

Nursing as a discourse community nursing essay

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Community Registered nurses are vital to patient care and they play a crucial role in promoting health, preventing diseases, and helping patients manage with illness. Nurses are a supporter for the patient, the patient's health, and the patient's families working to restore health and lessen suffering for their loved one. As members of the nursing discourse community, registered nurses connect with a group of people who share common goals, attitudes, and values. The primary goal of registered nurses is to restore their patients to good health as much as possible while keeping the patient's emotional and physical state in balance. As nurses become skilled in their field of practice, their level of responsibility may increase, hence helping them advance into positions with better authority requiring more intricate skills. As nurses become more skilled and gain more responsibility they are becoming a more intricate part of their discourse community. They are learning more about the goals, values, and language of the discourse community in nursing. This helps each nurse to understand more about the nursing discourse community in order to help teach those who are just beginning in the nursing field. After all, you must train the new nurses in order to move others up and replace those who are retiring from the career in order to keep the discourse community going. In my opinion, a discourse community is described as the audience in which you write for or speak to or with. It is those who relate to you and what you are discussing whether it is writing, debating, giving a speech, or just socializing. Everyone in the group has a common goal they are working towards or common idea which they share. A discourse community is a group of people who communicate about their

similar interests that they have in common with each other. This definition gives a good understanding of how a discourse community might possibly begin. Discourse communities take place all over the world and play a vital role in communication. It is important to understand what a discourse community is because each person is involved in at least one discourse community in their life. By being involved in more than one discourse community a person can learn much more. By having a part in all different types of communities you are given the opportunity to learn about the differences in each one which overall gives you a better means of communication. In the article called " The Idea of Community in the Study of Writing", the author, Joseph Harris says that people do not have to leave one discourse community for a different one but can be a part of another discourse community all at the same time (Harris 590). In order to classify different discourse communities, you must first know what characterizes a group of individuals as a discourse community. John Swales discusses the six defining characteristics in his article " The concept of Discourse Community". The first characteristic according to Swales is that a discourse community has a broadly agreed set of common public goals. These common goals may be inscribed in documents or like in most cases; they may be understood without the need to be written down. The second characteristic is that a discourse community has ways of communicating between each of its members. The ways in which each discourse community communicates amongst each member varies from meetings to conversations or to newsletters in order to meet each discourse communities needs. The third characteristic is that a discourse community uses its participatory

mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback. This means that in order to be a member to a discourse community you must read or pay attention to the information which it shares in order to understand it. You cannot simply subscribe to the newsletters and consider yourself part of the discourse community if you never open the newsletters and read them. The fourth characteristic is that a discourse community utilizes and therefore possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims. This means that a discourse community has developed and continues to develop new discursal expectations. The fifth characteristic of a discourse community is that in addition to owing genres, a discourse community has acquired some specific lexis. This means that each discourse community has its own terminology and abbreviations in which it uses to communicate. In order to be a part of each discourse community you must understand its language, terminology, and abbreviations. The last characteristic of a discourse community is that it has a threshold level of members with appropriate degree of relevant content and discursal expertise. This means that a discourse community must have changing memberships. If you break this down a little more means that individuals enter a discourse community as a beginner and leave by death or different involuntary ways. Survival of a discourse community is dependent on a balanced ratio between new members and experts. It takes all six of these characteristics in order for a group to be classified as a discourse community, without even one of the six it cannot be called discourse community (Swales 471-473). Every career you could possibly choose has its own discourse community, or in some cases more than one. Each of these discourse communities has their own set of

