Clinical competency and safety are key elements expected in Bachelor of Nursing graduates and should form vital part of undergraduate education. This paper presents a case study from Griffith University where clinical laboratories are organised to develop critical thinking by the students to increase their clinical preparedness. Research identifies that the first 3-6 months are a critical time for the new graduate, influencing the graduate nurse’s ability to integrate into the workforce (Levett-Jones, 2005). Clinical preparedness is noted to be an influencing factor and relates to the knowledge and skills of the graduate. The new graduate should be equipped with a base line ability to critically think through patient care situations. Using constructivist principles to prepare student nurses for the increasing complexities of a dynamic health industry, active involvement with case studies has been shown to better prepare students for real world situations (Young & Paterson, 2007).

At Griffith University the student nurses are introduced to learning and assessment by case study in their second year and the complexity of the case studies increase over each semester. The technical services prepare the manikins to reflect the clinical situation, also appropriate chart containing all medical orders, nursing assessment and documentation is available. The academics challenge the students as they work through the scenario providing opportunities and support for the student to think laterally about the patient situation. Feedback from the clinical areas was positive and related to the student’s ability to be able to work through a clinical situation with minimal direction. This paper aims to provide information on the value of clinical case studies with basic manikin setups for developing clinical preparedness in nursing students.