



Building infection control professionals' capacity in Australia

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Introduction

The ICP has a pivotal role in the Australian health context. (ACSQHC)

Design, implement and evaluate programs =
mitigate infection risks and ensure the
safety of patients, staff and visitors.





Expanding Scope of Practice

ICP role has expanded:

- Governance, education, consultation, practice, research
- Bioterrorism
- Pandemic preparedness
- New/emerging pathogens (SARS, Ebola)
- Heater-cooler units



Building capacity and succession planning

- How do we attract people into the specialty?
- How do we prepare prospective ICP for the role?
- How do existing ICP maintain currency?





Attracting new ICP

- Continually demonstrate relevance and usefulness
- Role model professionalism
- Provide a clear career pathway
- Facilitate professional development opportunities





Preparing the ICP

Start at the end point and work backwards.

- What are the characteristics we want to see in ICP?
- What does it take to make a successful ICP and what does this success look like?





Preparing new ICP

The four C's of preparation: novice to expert

- Competency
- Capacity
- Complexity
- Capability





Competency

Having the necessary skills or ability: able to do something well or well enough to meet a standard

(Merriam-Webster)

Competency standards:

- Agreed measurable professional standards allowing assessment of specific tasks and roles
- Designed for practice in stable environments with familiar problems. (Phelps et al 2005)



Capacity

- The ability to do something: a mental, emotional or physical ability (Merriam-Webster)

Building capacity (two domains):

- Expand upon the skills and knowledge of existing ICP
- Increase the number of people with the knowledge and skills





Complexity concepts

- Neither the system nor its external environment are, or ever will be, constant
- Individuals within a system are independent and creative decision makers
- Uncertainty and paradox are inherent within the system

(Fraser & Greenhalgh 2001)





Capability

- “The extent to which individuals can adapt to change, generate new knowledge, and continue to improve their performance.” (Fraser & Greenhalgh 2001)
- “Unused capacity” or “some potential ability” (O’Connell et al 2014)





Complexity can lead to capability

Although the scope of practice may change and the practice context may change (political, financial, physical) the principles of practice remain constant.

The stretch to apply principles in a changing or unfamiliar context, if successful, produces capability.



Educating for capability

- Enhanced through feedback on performance, the challenge of unfamiliar contexts.
- Education must focus on process, supporting learners to construct learning goals, receive feedback, reflect and consolidate

(Fraser and Greenhalgh 2001)





Creating the context

- “Individuals and systems change because they learn.”

- “Adults learn because they want to change.”

(Fraser & Greenhalgh 2001)



Novice to Expert

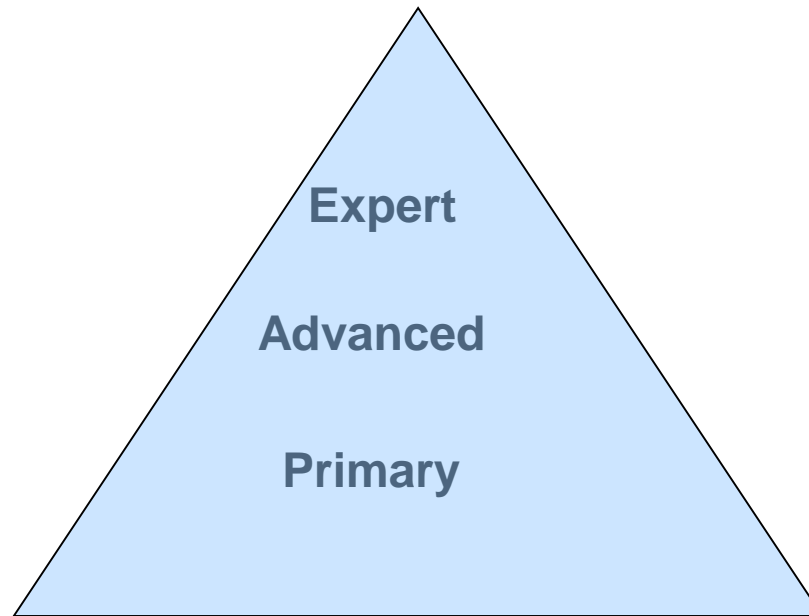
- Capacity: always seeking to increase it.
- Competency: the hallmark of the novice
- Complexity: the advanced ICP should begin to embrace complexity
- Capability: the expert ICP lives and practices here





Credentiailling

The three-tiered system provides a succession planning pyramid.





Credentiailling: develops capability

Incorporates:

- feedback
- structured and formal learning
- skills development through experience
- reflective practice





Future challenges.

- ICP scope of practice evolving
- Tools now available to support professional development
- Aim for capability, don't settle for competence
- Challenge is for individuals and systems





The prize

- Safety for patients, healthcare workers and visitors
- Professional, adaptable, knowledge-generating ICP role models
- A sustainable specialty





References

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