Enhancing My Thinking Process

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The human mind is a complex organ that was created with great thinking power to process information. Each human mind has a different level of intelligence and ability to process information. The ability to process information and critically think requires the individual put forth a degree of cognitive effort (Krupat, et al, 2011). The ability to effectively apply the critical thinking inventory requires one to be willing to enhance their innate ability to think and challenge themselves to develop or improve their thinking skills in order to grow intellectually and make effective decisions.

Definition of Critical Thinking

Rubenfeld & Scheffer (2010, p. 28) suggest all thinking should be questioned and tested. Rubenfeld & Scheffer (2010) also suggest critical thinking (CT) is a self-directed and self-disciplined way of thinking about or processing information. CT requires several habits of the mind that can be a part of how you process information but can also be learned. CT requires a degree of confidence in the area of thinking, an open-minded, inquisitive, flexible and creative approach to processing the information. Effective CT also requires an awareness of intuition, the ability and willingness to reflect on situations and thought processes and the perseverance to overcome obstacles (Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2010). Huhn, et al (2013, p. 26) define CT as “critical thinking is the disciplined, intellectual process of applying skillful reasoning as a guide to belief or action and involves the cognitive abilities of analysis, interpretation, inference, evaluation and explanation”. Essentially CT is considered a process or an ability; however some believe CT is a personal characteristic (Krupat, et al, 2011).

Types of Intelligence that are Most Relevant to How I Process Information
As a life-long learner, I have identified that I am a visual, auditory and hands on learner and a very logical, yet creative thinker. Comparing my thinking processes to Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence (MI) Theory (as cited in Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2010), I believe that I am stronger in the areas of linguistic, logical, spatial and interpersonal intelligences. I process and retain information best if I can relate the information to something visual or a situation. Engaging more than one of my senses also helps me process and retain information. Seeing and hearing rather than just reading information solidifies the information for later retrieval. I need to know the details when processing information so I understand why; this is my logical intelligence.

**Examples of Types of Intelligence and Critical Thinking from My Nursing Practice**

As a nurse manager of a large teaching hospital’s home care program, I have learned to acquire and refine most CT habits of the mind and CT skills in order to thrive and succeed in an academic environment without an advanced education. I have taken advantage of my interpersonal, linguistic, spatial and logical intelligence to learn and implement successful clinical management in home care. I have learned from exceptional mentors who have spent the time helping me learn not only clinical management but how to analyze and manage utilization of services and entry level financial management.

In order to meet the needs of the complex patients being discharged from our hospital, I have had to refine the innate CT habits of the mind I was fortunately born with and become more open-minded, flexible and creative to meet the needs of both patients and clinical staff. It was long ago decided that the value of having a home care agency associated with an academic medical center is that we care for the medically acute and complicated patients that other home care agencies refuse to accept whether due to the medical complexity and lack of nursing
THINKING PROCESS

competence to provide the care or due to reimbursement limitations based on the level of care required.

Why I Desire to Enhance My Way of Thinking

After learning about CT habits of the mind and CT skills, I would like to enhance my CT inventory but not necessarily change my way of thinking. My way of thinking has been extremely successful for me professionally. Over the past 18 years, I have been recruited into supervisory and management positions in an academic setting without an advanced degree due to my innate ability to think globally and strategically, process information and problem-solve. I analyze and apply nursing best practice and regulatory standards to each situation by inquiring to gather more detailed information, by keeping an open mind, by using logic in my decision-making and applying my practical yet creative thinking skills to problem-solving. In the coming year, it is expected that I assume the position of administrator for my department after the current administrator retires. In order to effectively advance in the administrator role, I need to enhance my knowledge and confidence in decision-making at a higher level which will encompass business and financial decisions.

The thought of moving from the nurse manager role into the administrator role has required me to do a lot of critical reflection. I have engaged rational thought processes in order to evaluate and thoroughly question the truth and validity of my desire to assume the administrator role and limit my direct patient care involvement (Oyamada, 2012). Exploring the truth involved me engaging my intellectual integrity, open-mindedness and flexibility to consider how the administrative role can meet my clinical interests and desire for some direct patient care involvement.

How I Plan to Enhance My Current Way of Thinking
In order to enhance my current way of thinking and utilize the full CT inventory discussed by Rubenfeld & Scheffer (2010), I plan to enhance my knowledge of home care by using perseverance to overcome the challenges of learning business and financial management strategies. In terms of CT skills, I will mainly need to enhance my skills of information seeking and transforming knowledge in order to gain a different perspective and more global knowledge of business and financial management and strategic planning in home care. Based Gardner’s MI Theory (as cited in Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2010), instead of relying on my interpersonal intelligence and relying on interacting with others to learn, I plan on challenging my intrapersonal intelligence. I feel that in order to be truly successful in this new role and as a growing leader, I need to focus on better understanding myself and to challenge myself to strengthen my ability to internalize learning through connecting thoughts and transforming my knowledge into meaning (Rubenfeld & Scheffer, 2010). I do believe that my spatial and logical intelligence will benefit me in learning financial management and further my strategic planning ability. Management requires the ability to decipher numerical or quality data typically presented in graphs or pictures and apply the outcomes to planning and performance improvement strategies. In my clinical management role, this has been fairly easy for me to explore and develop many opportunities to measure patient care outcomes, including publicly reported measures.

**Conclusion**

CT requires one to use self-discipline while thinking and essentially think about one’s thinking. Pursing the new role of Administrator of home care will require me enhance my innate CT abilities and challenge myself to develop or improve my CT inventory in order to grow intellectually, feel confident in my new role and make effective decisions.
References


