

Professional Development Plan

Patricia M. Miller

Ferris State University

Abstract

This paper is a professional development plan with the purpose of evaluating my current and previous nursing practice as well as identifying goals for future career development. In analyzing my professional behaviors, I compare them with Standards of Professional Performance outlined in the American Nurses Association (ANA) book, *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* (2004). I also identify five and ten year goals for my professional career along with plans and methods of evaluating my goals and possible revisions of my goals

Professional Development Plan

The purpose of my professional development plan is to determine a plan for career and professional development with short and long-term goals, as well as analyze my current professional behaviors. The Dictionary of Nursing defines personal development plan (PDP) as “an individualized plan developed by nurses and other health-care professionals to further their commitment to continuing professional development” (2008). By evaluating my current professional behaviors and by developing a plan for professional development I am ensuring my advancement in a career of nursing, an indispensable function of healthcare.

The American Nurses Association (ANA) has established standards of practice and professional performance to guide the profession of Registered Nurses. Standards, as defined in *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*, are “authoritative statements by which the nursing profession describes the responsibilities for which its practitioners are accountable” (ANA, 2004, p. 12). Standards reflect the values and priorities of the profession, based on research and knowledge from nursing and other various disciplines and provide direction for professional nursing practice as well as a framework for the evaluation and improvement of practice (ANA, 2004, p. 12). By comparing my current practice with the criteria outlined by the ANA, I will be able to analyze and reflect on my current practice. In the remaining of the paper I will be able to develop a plan for my career and professional development by formulating goals and specific actions to aid in my attainment of the goals.

The ANA’s Standards of Nursing Practice content consists of six Standards of Practice and nine Standards of Professional Performance (2004, p. 3). The Standards of Practice describe a competent level of nursing care as demonstrated by the nursing process (ANA, 2004, p. 4). The Standards of Professional Development describe a competent level of behavior in the

professional role (ANA, 2004, p. 4). Measurement criteria are key indicators of competent practice for each standard and ANA's *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* includes criteria for each of the standards to be measured (2004, p. 5). For the purpose of my professional development plan I will be comparing my practice to the Standards of Professional Development using the criteria listed for each of the nine standards.

Current Professional Behaviors

Standard 7: Quality of Practice

The ANA lists standard 7, quality of practice, as: "The registered nurse systematically enhances the quality and effectiveness of nursing practice" (2004, p. 33). My current professional role is that of a student because I am not currently practicing nursing. One measurement criteria within this standard states: "Incorporates new knowledge to initiate changes in nursing practice and in the healthcare delivery system" (ANA, 2004, p. 33). By furthering my education, I will improve my delivery of quality care in the future. I will be advancing my knowledge base in order to initiate changes in my own nursing practice which will lead to an improvement in the healthcare delivery system. In my previous work experience I enhanced the effectiveness of my nursing practice in several different ways. Another criterion for measurement in this standard is listed as: "Uses creativity and innovation in nursing practice to improve care delivery" (ANA, 2004, p. 33). In my practice I worked on a medical surgical unit with a variety of patients and acuity levels. I utilized my own nursing education as well as advice from more experienced nurses to provide quality care. I often utilized resources and material for teaching purposes and gained personal insight and ideas from patients to better provide for their needs. "Demonstrates quality by documenting the application of the nursing process in a responsible, accountable, and ethical manner" (ANA, 2004, p. 33) is also a standard

listed. In my previous nursing practice I documented the care that I provided to the patients as learned in my nursing education.

Standard 8: Education

The ANA defines standard 8, education, as: “The registered nurse attains knowledge and competency that reflects current nursing practice” (2004, p. 35). I am currently continuing my education by working towards completion of my Bachelor’s degree in nursing. This fulfills the measurement criterion listed as: “Participates in ongoing educational activities related to appropriate knowledge bases and professional issues” (ANA, 2004, p. 35). Other measurement criteria for this standard are: “Seeks experiences and formal and independent learning activities to maintain and develop clinical and professional skills and knowledge” and “Maintains professional records that provide evidence of competency and lifelong learning” (ANA, 2004, p. 35). I utilize a variety of resources such as independent studies, online learning modules, and seminars to obtain continuing education credits to maintain my licensure. In obtaining my continuing education credits, I maintain records and certificates of completion of those activities to provide evidence of learning. One other measurement criterion that I can identify within the standard of education is the criterion listed as “Acquires knowledge and skills appropriate to the specialty area, practice setting, role, or situation” (ANA, 2004, p. 35). In my previous nursing work experience I completed yearly unit-specific competencies provided by the organization to ensure up to date knowledge.

