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Assessing Critical Thinking Through a Transition to Practice Program

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Methodist Research Day

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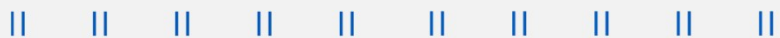


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Disclosure

I have no conflicts of interest to disclose.



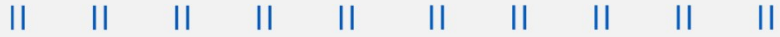


Objectives

By the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- **Describe** the use of the N-CT-4 validated assessment tool to measure critical thinking development among novice nurses participating in a Transition-to-Practice (TTP) program.
- **Interpret** changes in critical thinking across the four N-CT-4 domains and discuss the implications of these findings for nurse residency and professional development programs.
- **Identify** strategies to intentionally foster and evaluate critical thinking within Transition-to-Practice or nurse residency programs to support clinical judgment, professional growth, and patient safety.

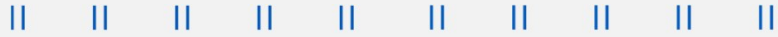




Why Critical Thinking Matters

- Nursing practice continues to become more complex.
- Novice nurses need to transition from "knowing" to "clinical reasoning."
- Critical thinking is linked to:
 - Patient safety
 - Clinical judgment
 - Recognition of deterioration
 - Communication
 - Decision making
- Hospitals invest heavily in residency/TTP programs, but how do we know they work?





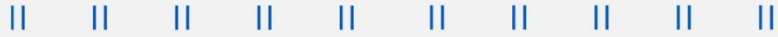
Project Purpose

Aim

To evaluate whether participation in a six-month Transition-to-Practice program improves critical thinking skills in novice nurses.

In novice registered nurses participating in a six-month Transition-to-Practice Program, does participation improve critical thinking skills as measured by the N-CT-4 compared with baseline?





About the TTP Program

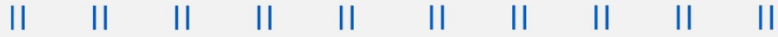
Transition to Practice is not just another part of orientation

Geared toward novice nurses with a goal of addressing issues that will help own their personal nursing practice

Based on the Nursing Scope and Standards of Professional Performance and the Code of Ethics for Nurses

We have had 2 cohorts thus far





ANA Standards of Professional Nursing Performance

Ethics	Advocacy	Respectful and Equitable Practice	Communication
Collaboration	Leadership	Education	Scholarly Inquiry
Quality of Practice	Professional Practice Evaluation	Resource Stewardship	Environmental Health



2025 ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses

Focuses on Relationships

Provisions 1-3: Nurse to Patient

Provisions 4 & 6: Nurse to Nurse

Provision 5: Nurse to Self

Provision 7: Nurse to Profession

Provision 8: Nurse to Others

Provision 9: Nurse/Nursing to Society

Provision 10: Nurse to Global Community

Transition to Practice Topics

Module 1

- Introduction to program
- Wellness activity
- Bedside stories
- Professional development
- Outcome measures/ HCAHPS

Module 2

- Bedside stories
- Professional Governance
- EBP (Evidence Based Practice)
- Critical Thinking
- Just Culture
- Risk Management
- Wellness activity

Module 3

- Bedside stories
- Well-being
- Health Equity/Bias
- SDOH Overview
- Impact of SDOH on Outcomes
- Ethics
- Wellness activity

Module 4

- Bedside stories
- Group Code of Ethics
- CCC
- Communicate with providers
- Communicate with patients
- Communicate with challenging dynamics
- Wellness activity

Module 5

- Bedside stories
- Medical emergencies (simulation)
- Wellness activity
- Activity

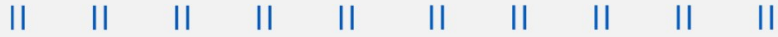
Module 6

- Bedside stories
- EBP/Patient Case Study Presentations
- Potted plant reflection
- Graduation

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N-CT-4 Assessment Tool





N-CT-4 Practice Tool

Validated tool – 109 questions

Designed based on the theoretical model 4-Circle Critical Thinking Skills in Nursing in the Clinical Setting

- Four domains
 - Personal Characteristics (39 items)
 - Intellectual and Cognitive Skills (44 items)
 - Interpersonal and Self-Management (20 items)
 - Technical (6 items)

Administered as part of TTP

- First day of the program (8/2025)
- Last day of the program (1/2026)

