**Introduction**

Continuing professional development (CPD) is “a process by which the nurses are learning new skills, activities and innovations through the ongoing academic education in order to maintain professional practice and to achieve career goals” (American Nursing Association(ANA) ,2000,P,1 ).Professional development is mainly occurring through the continuous nursing education. It is widely believed that nurses are updating their knowledge so it is not possible for them to continuously depend on the learned skills (that they acquired during their education). These developmental opportunities provide a chance not to learn new ideas but to apply the skills in practice for the nurse. The code of ethics also specify that the nurse “owes the same duties to self as to others”( ANA,2001,P.18).” Competence can influence one’s professional status, job satisfaction self-respect and self-esteem”(ANA,2001,P.18). Skill development is closely related with competency because nursing is a complex and multi challenged profession based on a number of theoretical aspects .Professional development is not only directed to the development of the science of nursing but also to the progression of the personal growth CPD ensures health care equity for all members of society to an extent. This essay highlights the significance of nonstop career development and how it maintains nursing competency.

**Nursing competency through Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

Each and every professional can achieve their professional improvement through the use of different methods and this is approved by Australian Nurses and Midwifery Council (ANMC), 2005. According to the ANMC, continuing education and reflective practice are the best options to attain professional competency and professional development is closely related to competency (as cited www.anmc.gov. au assessed on 08/04/2011). There are other ways to maintains nursing competency through the use of critical thinking ,research, demonstration via advanced technique of nursing skills, feedback from the supervisor ,decision-making skills and in-service education programs that facilitate to increase knowledge and skills in nursing practice.

**Effectiveness of Continuing Education**

Continuing education creates an enthusiasm among professionals and which is one of the main objectives of this education .Technology and nursing practice is on the verge of dramatic changes, here continuing education plays an inevitable role for nurses to become expert in clinical practice (Slusher ,2000,p.441. ).Hence it is mandatory to assess whether these educational programs meet the actual out-comes. There are different ways to Even the experienced nurses also want to upgrade their skills and level of knowledge to deliver safe and secure age-specific care in different situation. Therefore professional organizations must offer a framework for the RN to update their theoretical experience (Kovner , Mezey and Harrington,2002,p..12 ). Nurses who wanted this kind of development must focus on learning goals, time allotment and evaluation of learned skills. For instance,a nurse who want to become a ‘’geriatric trainers’’ can attend 8 hour workshop with the help of staff development from their employer. These trainers are allowed to train other health care members to provide quality care for elderly patients in hospitals and in their home (Griscti $ Jacono,2008,p.13.). These days clinical instructors (nurse educators) are appointed in hospitals in order to cultivate staff education. So the nurses can consult them for their needs.

. **Role of reflective practice on CPD.**

Reflective practice acts as a tool to explore nurses’ professional skills (Erenstien $ Mc Caffrey, 2007.p.121 ). For example, feedback from the supervisor can act as a stepping stone for reflective practice-on the part of the nurse. Using reflection on the feedback from the supervisor increases the understanding of strength and weaknesses relating to the performance of nursing practice, Critical analysis of the areas that demand improvement ensures safety and high standard nursing care. Commitment in the delivery of high standard care is a task that is mandatory for all nurses to adhere the knowledge(Lannon, 2007.p.501.). According to ANMC (2005) the elements of reflection involves self-appraisal, research for practice, feelings and believes and criticism.

The effect of reflective practice into the field of health care made dramatic changes and it ensures best nursing care for clients. Reflective practice is a method to analyze the whole impact of results something after the completion of a task. This is very helpful to identify the required changes. In other words reflection is a technique to upgrade the knowledge level in accordance with the experience and it is directly connected with one’s critical thinking as well as self-awareness and development. This notion helps nurses to be introduce to new ideas instead of the old one and assist us to react more quickly as well as effectively (Daly, Speedy $ Jackson, 2008. pp.275 - 276). For example, a nurse realize the importance of physical assessment on the time of admission, the reason behind that was – patient developed bed sore due to self care deficit, which occurred because of the lack of detailed assessment. A patient may develop fever two days later, then the nurse enquired the reason for fever and found a bed sore on the buttocks, which throws light on the significance of thorough physical assessment. According to Usher and Homes (2006,p.278.) the main element of reflection is’’ cognitive postmortem’’ or an activity of looking back at actions. In health care set-up, clinical supervisors can use this technique in order to find out the pros and cons and is very helpful to enhance outcomes to the client. Self-questioning is one among the ways to progress the theoretical thoughts, it screws the thinking abilities. It plays an inevitable role in problem solving skills-which is possible through asking questions in order to get clarification about a situation and to learn decision making skills Wolf Z (1998) (cited in daly and chang , 2008,pp.266-7.)

Furthermore, (Rowle and Brigham,1998,pp.301-14 cited in Daly and Chang 2008,p.267.) states sharing experiences through reflection and critical analysis among peers can increase theoretical and practical knowledge.

