and/or proficiency we are trying to define, the need to identify the current level of care required and to assess the student’s ability to perform the care competently. Each corner of the triangle represents a domain of learning, namely professional approach, underpinning knowledge and skilled care.

**ACTIVITY 2**

Use the PASK triangle to map your knowledge, skills and professional approach to an aspect of your recent practice experience.

Think about an assessment you have recently undertaken. This could be, say, on admission, a reassessment during the patient’s stay to see if the care plan is still appropriate, or a risk assessment.

**Map your thoughts**

Why was the assessment being undertaken? (K)

What research, policy or protocols offered guidance for your approach to his or her assessment? (K)

How did you approach the client (staff member), and what influenced how you approached the patient? (PA)

What combination of skills did you need or use to undertake the assessment, and how well developed are these skills? (S)

Draw two lines, as in Fig 2, then mark a cross on each continuum to indicate how competent and confident you feel you are in assessing clients or staff.

Reflect on, and summarise, what you have learnt from this activity about yourself, your competence and confidence in your practice. Identify if there is an area for development to discuss with your mentor or clinical supervisor. Map the results of the mind mapping to any proficiencies or job descriptors you need to show you have achieved in your portfolio.

One area that is perhaps the most difficult to assess is how nurses’ approach to practice may be influenced by pre-existing beliefs and attitudes. As nurses we all need to be seen to be “non-judgemental towards others” to provide equitable, fair and just care (NMC, 2008). Professionally it is important we recognise personal viewpoints on issues and ensure they do not impact on how we act towards individuals. Goldsborough (1970) offered some points about how we can become non-judgemental in our practice by being open to new insights about ourselves, learning to set aside personal beliefs and to behave in a professional and empathetic way.

It can be useful to repeat Activity 2 using the triangular framework, to explore an issue which has challenged previously held beliefs and values about people. For instance, I work with students undertaking placements in the community learning to care for people with drug and alcohol problems, or who are homeless. We often do this exercise at the beginning of placement and again at the end. Students should ask themselves: how does quickly mapping their thoughts around this area of practice reflect their understanding of the client’s situation and their role in enabling them to meet their health needs? Would it work as a piece of evidence in their portfolio? How does using the PASK triangle help to identify areas for development?

Building a meaningful portfolio involves exploring a series of practice experiences – working with colleagues, caring for patients, and or their carers. The questions nurses ask themselves or others ask will influence how well they analyse their experience and capture their learning. The key is in keeping the patient and their family central to the evidence. This will assist nurses in thinking, talking and writing about their practice.

**CONCLUSION**

A portfolio is about capturing learning. This requires an ability to question, critique and see how well they can direct and provide consistent and high quality nursing care within a multidisciplinary and/or multi-agency setting and to justify when and why that care is needed. It also means being able to identify factors influencing a patient’s health status and the health and social care they receive, to pinpoint factors that influence their practice, to consider the positive attributes of the care they deliver and to develop their knowledge and skills where there is a need.

Part 2 of this unit, to be published in next week’s issue, explores in more depth what is meant by quality evidence and how to develop it meaningfully.

**REFERENCES**


Nursing and Midwifery Council (2004) Standards of Proficiency for Pre-registration Nursing Education. London: NMC.
