

Reflection on assistant Experiences

CLNC 2030/2040

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In what ways have you improved as a midwife? What brought about these improvements? This last trimester has been one of exponential growth for me as a midwife. I have been with my current placement now since late April/May of 2022. In the last few months I have not only had the opportunity to step into more of a Phase 3 role, but I have gained the trust and confidence of my preceptors. Seeing them not only allow me to increase my skills but encourage me to step beyond my comfort level has been really incredible. I have not only gained experience, but **confidence** and that is something that has been really empowering for me. I have done 45 births with my current placement, 29 of them have been during the span of this trimester, I have logged over 200 prenatal visits in this current placement and have had the opportunity to take a primary role in roughly 38 newborn visits. During each of these experiences I have been able to take away a wealth of knowledge. A few days ago we had a client transport to the hospital because they wanted epidural pain relief. This was not my first time supporting during a non-emergent transfer of care, this was not even my 10th time, this is something that I have done many, many times however, this time did feel different, it felt different because all of those other times I was acting as the birth assistant OR as a doula. This was the first time that I was really *thinking* as a midwife for the first time. It was really fascinating to debrief afterwards with my preceptor as we discussed the ethics of stable transports and people changing their mind about their birthing place while in labor, especially when the birthing person is a multip and has had several out of hospital births before. So to really sum it all up, this trimester I grew as a midwife in my confidence.

What challenges have you encountered this semester in your clinical work? Where have you met this challenge with progress? Where do you still feel stuck? What might help you discover progress through this challenge? While there are aspects that I am feeling more confident in this term, I am still struggling with some of the technical aspects of the work. In particular, to break it down into two categories:

In the birth space:

1. Cervical exams
2. Managing hemorrhages
3. Resolving shoulder dystocias

4. Managing NRP, specifically giving PPV

With performing cervical exams, and managing other emergencies in the birth space, I know that some of this comes from the nature of my preceptors needing and ethically being the most qualified to manage. I think that as a student learning these aspects are an essential part of the learning process but I still feel really overwhelmed by knowing exactly where to fit in during these events as a student. We have teams of three specifically so the student can start “thinking” like the midwife. However, it is hard to not feel stuck because I know I need to support the midwife in these situations where she feels like she needs support and that most often entails stepping into the assistant role while the designated assistant charts. I think I have met these challenges with progress by feeling *more* comfortable assisting the midwife during these events. Discovering progress through this challenge I think will look like intentionally taking more time to debrief after births. Specifically walking the midwife through my thought process, receiving her feedback on how she felt supported and reflecting on her thought process as the primary midwife.

In clinical settings (specifically prenatsals)

1. Leading prenatal appointments
2. Ordering labs and **reviewing** lab results
3. Consistency with blood draws and IV placements
4. SOAP note charting

Sometimes I feel like day to day clinic tasks are more overwhelming than managing birth emergencies. Prenatals, especially LEADING prenatsals can be really overwhelming. I worry that I will forget important aspects to cover as I discuss prenatal care with my clients. Labs have always been challenging for me as well, I have a really hard time remembering what labs to order for what, and when the lab results come back deciphering through them and understanding what normal values are and how it all fits into place is really tough. I have talked to my preceptors about walking me through this process a little more and it is tedious and often gets put on the back burner.

I think that while practice doesn't truly “make perfect”, I do think that it makes for improvement and I need to continue to practice these skills until I am able to feel more confident in my ability.

Although I still feel a little stuck with some of these important skills, I think that I need to continue to give myself more time. I know that I am still in Phase 2, but after this trimester I will have completed my Phase 2 clinical hour requirements, and I am feeling ready to expand in a new way.

What is your clinical learning process or strategy? How has this changed since you started? I think that my clinical learning process and strategy is really always changing and adapting. Initially I wanted to do all the things, and be at all the births, I had very little boundaries because I wanted as much exposure to all of the things that I could. Every day was like drinking water from a fire hose and I couldn't get enough. I have really started to become more methodical and intentional about my clinical learning process. I have taken the time to curate my skills and requirements needed for me to advance forward as a student and as a future midwife to be better prepared to develop and fine tune the skills needed. For example, paps are something that I have been needing to learn and so I have begun curating my day to position myself to be with the midwife in clinic during the pap so I have the opportunity to either perform the pap or watch it done, rather than staying with one midwife during the entire clinic day. This has been really helpful and has changed since I first started at this particular practice that I am at.

What patterns have you noticed in your personal and professional practices? When it comes to patterns that I have noticed in my personal and professional practices I think that I see some patterns of strength and some patterns of weakness. It is really easy for me to focus on my patterns of weakness, I tend to be a slow learner, I feel like I have to do tasks several more times than the average person to fully grasp how to be competent in the skill or task, I also feel like some of my patterns keep me from truly excelling in the ways that I hope that I would be able to. I also am very determined, and dedicated to this line of work, I give this work my heart and soul. I am invested in the people that I work with and alongside. I am honored to be a part of these birthing stories and I know that is also a pattern that serves me well in my personal and professional practice.