

### Abstract

60% of patient care errors can be attributed to lack of effective clinical judgment<sup>1</sup>. Clinical judgment is an expectation of baccalaureate degree nurses upon graduation<sup>2-5</sup>, but research shows both the profession and the students themselves do not feel they sufficiently possess this skill<sup>6-8</sup>. While ample research has focused on teaching and assessing clinical judgment in the clinical and simulation settings<sup>9-12</sup>, there is a gap in effective strategies to use in the classroom. This project presents an innovative course structure, aligned with the conceptual framework of Tanner's Clinical Judgment Model<sup>13</sup>. Students completed collaborative and instructor-facilitated case studies using video-based scenarios. Debrief was done individually utilizing reflection-on-action prompts. Qualitative results demonstrated an increase in confidence in decision-making, an appreciation for professional collaboration, and a better understanding of how to think like a nurse. Quantitative results showed an improvement in clinical judgment skills using case-based examinations in 76% of the students enrolled in the course.

### Background

Surveys of nursing faculty, hiring managers, and staff nurses highlight that the gaps in novice nursing clinical decision making have grown in the last decade<sup>2-5</sup>. Novice nurses report decreased confidence in clinical judgment<sup>6-8</sup>.

- 80% of employers are dissatisfied with the decision-making skills of novice nurses<sup>8</sup>
- 74% of practice nurses stated that new graduates have not improved in their clinical judgment skills over the last decade<sup>8</sup>.
- Only 8% of novice nurses can make appropriate clinical decisions. This skill has experienced a marked decrease in the last 25 years<sup>7</sup>.

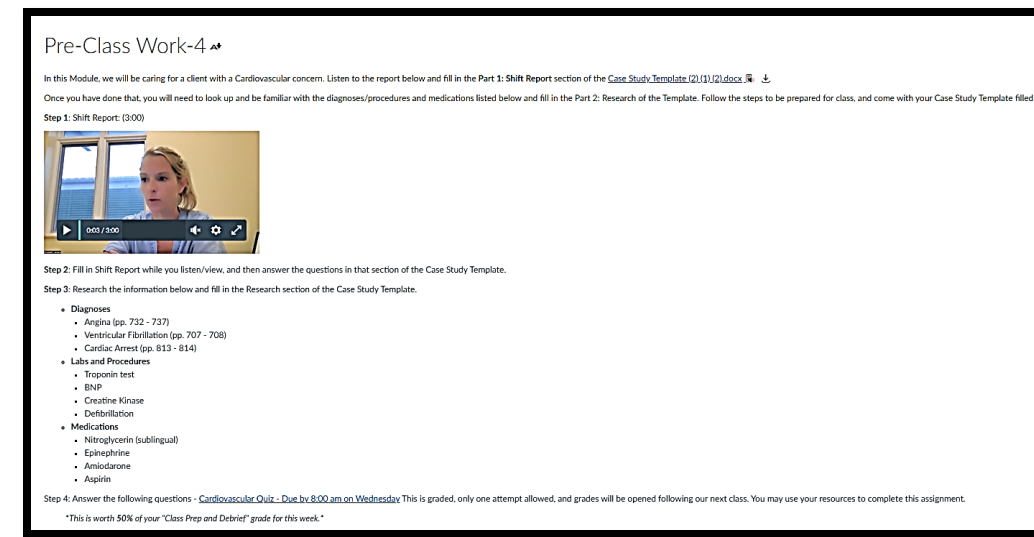
Nursing programs are tasked with increasing clinical judgment skills in nursing students while navigating the challenges of facilitating experiential learning in a discipline with documented shortages in both faculty and clinical sites<sup>14</sup>. Clinical judgment is developed through experience<sup>10, 15-17</sup>, and mastery experiences have the most influence on perceived self-efficacy<sup>18-19</sup>.



### Methods

#### 1. Preparation Assignments

- Video Client Report
- Research Pertinent Topics
- Gather Additional Data
- Knowledge Check



#### 2. Collaborative Video Simulation



#### 3. Post-class Reflection-on-Action

- How confident did you feel in the decisions that were being made?
- What part of the simulation did you find most challenging?
- What part of the simulation did you think went well?
- What will you do differently next time, if you encounter a situation like this in the clinical setting?

#### 4. Objective Clinical Judgment Examination

#### 5. Anonymous qualitative survey, administered at three points in the semester.

### Common Themes Identified

1. **Increased Confidence in Decision Making**
2. **Appreciation for Teamwork and Collaboration**
3. **Now I'm Thinking Like a Nurse**

#### Course Structure:

- 98% of students agree that class sessions were engaging.
- 94% of students agree that the course was challenging.
- 97% agree that they could participate in class discussion in a meaningful way.

#### Course Content:

- 100% of student agree that they have a stronger understanding of clinical judgment after taking this course.
- 76% of students demonstrated a stronger understanding of clinical judgment with an increase in grades on clinical judgment objective exams.

### Results

"This course was one of the first times in nursing that I felt extremely confident...It made me realize how much knowledge I actually do have stored in my head, and taught me how to properly apply it. This [course] was more about developing real-life nursing skills, which I found incredibly valuable."

"This course has shifted my thinking from textbook to practical and more natural. It helps me think of the situations with a patient-centered lens, rather than a condition and textbook lens. I am now able to see the bigger picture more clearly, while also focusing on priorities and the importance of recognizing how to care for the patient best. I feel more comfortable with my upcoming transition into practice with a whole new set of skills."

"This coursework has changed the way I think...not everyone is going to see a situation the same way... One person might not see what the patient is going through right away, but it is important that we work as a team with other healthcare professionals... As nurses we are trying to figure out the next best intervention, while keeping the patient safe."

"I think as we reached this point in our nursing career we are reaching a new level of competence with nursing content in school and in practice. I think that this process of learning and understanding patients' assessment, priorities, and actions helps bridge the gap between book-knowledge and the human art of nursing."

### Discussion

Clinical Judgment is developed through experience<sup>10, 15-17</sup>. **Nursing educators must provide innovative opportunities for development of clinical judgment in the classroom** that include noticing cues, interpreting relevant data, responding to unique client needs and reflecting both in-action and on-action. While instruments are available to measure clinical judgment in the clinical and simulation setting<sup>10</sup>, future research into effectively evaluating these skills in the classroom setting would strengthen course design. While this project was conducted within one class, the benefits of this strategy could be applied to any course where clinical judgment is an expectation.

### References

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