Results were aggregated to protect the identity of the participants



Personal Dimension

1. I recognize my own emotions.
2. I know my strengths and weaknesses.
3. I show my feelings to others.
4. I am faithful to my principles and values.
5. I know how others feel.
6. I understand how others feel.
7. I look for alternative responses when necessary.
8. I can identify the moment to be constructively critical.
9. I interpret information before expressing a conclusion.
10. I reflect upon my decision before acting.
11. I think before I act.
12. I act in a reasoned, step-by-step manner.
13. I know when I am acting impulsively.
14. I believe in myself and in others and act accordingly.
15. Problems are challenges and not threats.
16. I believe that I act in a firm manner.
17. My behaviour is firm.
18. I initiate and complete tasks on my own.
19. I take responsibility for my own actions.
20. I am meticulous in my actions.
21. I am prudent in my actions.
22. There is more than one way to approach life.
23. I make decisions in objectively.
24. I accept cultural differences in people's responses to situations.
25. I look for solutions to problems.
26. I look for appropriate solutions for situations.
27. I consider consequences before taking action.
28. I create chances for improvement and offer innovations.
29. I act when I have the chance to do so.
30. I am loyal to my values in the face of opposition.
31. I go ahead even if there is a chance of failure.
32. I am patient in achieving my goals.
33. I am persistent in trying to reach my goals.
34. I don't impose my own thinking on others, but I am open to change.
35. I have a healthy lifestyle.
36. I encourage others to follow a healthy lifestyle.
37. I look to improve my thinking.
38. I promote patient health.
39. I promote action to improve safety and quality

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Intellectual and Cognitive Dimension

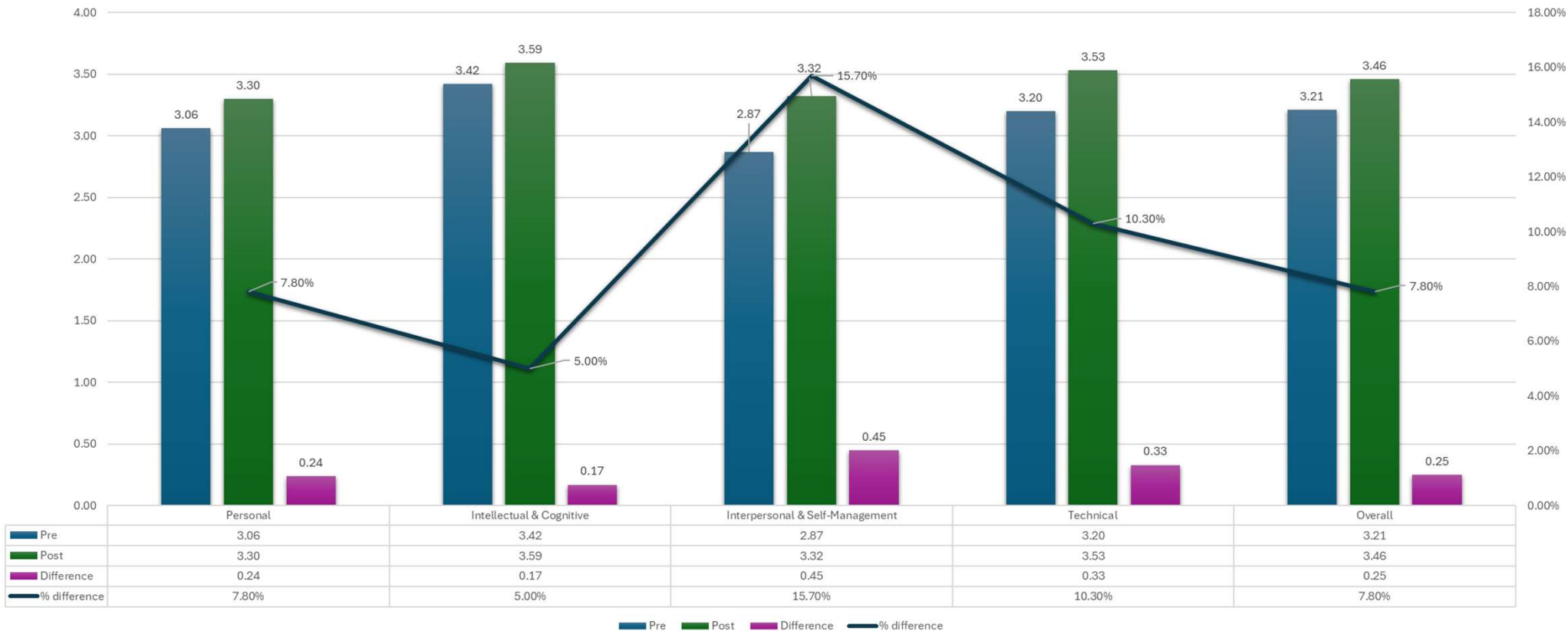
40. I have the scientific knowledge needed for professional practice.
41. I have a theoretical basis in nursing methodology.
42. I have knowledge needed for patient psychosocial aspects.
43. I apply knowledge from scientific evidence to care.
44. I communicate effectively.
45. I fill out the nursing records rigorously.
46. I look after people regardless of social or cultural differences.
47. I provide safe, competent, and compassionate care.
48. My professional practice is based on respect for the rights of the patient.
49. I respect patient privacy and confidentiality.
50. I try to realize the values of the profession.
51. I take action to prevent risk to patients.
52. I try to guarantee workplace safety.
53. I choose among alternatives based on the consequences of each.
54. I empower patients and their caregivers.
55. I systematically assess information needed to identify health problems.
56. I obtain key data for factors in the care of patients.
57. I observe which patient signs or symptoms are within normal limits.
58. I decide when data may be signs or symptoms of problems.
59. I identify information relevant to health problems.
60. I compare subjective data with objective data.
61. I can recognize contradictions between subjective and objective data.
62. I analyse data and identify possible omissions.
63. I look information for what is needed for the clinical situation.
64. I identify the current and potential problems of the patient.
65. I determine problem causes and factors.
66. I identify expected results in the patient following the care process.
67. I prioritize actions based on each patient's situation.
68. Patient and the carer are core in decisions about the patient's health.
69. I choose appropriate interventions for expected results.
70. I treat interventions and actions to prevent or control problems.

