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ENG1101

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Final Reflection & Portfolio

Final Reflection

This semester I returned to school after more than ten years with the goal of advancing from a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to a Registered Nurse (RN) by obtaining my associates then eventually my bachelor's in nursing. As an immigrant from Haiti, English is not my first language, so I was nervous about taking any classes that required me to write as I believe that my understanding of the rules for writing in English is lacking. But knowing I had too, I registered for this course with the support of my family behind me and the determination to try my best.

Upon starting the class, I learned that there were four major writing assignments that I had to complete in addition to many different reading assignments. I have to say that I really enjoyed the assigned readings. After reading many of them I realized that I am not alone in my experiences. I felt this more especially with the readings assigned around the first paper, the educational narrative. For example, in the unit 1 assignment I wrote, "However, even though I could read, write, and speak in English now, I had another problem. The new issue was applying what I learned to the standards of higher education. After many remedial classes and issues with the college's staff related to advisement and the progress towards getting my degree, I had enough." I remember reading the pieces from Fredrick Douglas and Malcolm X and thinking that

I am not the only one who has struggled to better themselves and thinking that I will be able to accomplish my dreams one day. The readings helped to provide examples of what I aspire to achieve when I write, to tell a story that reaches others the way that what I read touched me. Also, all the chances I had to write during class this semester helped me become more comfortable with writing in general and helped me learn to plan/draft my ideas before starting the assignment.

Now that I think about it, I believe that from the start of the semester to now, I have improved as a reader and writer. Before, I would read and make note of areas that stood out to me. Now, when I read, I try to pay attention to how the ideas are put together and the authors make their writing come alive with their language use. As a writer, I evolved because I am more willing to try new styles even if I struggle at first with it. For example, in the unit 3 assignment I decided to create an academic poster. I helped my children with theirs, but never had to do one entirely myself. Learning the characteristics of an academic poster and having the chance to do one makes me feel prepared for the possibility that I may have to do one in the future. Also, I am now more comfortable utilizing resources like the library or my peers to support my ideas or obtain feedback on how I can improve.

Reminiscing on the past three months, I have to say that I learned a lot. One thing I learned was how to improve as a reader by taking note of vital information, reading a text multiple times, each with a different mindset, to get a better understanding of the information in front of me. For example, with the unit 2 assignment, I wrote “The piece continues to suggest reasons for the shortage which includes the aging population, aging work force, nurse burn out, career and family, regions (location), growth potential, and workplace violence.” Using a source I obtained from the library website, I used my improved reading skill to pull out key information needed to

give a summary of the text. Another thing I learned from this class is how to benefit from the criticism of my peers to improve my writing. Considering what I learned, when I move forward in my college career, I feel confident that I will be able to ask appropriate questions, gather necessary information from assigned text or through my own research, and accurately relay my findings in a way that gives credit to the author. This semester helped to get me used to working with people with skills that differ from my own and how to benefit from their input because the way we view the same thing is different and they may point out a path I would have otherwise never considered.

Unit 1

I emigrated from Haiti in the early 1990s. I was brought here by my family to obtain opportunities that would lead to a better life. Like most immigrants, the dream is to come to America, get a well-paying job, buy a house, and support our families so that they will have a better life than we did growing up. What no one mentions to you until you get here, is how difficult it is to achieve those goals. As a youth coming to America, experiencing a culture and language that was quite different from what I used to, it took some time to get accustomed to. I can honestly say that I was naïve about the amount of trust I put in others. It was not until I was robbed a couple of times and jumping from job to job that I knew I had to change how I interacted with people in the city.

When I initially came to New York, I had recently started a career as a laboratory technician. When I got here, I thought that I would be surrounded by tubes and vials filled with specimen samples I collected to use as part of the research I was helping with. However, that was not what I ended up doing. Instead, I was employed in a factory making Chia Pets. Due to the differences in the educational system, I was informed that I could not use the degree I earned in

Haiti to get a job in the same field without redoing the courses again in America. This took its toll on me as I now had to figure out if I wanted to continue as a laboratory technician or try something else. It was at this point that after some careful consideration I decided to begin the journey to becoming a nurse. I decided to pursue nursing because growing up I was responsible for assisting the elderly in my family and community with various tasks. My history of helping others and desire to make a difference in the lives of the people around me furthered my desire to be a nurse. My love of science played a big part also. While the journey is far from over, here is what led me to my current position.

