According to the new objectives for the Nursing Program, you are seeking outcomes in writing that will do the following:

1. Describe and evaluate safe, quality, patient-centered, evidence-based nursing care to individuals, families, and/or communities
2. Demonstrate the critical thinking/clinical reasoning skills relevant to providing nursing care
3. Describe and evaluate quality improvement related to patient care
4. Acknowledge collaborative relationships with members of the interdisciplinary team
5. Incorporate the information management (i.e., research) principles, techniques, and systems needed to provide nursing care
6. Demonstrate the professional, ethical, and legal principles needed to implement the professional role of the registered nurse as provider, designer, manager, and coordinator of care
7. Provide evidence of the ability to reflect on what the student has learned and still needs to learn

Two Effective “Traditional” Approaches

- Use the same short assignment 3-4 times during the semester (e.g., review of an article, evaluation of a case study, analysis of a care plan, ethical critique of a diagnostic procedure). Provide sufficient instructions, such as:

  On each of the following due dates—9/7, 10/5, 11/2, and 11/30—turn in a 300-word critique of an article that relates to the list of class topics that is on your syllabus. For each of the article critiques, summarize the article in 3-4 sentences. Explain how the article adds to, contradicts, or provides a different perspective on the topic, as we’ve covered it in class. If you quote, do so briefly and cite in APA style. Choose your articles from the list provided on our class website. Your critique should target busy young nursing professionals like you who would want to know why reading the article would be worth their while. The University Writing Center has this assignment on file and can help you complete it successfully.

- Break a longer paper into short assignments that students write individually during the semester. Instructions might resemble the following:

  For 9/7: Choose a statement from the list of 7 on the syllabus. In about 250 words, explain why you agree or disagree, based perhaps on personal knowledge (e.g., “Medical study remains inconclusive about causes of Alzheimer’s disease.”)

  For 10/5: Refer to the syllabus and choose 2 articles from the class list that relate to the topic you chose on 9/3. In 350-400 words, summarize each article and critique it (i.e., explain how each adds to, contradicts, or expresses a different perspective from yours). Document and cite in APA style. Study the student example on our class website. Keep in mind that I might choose your critique as an example as well, for the students who take this class next semester.

  For 11/2: On your own, find 2 refereed print or Internet articles that deal with the topic you chose. Each article should balance fact and informed opinion that’s supported by reliable evidence. In 350-400 words, briefly summarize and critique each. Attach print copies of the articles to your critique. Before I collect your work, two classmates will comment on your critique and check your use of APA documentation. I’ll use the rubric on the syllabus to evaluate your work.

  For 11/30: Comparing it to your earlier opinion, turn in a 400 to 500-word reflection on how you have developed a more informed opinion of your topic. Cite all 4 sources in APA style. Address the following questions: Why has your opinion changed—or remained the same? What specific information from your reading affected your opinion—and why? How do you know this information is reliable? What questions or doubts do you still have about this topic? How would you respond reasonably to people who disagree with your opinion? NOTE: I may ask you to revise if your reflection is incomplete, poorly written, or incorrectly documented. Consider going to the University Writing Center, and show the tutor this assignment.

Informal “Write-to-Learn” Exercises

Writing studies research shows that frequent, informal written exercises done in class once a week (e.g., journals, blogs) are often as effective as longer papers in promoting critical thinking. These exercises tell you where students are successfully understanding course material and where they might need review or reinforcement of instruction. You can ask students to take no more than 5-10 minutes writing the exercises, their written responses can serve as basis for meaningful class discussion, you can read them quickly, they concretely indicate the level of class participation, and you can easily evaluate them with no more than a √, +, or -. Such exercises can also serve as “useable writing” that students can incorporate into longer written assignments. Please check three that you’d consider using from the list below, explain why, and match the exercise type with one or more of the Nursing Program objectives above.
Workshop: Small Assignments, Big Results
SCHOOL OF NURSING 4/29/2013