71. I recognize changes in patient health status.
72. I interpret signs and symptoms that of complications in a patient's state.
73. I foresee complications in the patient and apply preventive measures.
74. I modify the care or therapy plan in accordance with the patient's state.
75. I act to foster the health of patients and their families or caregivers.
76. I educate patients regarding the prevention of health complications.
77. I distinguish between ethical conflicts and other situations.
78. I use information resources critically.
79. I use information resources to support my clinical practice.
80. I understand how my abilities will be useful for my goals.
81. I analyse how I learned newly assimilated material.
82. When I need to learn something, I know to proceed to learn it.
83. I share my organization's mission, vision, and values.

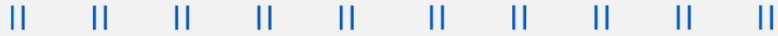
Interpersonal and Self-Management Dimension
84. I adapt information to patient needs and capacities.
85. I offer emotional support to the patient and caregivers.
86. I defend the rights of the patient and carer.
87. I help empowerment the patient and carer in the care process.
88. I resolve conflicts in relations between the patient and caregivers.
89. I defend the rights of the professional team.
90. I enhance the empowerment of the professional team.
91. I help to resolve conflicts in professional relations.
92. I adapt to workplace organizational change.
93. I help others adapt to the work team and to organizational changes.
94. I share my experiences with the nursing team to achieve common goals.
95. I share my experiences with professionals to achieve common goals.
96. I am able to optimally manage my time.
97. I use strategies to better manage time.
98. I use critical thinking to propose new solutions to identified problems.
99. I delegate tasks to people in line with their competencies.
100. I follow-up on the delegated tasks.
101. I try to influence the professional team positively to achieve the goals.
102. I am able to manage a professional group to achieve stated goals.
103. I am able to help contribute to a healthy working environment.

Technical Dimension
104. I obtain reliable information from the scientific databases.
105. I have the information technology skills needed to produce results.
106. I use necessary techniques and procedures for each case.
107. I match the procedure to be done with the appropriate context.
108. I administer medication in a safe manner.
109. I use appropriate care in correctly administering medication.

N-CT-4 Practice Tool TTP Cohort 2



Descriptive analysis demonstrated improvement across all domains of critical thinking following completion of the six-month transition to practice program. The overall mean score increased from 3.21 pre-program to 3.46 post-program, reflecting a 7.8% improvement.



References

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