

OADN values the role of the educator. Being an effective educator can impact students and their patients for decades. It is for this reason that we promote professional certification as an educator. Obtaining the certification as a **Certified Nurse Educator (CNE)** denotes your dedication to your practice as a nurse educator. Over the course of several months, the Education and Research Committee will post each of the 6 Competencies as identified in the Detailed Test Blueprint for the CNE Examination. These posts are brief summaries of where to focus your study for the competency with some tips for practical application in your role as nurse educator.

The CNE 2014 Candidate Handbook provides an in-depth explanation of certification and the test blueprint. The handbook can be downloaded at <http://www.nln.org/professional-development-programs/Certification-for-Nurse-Educators/handbook> . Here faculty will learn about the 150 item exam, the purpose of the exam, and how to qualify to take the exam.

CNE Major Content Area #1: Facilitate Learning

The first major content area is Facilitate Learning and accounts for 22% of the exam. This content area focuses on assessing faculty understanding of developing an effective learning experience.

When developing a learning experience, faculty should consider a theoretical basis to guide their decisions. These theories help us better understand the learner, the educator, and the best strategies to promote effective learning.

Some of the more common theories include behaviorism, adult learning , and constructivism. With behaviorism, learning is observed through behavior (or a change in behavior). This theory tends to be best for learning experiences that involve methodical processes (eg. urinary catheter insertion). Adult learning emphasizes learner experiences of past and present. The faculty are encouraged to keep the learner very involved in all aspects of the learning interaction (eg. How have you learned skills in the past and how can you apply some of those principles to learning this skill?). With constructivism, the learner is interacting with past experiences to build (make) meaning. Reviewing content from a prior class is an example of constructivism. Group learning presents an excellent opportunity to foster this type of interactive learning. Using the example of urinary catheterization above, the faculty may want to form small groups of students to practice in a skills lab where each student can share their experience and what they are feeling about the experience.

There are other theories that will be addressed in this examination so all of you are encouraged to take a deeper look at the test plan and prepare accordingly. This exploration should take into consideration theorists such as Bandura and Kolb.

Regardless of learning theory, most nursing students will need learning to happen at higher levels of processing within Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive processing. Therefore, when educators are developing learning experiences, they should consider how to promote learning at the application level and higher. One example using application can occur while teaching students about congestive heart failure. When writing learning outcomes , developing learning experiences, and evaluating competency, the nurse educator should be careful to facilitate learning at higher levels. For example, a low level learning objective for a patient with Congestive Heart Failure might be to "describe the care of the patient whose capillary refill is more than 3 seconds." Higher levels of learning with focus on application would include

“develop an effective plan of care for the patient whose capillary refill is more than 3 seconds. For the first learning example, the nurse educator would tell the student what they need to know. For the second, the nurse educator would facilitate competency development by coaching the learner through creating a plan of care.

For the CNE exam, the nurse educator will need to be able to match learning activities to the corresponding learning outcome/objective.

Another area to consider in this competency, to Facilitate Learning, is the use of instructional technology. Synchronous technology is that which is used by learners and/or educators at the same time. This may be a Skype phone call, webinar, or voting with clickers during class. Asynchronous technology is that which is used even if students and faculty are not physically together at the same time. An example of asynchronous technology is use of a discussion board/forum for an online postconference after clinical.

When choosing instructional technology, there are some basic considerations to explore. First, ensure that the technology promotes learning and is not the center of the experience. The goal is higher order thinking, not technology. If technology competency is part of the learning objective, faculty will do well to ensure that the student has the experience with the technology in multiple settings with multiple exemplars. Next, it is important to understand that more complexity and cost does not yield better outcomes. When choosing instructional technology, find ways of using the same technology in multiple locations and experiences. This helps learners and faculty better manage the tool and spreads the cost across the curriculum.

Finally, technology should help the learners visualize the desired learning outcomes in real life situations. For instance, high fidelity simulation mannequins work well for some learning activities, such as a code, because they help the learner experience the desired objectives realistically.

These are some of the basics of the competency Facilitate Learning. As you prepare for the CNE exam, you will want to ensure that you look for resources that address learning theories, instructional design theories, and provide ideas for application. As you create lesson plans for your students you will do well to think about how these theories apply to learning.

References

Billings, D., & Halstead, J. A. (2011). *Teaching in nursing: A guide for faculty* (4th ed.). St. Louis, MO: Elsevier.

Wittman-Price, R., Godshall, M., & Wilson, L. (2013). *Certified nurse educator (CNE) review manual* (2nd ed.). New York: Springer Publishing.

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