial knowledge and competence can quickly become obsolete. As a result, safe practice is dependent upon the continuing competence of nurses. The Board is committed to ensuring nurses maintain and develop their skills and competence.

What is meant by "Reflective Practice"? Reflective Practice is "a process for the assessment of one's own practice to identify and seek learning opportunities to promote continued competence. Reflective practice helps nurses identify goals and progress from "novice to expert" (Benner, 1984). It is not a new concept; it is simply an approach for learning from experience and incorporating that knowledge into your practice. It is as simple as

A, B, C, D -----

Assess your practice, Based on Standards

Assess four dimensions of nursing practice that are applicable in any practice setting.

1. Professional Responsibility
2. Knowledge-Based Practice
3. Legal/Ethical Practice
4. Collaboration

Dimensions of practice are founded in nursing law and are general in nature. In order to assess your level of competence in these four practice dimensions, you should select standards that apply to your area of practice. Standards may be general in nature (nursing law), or may come from professional or specialty organizations or agency policies. The Board has developed worksheets for your use in assessing your practice utilizing a reflective approach. Other tools, such as your employer evaluation, may also be used to assist you in assessing your practice.

Collect feedback

Use feedback from others, if available, to help you identify strengths and opportunities for further development. Feedback can be verbal or written information you receive about your practice- examples could be supervisor comments or feedback received from patients, colleagues or students.

Develop a learning plan

Review your self-assessment data and feedback to help you identify strengths in your practice and areas that you would like to improve or strengthen. Establish one or more personal goals for continued competence and select a learning activity that will assist you in meeting your goal/goals.

Completion of one of the following will be required:

- 1) National certification or re-certification by a national credentialing body recognized by the Board
- 2) 30 contact hours of continued education
- 3) Completion of a Board approved refresher course
- 4) Completion of a minimum of two semester hours of post-licensure academic education related to nursing practice
- 5) 15 contact hours of continued education and completion of a nursing project as principal investigator or co-investigator to include statement of problem, project objectives, methods, date of completion and summary of findings
- 6) 15 contact hours of continued education and authoring or co-authoring a nursing-related article, paper, book or book chapter
- 7) 15 contact hours of continued education and developing and conducting a nursing continuing education presentation or presentations totaling a minimum of five contact hours, including program brochure or course syllabi, objectives, date and location of presentation, and approximate number of attendees
- 8) 15 contact hours of continued education and 640 hours of active practice within previous 2 years
 - “contact hour” means (60) minutes of an approved, organized learning experience
 - the board has a listing of recognized providers of continued education

Effective July 1, 2006, you will be expected to complete steps A-D.---i.e. assess your practice, develop a learning plan, and select one of the acceptable learning activities listed above. Then, implement your plan! You should complete your learning activity before your next renewal.

Effective July 1, 2008, you will have to attest to having completed the continuing competence requirement on your renewal application. The Board will monitor compliance through random audits. Should you be selected for audit, you will be asked to submit supporting documentation, such as copies certificates for continuing education or national certification, proof of hours worked, etc.

The North Carolina Board of Nursing thanks the Council of the College of Nurses of Ontario, Canada and the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta, Canada for their assistance in the development of the Reflective Practice model and related documents.