My Educational and Professional Goals in Nursing

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My Educational and Professional Goals in Nursing

As of today, I have been a nurse for six years and five months. I decided to become a nurse in 2003 after completing my chemotherapy and radiation treatments for cervical cancer. Throughout the whole process of being diagnosed with cervical cancer, having a partial hysterectomy, and receiving treatment, I was not only supported by my friends and family, but also by the nurses who participated in my recovery. The compassion and care that I received during this ordeal created a desire within me to take on the role of nurse, so that I may be able to show others the same in similar situations, such as mine.

**Journey to BSN Program**

 After obtaining my Associates of Science degree in Nursing at the age of 43, I began my nursing career on a Cardio-Vascular Intensive Care Unit in Tennessee. For four months, I trained as an ICU nurse, but felt that even after four months of training that I was not adequately prepared to be an ICU nurse. I needed to build a firmer foundation of nursing skills with which I could provide the proper care for my patients. I then obtained a night-shift position as a med-surg nurse in Richmond, where I continued to increase and improve my nursing skills and knowledge for 18 months; however, working the night shift had led me towards developing hypertension. I moved to day shift in order to improve my health and began to learn how to interact with the doctors and case managers who planned the care for my patients, as well as providing more input regarding their care. After another 18 months, I realized that, for me, working on the floor was beginning to fill me with dread. Here I was, a Registered Nurse with a BS in Communications and an AS in Nursing, and I felt that I spent most of my day fetching drinks and food or cleaning up patients who had soiled themselves, like an “orderly” (a rather humbling experience); not the pursuits that one would associate with a college-educated person. I wanted to do something in the nursing field that would provide more of an impact than being on the floor was doing, such as a Case Manager or an Educator, but, in order to gain entry into either position, I would need to obtain a BSN. Since my nursing dream had evolved, I realized that I needed to come up with a plan that would provide me with enough time and the right education program to pursue my BSN.

**Educational and Professional Goals**

 In pursuing my BSN at ODU, one of the educational goals that I have set for myself is to improve my ability to collaborate and interact with my fellow nursing students so that that skill can transfer seamlessly to the workplace. ODU provides those opportunities of collaboration through the discussion boards and projects assigned. As my skill level in this area increases, I hope to take on the role of leader more often so that I may learn to be more assertive in the work environment. I also would like to improve my PowerPoint skills so that I may become a more proficient presenter. Eventually, I would like to utilize these presentation skills either as a Nurse Educator, or by presenting my research at a conference someday.

 As far as professional goals that could be obtained once I receive my BSN, I would like to apply for an Educator position within my hospital system. Of course, if I were to do so, then it would become necessary for me to pursue an MSN, since our Educators are required to have an MSN within five years of accepting an Educator position. If I do not pursue the Educator career track, then another field of interest that I would pursue would be the field of Nursing Informatics, since I am an analytical person who enjoys solving puzzles and utilizing computers. I would like to be in a position that would allow me to improve the documenting capabilities of the software programs that we use from day-to-day. With computers being used more and more within the healthcare industry, I want to use the knowledge of nursing that I have gained over the years and integrate it into the software that we use within our scope of practice.

**Strengths and Weaknesses**

 My obsession with wanting things to be perfect can be a strength, as well as a weakness. I find myself wanting each assignment, whether at work or at school, to be completely without error and be the embodiment of whatever point I am getting across. However, pursuing perfection can lead to procrastination, which is one of the weaknesses that I am constantly battling within every aspect of my life. Consciously, I know that I need to meet deadlines in a timely manner, but I find myself being easily distracted by family and the pleasurable pursuits around me. As I continue my journey towards achieving my BSN, I know that I need to still pursue perfection with my assignments, but I need to temper that obsession with the knowledge that as long as I am able to get my point across, it is okay if an assignment does not contain all of the research that I had put into it. I also need to make a more concerted effort to avoid distractions and maintain my focus on each assignment until its completion before the deadline is reached.

**Conclusion**

 In trying to obtain my BSN, it is necessary to set specific goals that I wish to achieve throughout my program at ODU. Not only do I need to pursue educational goals, such as improving collaboration and PowerPoint skills, but I also need to have a clear vision of what I want to use my BSN for as I continue to build my career in nursing, whether that career leads me to be an Educator or a Nursing Informatics nurse. In the future, maybe I can combine my two career goals and become an Educator of Nursing Informatics. The main thing for me to remember is that there needs to be more to pursuing a BSN than just obtaining the degree. Having a BSN is a tool that I need to utilize as I attempt to improve the professional standing of the nursing field. To that end, it is important to be a lifelong learner and realize that a BSN is just a stepping stone in my journey to be all that I can be in the nursing field.