PHILOSOPHY OF THE NURSING PROGRAM

The Nursing faculty at Hudson Valley Community College believes nursing practice is a human service rendered by a caring person who is technically competent, intellectually curious and motivated toward self-growth. The Nursing Department believes people, as consumers of health care, are bio-psycho-socio-cultural individuals in a society that is highly complex, technical and competitive. In this changing environment, people proceed through the process of growth. Progression through the life cycle often leads to periods of stress, immobility, loss and crisis. The individual’s response to these changes necessitates a holistic approach by the health care provider. Nursing practice is the human service designed to support the person and family during these periods. As a person proceeds through the life cycle, their health care needs constantly change and consequently require a variety of health services within structured settings in the community for the prevention of illness and the maintenance and restoration of health. Working collaboratively with health team members, nurses provide direct care services to clients and families. The Nursing Department believes the most effective way to render these services is by the use of the nursing process. Using this problem solving, critical thinking approach, the nurse applies knowledge of the biological sciences, the liberal arts and nursing theory to assist clients and families.

Nursing practice, as a dynamic human service, is constantly in a state of change as a result of fluctuations in family structure, demographics, discoveries of research and technology, and ethical/legal issues. A graduate nurse must demonstrate competency, be flexible, assume responsibility for continued learning and participate in the peer review process.

The Nursing Department believes that an educational outcome of associate degree education at Hudson Valley Community College is to prepare graduates for a position as a registered professional nurse. The role of the associate degree graduate is to assume responsibility and accountability for a prescribed area of practice in the health care field. Practicing in a variety of health care settings, the graduate demonstrates competency, flexibility and provides a safe environment for the client.

In order to provide safe care, the graduate uses the nursing process within the bio-psycho-socio-cultural framework of stress adaptation. Initially, the graduate uses assessment skills for data collection and identification of common health problems. Following assessment, the graduate identifies nursing diagnoses, sets priorities and designs an individualized plan of care. The graduate uses standard nursing diagnoses and protocols, while actively participating with other members of the health care team, to implement care. Lastly, the graduate evaluates care based on client-centered outcomes and modifies the plan of care as needed.

As a provider of nursing care, the graduate uses appropriate resources for referral. The Nursing faculty also believes the graduate must maintain a collaborative relationship with other nurses, physicians and the entire health care team. The Nursing department expects a graduate to determine areas of care that can be safely delegated to the less skilled worker and further encourages graduates to be involved in research by participating in data collection and using the results of nursing research in practice in the structured health care setting.

Believing that formal college education constitutes the beginning of a program of continued learning, the faculty anticipates that the graduate will identify individual learning needs and the style of learning that will best meet these needs. Finally, the graduate should be responsible for self-evaluation of individual practice and for participation in the peer review process.

The Nursing faculty believes associate degree education for nurses should take place in an institution of higher learning. The Nursing department of Hudson Valley Community College is an integral part of the college community and subscribes to the philosophy and educational outcomes of the parent institution. In keeping with the mission statement of the college, the Nursing department has responded to the needs of the community by providing graduates who have demonstrated the competency to provide direct care to clients and families with common health care needs in structured settings.
The Nursing faculty believes associate degree education includes theory based in the liberal arts, sciences and nursing. General education courses are selected to provide support for the content included in the curriculum. At Hudson Valley Community College, there is an equal distribution of courses in general education and nursing.

The conceptual framework of stress adaptation serves as a guidepost to the curriculum plan. As people proceed through the life cycle, they experience periods of stress, immobility, loss and crisis: the same concepts that provide continuity through each nursing course. To achieve program outcomes, the following threads are included in each course: safety, nutrition, pharmacology, technical skills, information regarding community resources, health teaching, self-esteem, communication, asepsis, growth and development, critical thinking, client care management and ethical decision-making skills.

Communication skills are necessary to be an effective member of the health care team. The faculty believes that the graduate must be able to use oral and written skills with clients, families and members of the health care team. As a result, two courses in composition are required for freshmen at Hudson Valley Community College. Public speaking is an integral component of both composition courses.

The department believes associate degree learners are a heterogeneous group of adult learners who have a variety of learning styles. The faculty recognizes individual differences and has designed an instructional plan with a variety of teaching-learning methods. This plan provides students with the necessary skills for continued learning and self-evaluation as graduates. Students are able to identify their own learning needs and independently use resources to meet these needs.

Faculty adhere to the principle that learning proceeds from simple to complex and from general to specific and believes nurse educators should provide students with learning experiences wherein the teacher facilitates learning and the learner actively participates in this learning process. This strategy fosters critical thinking skills and continued learning. Students are provided with experiences in a variety of clinical areas to encourage flexibility and self-direction.

In order to achieve the program outcomes, the faculty believes that college and clinical laboratory experiences should be consistent with the classroom theory being taught. The faculty also believes that immersion in a focused content area combined with correlation of theory to evidence-based practice in the client care situation enhances learning. Careful selection of the clinical learning environment enables students to transfer learning and become competent with the nursing skills pertinent to the client care situation.

Clinical competency is an integral part of the nursing philosophy at Hudson Valley Community College. This is accomplished by clearly identifying critical criteria for the practice of nursing. Using these criteria, the student practices skills in the simulated college laboratory, demonstrates competence and gains self-confidence to meet learning needs. The focus of clinical learning is consistent with classroom theory, discussions and the college laboratory experiences. The Nursing faculty believes that clinical learning experiences should be carefully selected, thus allowing the student to use the nursing process, correlate theory to practice and become proficient with nursing skills in client care situations. The Nursing department strongly supports, as a graduate outcome, the competent demonstration of technical skills and the ability to use critical thinking skills to perform as an entry-level graduate technical nurse.