It was after having my two daughters that I decided to go to college to get my nursing degree. I enrolled at Medgar Evers College and that is where my struggles began. The first problem that I had was the language barrier. Growing up I spoke French in school and Haitian Kreyol at home. Coming to America and learning English was difficult, but with the support of my family I was able to do it. However, even though I could read, write, and speak in English now, I had another problem. The new issue was applying what I learned to the standards of higher education. After many remedial classes and issues with the college's staff related to advisement and the progress towards getting my degree, I had enough.

With things in school not going in the right direction, I decided to put my education on hold to continue caring for the small children I had at home. It was at this point that I learned that at times it is a bit impossible to get everything that you need. Not wanting to give up, I tried something else. I was already working as a Home Health Aide, so I enrolled in a Medical Assistant program. During this time, I learned that I wanted to be more involved with the care of my patients. From there I went on to become a Certified Nursing Assistant and then a Licensed Practical Nurse. I did this not only for my family but also to prove to myself that I can say that I

succeeded in what I put my mind to. We all know children are a priority in parents' lives. We brought them into this world and now must take care of them to the fullness of our ability. Like they say, "children do not ask to be born." It is upon to the parent to do the necessary with help of our almighty God.

However, it was seeing my oldest child graduate school with not only a bachelor's in Human Biology, but also a bachelor's in Nursing, that I stopped to ask myself, "what are you doing with your life?" After obtaining the Licensed Practical Nurse certification more than 10 years ago, I have not done what I could to become a Registered Nurse. Since becoming licensed, I have applied to various nursing programs, but anytime something unexpected happened I put off the process and continued with my daily life as normal. But seeing my daughter face challenges on the road to getting her degree gave me the urge I needed to get my own. I was a little scared of going back to school at my age, but the number of times I have seen people older than me graduate from high school or college on the news. I know my age will not stop me. I must always believe it is never too late to try. Being a nurse is my dream and I will achieve it.

One evening after work, I had a discussion with my husband about returning to school. I asked him, "what do you think about me going back to school?" He replied, "it's about time." That filled me with relief knowing that I had his support. He went on to say, "you know the girls will help you out, don't worry so much." After hearing that, I went to my eldest and asked her to help me with finding a school and the application process. Which brings me to where I am now. Currently enrolled in college, working during the day, and attending classes in the evening. Now if I have my things my way, I will be in the nursing program at City Tech in the Fall of 2023 and complete the program so that in the next three to four years to have my degree in Nursing like I always wanted. It is a process, but I can do it. If I just work hard, the doors to my future will

open. Knowing that I will be a nurse, doing what I can to help others with my years of experience is all that I could ever want.

Unit 2

Introduction:

Research Question: How does the nursing shortage impact the safety of patients and staff?

Still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the more noticeable effects it had is the nursing shortage. It must be noted that throughout history the nursing shortage has always been a problem, but the pandemic contributed to its worsening. This in mind, after experiencing the effects of the nursing shortage at work, when asked to find a social justice issue of importance to me I did not need to look farther than my own environment. There have been many times that I have gone to work where there has only been myself and two other aides on the floor caring for about 40 patients. It does not seem possible and sounds like I am overestimating the situation, but that is the reality of my situation. And I can guarantee similar conditions are occurring worldwide and can be worse than what I presented.

The reality of what is happening is not fair to us nurses and patients. With the lives resting on my hands this problem needs to be addressed more thoroughly. This led me to question what effects the nursing shortage has on patient safety and nurse safety. I believe that while everyone prioritizes patient safety few focus on the nurses who work to ensure those patients safety. Through this research, I seek to find out more about the nursing shortage in general, what factors contribute to it, how it affects patients, but more importantly to me, how it affects the nurses and what can be done to resolve the issue.

Source Entries:

Citation # 1

Haddad, Lisa M, et al. "Nursing Shortage." *National Library of Medicine*, StatPearls, 22 Feb. 2022, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK493175/>.