- **Weighing Advice.** E.g., “A member of your interdisciplinary team at a clinic gives a patient a diagnosis of flu. Please write down your own concerns about the diagnosis, based on the following symptoms the patient describes to you….”
- **Translating original text.** E.g., “Look at the following description from a journal article on treatment of a severe sports injury. Put this description into language that the patient would understand, so that she knows the extent and seriousness of her injury…..”
- **Contradictory information.** E.g., “After reading information from a patient’s chart (detailed below), you find several items that do not ‘add up.’ Write a note to the hospital’s head nurse, discussing your concerns about the care currently being provided.…..”
- **Close-reading Annotation.** E.g., “Go over the instructional list of steps that your group has received on a typical procedure in nursing care. Jot down at least one question, observation, or concern that you have about the sequence/description of steps and how easy it is to perform them. After you talk about your annotations, you’ll report your findings to the rest of the class.”
- **One-pagers.** E.g., “After you have listened to the podcast of a patient’s care history posted on our online syllabus, please write a one-page reaction to (a) the most significant changes that occurred over the period of care, (b) the purpose of the various interventions and treatments the patient received, and (c) your opinion of how successfully the patient’s care was delivered.”
- **Big questions.** E.g., “As a parish nurse, you receive a phone call from someone who is experiencing unpleasant reactions to her medications. After hearing the reactions (list provided), what are five important questions you’d ask? Give a rationale for each.”
- **Scenarios.** E.g., “A mother comes into the emergency room with a child who has been badly hurt in a playground incident. As you examine the child you notice some characteristics of the child’s injuries that cause you to doubt their origin. What characteristics do you notice, what kinds of action do you need to consider taking, and whom do you consult?”
- **Patient Interview.** E.g., “A Native-American male who has diabetes is coming into the doctor’s office to have a check-up on his most recent state of health. Compose a list of at least 10 questions you want to ask him, and include questions that address cultural issues that you know are relevant to the patient’s condition. Cite a source that helped you.”
- **Cornell notes.** For a reading assignment, ask students to fill out the following chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key quotation</th>
<th>What’s it mean?</th>
<th>Why is it important?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write a 250-word article summary, adding your own thoughts on why a psyche nurse plays a key role mental health.

- **Simulation/Role play.** E.g., “You have met and talked to a regularly returning patient who is six months pregnant and has had the earlier complications you see listed…. Write a script of the overall conversation you’d have with a doctor before she goes to the examination room to see the woman. Include remarks about the patient’s appearance, mood, apparent progress, etc.”
- **See-think.** E.g., “Write down 7 observations of the patient you see portrayed in the photograph(s) you’ve received. Explain what you think is important about each of your observations. You will discuss what you observed with a partner who has received the same photograph(s), and you’ll write a short reflection on how you’re partner’s observations affected your own.
- **RAFT (Role, Audience, Form, Topic).** Students have a choice to write one short piece that centers on a particular event, e.g.,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Releasing nurse</th>
<th>Patient</th>
<th>Oral instructions</th>
<th>Release from hospital care for concussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attending nurse (day)</td>
<td>Doctor (head injury specialist)</td>
<td>Observation report</td>
<td>Details of patient’s condition leading to release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head nurse</td>
<td>Hospital administrators</td>
<td>Release report</td>
<td>History of patient’s treatment and response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal physician’s nurse</td>
<td>Patient’s spouse</td>
<td>Phone dialog</td>
<td>Follow-up on patient’s condition and recovery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Multiple perspectives.** E.g., “After listening to patient’s complaints, you suspect that the patient is having a dangerous post-surgery reaction. Before you say anything or take any action, please put together a simple chart that compares what you anticipate will be (a) the patient’s perspective, (b) the doctor’s perspective, (c) the perspective of the patient’s family, and (d) a malpractice lawyer’s perspective. Then explain how you’d proceed.”
- **Question-Answer Relationships.** Promote closer reading by designing questions (a) whose answers can be found in the text, (2) whose answers require comparing what the author knows and what the reader knows, (c) whose answers must be synthesized from different parts of the text, and (d) whose answers come from the reader’s own experiences.
- **Collaborative research.** Require students to work on multiple authored projects, where each member of a group is responsible for finding different sources and responsible for writing a specific section of the project so that work is divided evenly.
- **Analytical round table.** E.g., “Make a graphic organizer with a care plan for a specific health issue in a circle at the center. Draw a box around the circle, divide it into four sections, and identify four important aspects of that care plan. Each member in your group must be prepared to write briefly about a specific aspect and share it with the class.”
- **Decision tree.** E.g., “In a flow chart, place the health condition of a patient at the top of a sheet of paper. Draw 4-5 lines angling down from that condition, each representing a decision a nurse must make in caring for the patient. Then draw vertical lines descending from each decision, and identify a consequence that each decision could lead to. Finally, in a box at the end of each consequence, identify the outcomes for the patient.”