rules and beliefs which adhere to the special needs of that specific career. Some careers even have more than one Discourse community. An example of this would be the field of study I am currently in, nursing. In nursing, or the medical field in general, you could be a part of many different discourse communities based on the different types of jobs performed. If someone was a nurse in a family practice office they would communicate and function differently than someone who worked in the emergency room or operating rooms. The same common characteristics that were described of a discourse community can also be used to describe the discourse community in the field of nursing. Between nurses some common goals do not necessarily need to be written down because most nurses automatically understand these goals. For example, common goals include caring for patients, doing what is best for the patient throughout their stay, and carrying out the required responsibilities during their shift. Certain rules are also written down for all nurses as well. Some of these rules can vary depending on each place of employment and include items such as paperwork and agreements between the state healthcare laws and the nurses wishing to practice in that state. Communication must occur for nurses to fully complete their jobs and for vital information about patients to be understood by other nurses and medical staff. Since nurses are always needed there are new students admitted to nursing programs every semester across the world. These students are being trained and taught about the discourse communities of the nursing profession. These students will replace old nurses in hospitals and other healthcare facilities. With the prior training and understanding of knowledge it makes an easier transition for both the new members to the

nursing profession and the experts who have been there for many years. The profession of nursing adheres to Swales' six defining characteristics of a discourse community. In nursing school, class and lecture objectives are clearly recognized, which relates to the 'agreed set of common public goals'. Also, nurses strive for the best and cost-effective care of each and every patient in which they see or treat. The goal of the nursing is to improve and promote well-being and cure and manage infections or diseases. The nursing discourse community also finds continuing education and self-wellness valuable for the patients and nurses themselves. This is one of the many participatory mechanisms that the nursing profession has. Finally, to conclude the characteristics of a discourse community directly related to nursing, nursing must incorporate a ratio between a high level of expertise and new graduates. What one might find in the nursing profession is that more experienced nurses "eat their young", meaning that the new graduate will need to be assertive and take a stand for themselves since he or she has every right to be a part of the nursing discourse community. This is necessary in order for the beginners to develop into the experienced nurses. Nurses use many different types of texts to influence their communication among everyone in their discourse communities. One of the most popular types of texts used is charts and tables. The charts and tables are the basis of almost all the information received by nurses. Whether it is the blood pressure, types of medication you are on, or even your temperature, it is all processed by putting the information in tables and charts. These are a good use for organizing information in order to allow all other nurses and medical staff the ability to read and easily understand the information contained in

them. When charts and tables were first introduced to the nursing profession they were all hand written and kept in files. In order for a nurse to view your past medical history they would have to go through your file and read each chart from prior visits. Today technology has taken over. All charts are now put into a computer and that computer is taken around with each nurse from patient to patient in order to track all past visits and enter the current visit. This allows for better organization of each patient's information and easier retrieval as well. The only downfall to having everything in a computer database is the possibility that all information could be lost if something were to happen to the computer system of that hospital or healthcare facility. Computers sometimes have a mind of their own and their systems can crash causing a loss of all information on that computer or computer system. I would assume they have an awesome recovery team that prevents incidents such as this, but you never know one hundred percent when it comes to technology. Overall charts are a very good way to organize data and information in the nursing field, but there is no way that a chart can hold all information needed for nurses and other medical staff. Another genre that nurses use is technology such as telephones. In hospital settings nurses and other healthcare providers must have access to a telephone in order to carry out their daily tasks and duties. With hospitals being as large as they are it is not possible for a nurse to walk around until they find who they need to speak with, whether it be the doctor, surgeon, or pharmacist. Telephones are useful for when nurses need to call doctors when they need answers to questions or even in emergencies, or when they must call a surgeon for an emergency life saving surgery. Another use for telephones in the nursing

career is to call pharmacists in order to get prescriptions for patients who are staying in the hospital. These are all very good reasons why telephones are a useful genre for nurses and other healthcare providers. Discourse communities are important in our everyday lives, whether we are at work, with our friends, or even in a professional environment. Discourse communities shape how we interact with others such as our actions and the communication in which we use. In the profession of nursing there is a definite discourse community in which all nurses associate. This discourse community is a way for each nurse to connect with each other and understand their goals, language, and overall actions in the nursing field. There are many genres in which nurses use to interact amongst each other and others. Two of these genres are charts/tables and telephones. Each of these genres allows for different means of communication and interaction between nurses and other healthcare providers whether it is to share information about the patient, contact pharmacists for prescription, or even contact doctors and surgeons for questions or emergencies. Nursing is a very complex discourse community which means that if you are not a part of the nursing profession and you have not been exposed to it frequently, you will likely not be able to understand their language or their goals in which they all follow together.