Summary

This article talks about one of the major concerns the world is currently facing, the nursing shortage. The piece began by defining and introducing how crucial nurses are to healthcare, making up the bulk of the profession. It was noted that "According to the World Health Statistics Report, there are approximately 29 million nurses and midwives globally... [and] Estimates of upward of one million additional nurses will be needed by 2020" (Haddad et al.). Additionally, it is mentioned that "an article in the Nursing Times, The US Bureau of Labor Statistics Projects that more than 275,000 additional nurses are needed from 2020 to 2030" (Haddad et al.). The piece continues to suggest reasons for the shortage which includes the aging population, aging work force, nurse burn out, career and family, regions (location), growth potential, and workplace violence.

The aging population increases the need for health services because they are surviving longer and need increased care as they are living with multiple lifelong health issues that need to be heavily managed. Addition the as the population ages the workforce decreases significantly because many workers are retiring at one time. This impacts the educational institutions mostly as the number of faculty decreases limits the number of students schools can accept decreases the availability of new nurses. Furthermore, because of the increased number of patients and limited support nurses are more overworked leading to increased rates of nurse burnout and high

turnover rates. Also, with most nurses being female and at the age where most are starting families limits on how much these nurses can work increase until they leave the profession all together.

The article also states that the shortage impacts regions around the United States differently as some have more nurses than needed and others can barely meet the needs of their communities. The main issue is getting nurses where they are needed in areas that are seen to have a slower growth potential. Another issue is finding nurses to take up the vacant positions on units that have higher instances of violence like the emergency or psychiatry departments. The article then highlights that the major issue is the staffing ratios which put the safety of the nurse and patient at risk for several reasons. Some interventions were suggested to combat this problem include improved technological resources and an empowering environment that supports and facilitates the staff.

Reflection

I agree with the source discussed regarding the nursing shortage. The statistics presented on the shortage make it clear that work needs to be done to solve this problem. As a nurse myself, I have experienced the high patient to nurse ratios firsthand. There is so much potential for educators within the aging of the population. I think that more should be done so that the nurses who retire consider teaching the next generation. Also, I feel the nursing associations and unions can do more to help by advocating for more support staffing and implementing programs that will help decrease the number of nurses who experience burnout.

I think the problem will be worse before it gets better. Many aspects of the article resonated with me, especially when it mentioned violence nurses experience within the health care system. Many of my friends have told me that the potential for violence is one of the main

reasons that made them change their mind about selecting a career in nursing and I am sure that it is the same for many others as well. The study referenced for that section of the article was interesting. It stated that nurses who work in the inpatient setting experience more verbal abuse and that nurses in general are the “most vulnerable to aggression” (Haddad et al.). Through my research, I believe that I will discover more information to solve issues such as short staffing for example. Because where I work, they are never adequately staffed. If I can present some solutions to the organization that have been shown to work, hopefully they will consider making similar changes. I would like to make my voice heard to advocate for myself, patients, and other nurses. Overall, the article was clear and presented the information in a way that lacked any bias.

Quotation

“Nursing shortages lead to errors, higher morbidity, and mortality rates. In hospitals with high patient-to-nurse ratios, nurses experience burnout, dissatisfaction, and the patients experienced higher mortality and failure-to-rescue rates than facilities with lower patient-to-nurse ratios” (Haddad et al.).

Citation # 2

King, Lucy. *We Know the Real Cause of the Crisis in Our Hospitals. It's Greed.* *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 19 Jan. 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/19/opinion/nurses-staffing-hospitals-covid-19.html>.

Summary

This video is short, about 7 minutes in length and is an opinion piece done by The New York Times. The video opens with nurses detailing the violence they experienced while on the job. These same nurses go on to inform views that the nursing shortage has been an issue for a

while and worsened due to the pandemic. The idea presented is that the nursing shortage is not the result of a shortage of nurses, but instead the result of hospitals not willing to hire nurses. Throughout the video, TikToks from other nurses were shown to be in tears, complaining about the conditions they are forced to work under and stating how they want to leave the profession. Many of the nurses interviewed suggest feeling as though they failed to do their job because of being overwhelmed by patients and not being able to care for them in the way they deserve or desire to. The video reminds viewers that the hospital is a business and just like any other business the goal is to increase their profits. It concludes with the suggestion to implement policies that will ensure safe patient to staff ratios. It was said to be the focus of many states, some of which passed the bill while others rejected it.