**The use of critical thinking in CPD**

Paul (2008.p.315. ) states that “critical thinking is thinking about your thinking while you’re thinking in order to make your thinking better”. It plays an important role in our day to day life. The quality of life depends on our quality of decisions. Nurses have to make decisions spontaneously in order to make positive outcomes they must ask questions about their practices. If the nurses are well enough to handle the crisis means their thinking and reasoning abilities are good. Shick and Vaughn (1995.p.315.) argue that critical thinker will not come into a conclusion all of a sudden and they take enough time to connect the information. Mostly they do not carry the ideas of others but analyze those suggestions very thoroughly .In the past, nurses take advice from others like physicians Now the condition is changed , we are taking ideas from other sciences and applying it into the profession.

Professional improvement methods are common in Western countries such as Australia and Canada. The net result of these movements is to progress the standard of care from earlier. To make sure that nurses’ knowledge, attitudes and skills are current and up to date, it requires life- long learning (Lindberg, 2003.p.201) . The stimulated

atmosphere in the work field because of the effect of this organization based education (Daly and Chang ,2008.p.74.) For example, hospital authorities now conduct seminars on new medication and equipments to nurses in order to provide better result with the

help of medical representatives and technicians. These day’s hospitals encourage nurses to study basic lessons of computer to record the client treatment details instead of writing, which ultimately saves time and energy. A very good outcome of reflection is a self awareness of one’s areas of deficit in practice that demand education or research,

Research is another method of professional development because it paves a chance to build up in-depth knowledge and understanding of clinical practice. Research is defined as ‘the systematic study of materials and sources to establish facts and reach new conclusions’ (Compact Oxford English Dictionary2004:1).The ability to question the studies is the fundamental tool for the research workers. The availability of research in nursing grants a number of benefits, which is helpful to extent the subject knowledge, stimulation of self study, development of best practice, test the level of knowledge. Now many nurses engaged in research studies and their employers are giving support through financial assistance and literature exposure (Crookes and Davies, 2004.p.130). The idea of research in nursing is to introduce new techniques and procedures in order to save time and to supply productive nursing care. Due to the launch of research many universities has nursing degree courses and doctorates. Australia and New Zealand it was in the late 1980’s.Research is not only to supply researchers but also to experience nurses to introduce outcomes to clinical practice and to influence co-workers.

Many health providers provide in-service education which probably last for 15 to 30 minutes so that the nurses can attend these classes during their resting hours. Usually head nurses are conducting these classes for other staffs and they are allowed to enquire the outcomes meanwhile this offers a good learning opportunities for them (Esther Chang John Daly,2008.p.73.). The changing technology and health service delivery invite the nurses to attend in service education programs in order to remain expert .As a result of these developments in healthcare and technology increase the number of learners and it needs clinical experience (Jeffries and Lunney,2008,p.353.). Here, in- service education plays an inevitable role on clinical practices.

Evidence- based practice plays an in evitable role in contemporary healthcare, it’s main aim is to improve the health care set- up. Which is mainly points on effectiveness, findings and calculations before to conclude the quantitative study (Joanna Briggs Institute 2008:1). This offers exact information about a process through the systematic review. For instance, nurse can find out the faults then she can formulate an idea to resolve the error and discuss it with colleagues before the demonstration.  Professional nurses have to face several challenges especially in rural areas than urban and suburban .This badly affect the nursing care and the career development because they are not getting much exposures when it compared with others. Hence it is mandatory to understand the rural nursing theories in order to wipe out these crisis. In the rural settings nurse leaders and educators have to take initiatives to meet the problems and to enhance opportunities offered (Olade, 2004,p.221.). Travel cost and staffing issues are the other challenges for rural communities, a clinical instructor need to travel to remote areas in order to present the new skills. Taking staff out of the ward to attend the seminar may create certain problems (staffing) in hospital (Trossman, 2001.p.129.) However, these kind of burning problems can freeze with the help of online education (Griscti and Jacono,2006 .p.13) . This enables the employees to access the desired courses and programs without the wastage of time meanwhile they can apply the learned skills into the health care practice Unfortunately the educational programs are usually conducting at day time so, the night shift nurses are not able to attend these movements. In addition to that, physicians rounds and consultations are mostly the day time activities (Campbell, Nilsson and Pilhammar, Anderson, 2008,p.18.) The current study suggest a solution that the teaching strategies should conduct in between 7am to7pm because it throws a chance for the night shift nurses to listen the programs. Additionally, effective communication among the team members positively reflects on their management skills. **Conclusion** In short, nurses are an essential component of the health care system as well as the most health care provider for others, as a result of this recognition, health professionals must participate in continuing professional development and life-long learning. Now health and social care become more diverse that guides the nurse to acquire and develop the skills and qualities in order to deal with a variety of new and appearing nursing tasks. Therefore, all the participants have to keen about their educational opportunities and alternative method of delivering education. It is clear from the evidence that nurses who attended these interactive and participatory education programs were motivated to make significant changes to their profession.