Reflection

As a nurse I was not surprised to hear what the nurse in the video had to say because I go through the same thing five days a week. This opinion video gives an alternative view of what is commonly suggested to the public, the pandemic did not cause the shortage of nurses, the hospitals did. Though I do believe that this is not the only cause, because from my research I learned of other factors that contributed to the shortage, the hospital as a business indeed is the primary factor. I have to say that the video is a little biased because the nurses are placing the blame of the shortage on the hospital, but I cannot find anything wrong with that. I say this because what they are saying has some truths to it, the hospital is a business with a budget where half goes to staffing.

With the several types of staff needed to run a hospital, not a lot of that budget can be spent on nurses. What needs to be done is have management reevaluate the in-place budget so that funds can be reallocated to support the hiring of nurses. Also, support needs to be given to

the policies that ensure adequate staffing numbers. I believe governments should also help fund hospitals to ensure they are staffed correctly. However, my only issue is that the other video did not comment on how short staffing is also a problem of other in-patient institutions like nursing homes and rehabilitations centers. I say this because I work at one and the conditions impacting nurse and patient safety are the same as those in the hospital. What I need to do is do more research to see if I can find related works that discuss those settings.

Quotation

“If you're in the hospital your chances of dying go up by 7% for every additional patient your nurse has to care for” (King and Kessel).

Citation # 3

Trinkoff, Alison M., et al. “CE: Nurses Are More Exhausted Than Ever: What Should We Do About It?” *The American Journal of Nursing*, vol. 121, no. 12, 2021, pp. 18–28, <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NAJ.0000802688.16426.8d>.

Summary

The article discusses how the covid-19 pandemic has increased the risk of fatigue. It is mentioned that working longer hours when understaffed can cause many kinds of health problems like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, anxiety, and depression. The result of this fatigue impacts both the nurses and the patient's safety. The article is divided into three different sections. The first section discusses the factors that result in the fatigue that nurses experience. They include heavy job demands, sleep and work challenges, and maintaining a work-life balance. The second section presents various solutions for nurse fatigue. Some of the solutions include sleep training, workplace napping, how and when to sleep, countermeasures to drowsy

driving, integrative health practices, and improved technological assistance. The third and last section of the article highlights the barriers to reducing nurse fatigue. The barriers mentioned include nursing and workplace culture, scheduling, and staffing.

Reflection

I agree with the information presented in this article as something needs to be done. Reading about the interventions to reduce and safely manage nurse fatigue which are sorely needed gave me more ideas I can research and present to my job as changes to implement. One that stood out to me was workplace napping. The article states that “nurses who tried napping fell asleep about half the time for an average of 31 minutes, and reported feeling "alert and refreshed" afterward” (Trinkoff, Alison M., et al. 21). This is an interesting concept, and I would like to see how it would be carried out. I have been interested in trying this during the days when I am asked to cover another shift, but not having a designated area that would allow me to nap comfortably prevents me from trying it. This article did an excellent job of presenting the information in a way that made it clear what they were trying to say and provided enough evidence to support their suggested changes. Also, since most of the authors of the article are nurses, they did a wonderful job of keeping biased opinions out of the article.

Quotation

“Despite evidence that longer shifts contribute not only to higher error rates but also to nurse fatigue, job dissatisfaction, and burnout, many hospital leaders believe 12-hour shifts are essential for nurse recruitment and retention” (Trinkoff, Alison M., et al. 25).

Conclusion

The current nursing shortage is a worldwide problem that was worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This research explored the effects of nursing shortage on the safety of patients and nurses. I decided to investigate this because everyone always considers the patients first and usually forgets about the nurses responsible for providing them care. If the nurse is unwell physically and mentally, how can they give their patient the quality of care they deserve? That said, my research highlighted that there are many causes of the nursing shortage including the current health care system, the aging population, nurses leaving the profession, and more. The research also provided potential solutions to the shortage including policies enforcing safe staffing numbers, how to reduce nurse fatigue – naps, yoga, and alternative scheduling, and technological updates. Considering all the information I gathered, I believe that this evidence would best be viewed by the management of various inpatient facilities because they are the ones that can implement the changes. What I learned will go a long way to improving the conditions that nurses work under and will hopefully result in the end of the nursing shortage. I am only one person, but the more attention that is called to the problem and valid solutions presented, then change will occur.

Unit 3

<https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/pennereng1101fa2022d308/2022/12/07/marie-desire-u3-writing-assignment-parts-i-and-ii/>