Standard 9: Professional Practice Evaluation

The ANA lists standard 9, professional practice evaluation, as “The registered nurse evaluates one’s own nursing practice in relation to professional practice standards and guidelines, relevant statutes, rules, and regulations” (2004, p. 36). The ANA lists a

measurement criterion for this standard as “Obtains informational feedback regarding one’s own practice from patients, peers, professional colleagues, and others” (2004, p. 36). Right now, as a student, I am evaluated by grades and feedback given to me by my professors as well as by evaluations and suggestions of my peers. In my previous nursing experience I was formally and informally evaluated by nursing supervisors. I also received feedback from patients and my co-workers. In practice, when I received constructive negative feedback or suggestions for improvement, I was able to apply the feedback or suggestions to improve my patient care. This fits with the ANA’s measurement criterion listed as “Takes action to achieve goals identified during the evaluation process” (2004, p. 36).

Standard 10: Collegiality

Standard 10 is defined as: “The registered nurse interacts with and contributes to the professional development of peers and colleagues” (ANA, 2004, p. 37). Some measurement criteria listed within the standard of collegiality include: “Provides peers with feedback regarding their practice and/or role performance” and “Interacts with peers and colleagues to enhance one’s own professional nursing practice and/or role performance” (ANA, 2004, p. 37). As a student, I participate in discussions to not only offer my viewpoint or suggestions to other students but also to receive feedback to enhance my own ideas and views. In my work experience as a nurse, I interacted with other colleagues to help find solutions to problems and to obtain and offer feedback and ideas. One other measurement criterion that I am able to identify with is “Contributes to a supportive and healthy work environment” (ANA, 2004, p. 37). In my previous nursing practice I assisted other nurses and colleagues with tasks as needed and helped the hospital as a whole by working extra hours as needed.

Standard 11: Collaboration

The ANA defines standard 11, collaboration, as “The registered nurse collaborates with patient, family, and others in the conduct of nursing practice” (2004, p. 38). One measurement criterion within the standard of collaboration that I can relate to my current role as a student is the criteria listed as: “Partners with others to effect change and generate positive outcomes through knowledge of the patient or situation” (ANA, 2004, p. 38). As a student, I work with an interdisciplinary team of professors, fellow students, and other school faculty by completing assigned work, participating in discussions, by giving and receiving feedback and answers to questions about assignment or the course in general. I utilize appropriate resources with the school system, such as the library, as needed. Some measurement criteria in this standard related to my previous nursing practice include: “Communicates with patient, family, and healthcare providers regarding patient care and the nurse’s role in the provision of that care” and “Documents referrals, including provisions for continuity of care” (ANA, 2004, p. 38). In my nursing practice, I worked with an interdisciplinary team of physicians, other nurses, occupational or physical therapists, and social workers as appropriate for my patients. I collaborated with these colleagues to seek and apply the best possible care for my patients and made referrals as necessary.

Standard 12: Ethics

The ANA defines standard 12, ethics, as: “The registered nurse integrates ethical provisions in all areas of practice” (2004, p. 39). Some measurement criteria within this standard are listed as: “Delivers care in a manner that preserves and protects patient autonomy, dignity, and rights”, “Maintains patient confidentiality within legal and regulatory parameters”, and “Serves as a patient advocate assisting patients in developing skills for self advocacy” (ANA,

2004, p. 39). In my previous nursing experience, I practiced with compassion and respect for the patient regardless of social or economic status. I maintained confidentiality by adhering to hospital policy regarding patient confidentiality and by informing patients of their rights and by respecting and documenting their wishes regarding confidentiality. I served as an advocate for patients by using learned skills to promote their health and well-being and educated them in their own self advocacy rights. I also, in my nursing experience, guided my ethical practice by following the ANA's Code of Ethics (ANA, 2001; as cited in ANA, 2004, p. 39). As a student, I integrate ethical provisions by abiding to the school's policies and regulations.

Standard 13: Research

Standard 13, research, is defined as: "The registered nurse integrates research findings into practice" (ANA, 2004, p. 40). I can most appropriately apply this standard to my current role as a student. Some activities listed within the measurement criteria for this standard include: "Participating in data collection (surveys, pilot projects, formal studies)", "Conducting research", and "Incorporating research as a basis for learning" (ANA, 2004, p. 40). As I student, I am continually conducting research for learning purposes. I participate in a variety of data collections and incorporate my research into assigned papers or discussions. Another measurement criterion determined by the ANA is listed as: "Utilizes the best available evidence, including research findings, to guide practice decisions" (2004, p. 40). I am able to apply this criterion to my previous nursing practice. While I do not typically conduct research in my practice, research is continually being conducted in health care and those research findings did affect me in my practice. As a nurse, I utilized resources to guide my practice and often the resources contained information on new research and newly implemented policies based on research.

Standard 14: Resource Utilization

The ANA defines standard 14, resource utilization, as: “The registered nurse considers factors related to safety, effectiveness, cost, and impact on practice in the planning and delivery of nursing services” (2004, p. 42). I can easily analyze my professional behavior within this standard in my previous nursing practice. Some measurement criteria that the ANA lists to assess the standard of resource utilization include: “Assists the patient and family in identifying and securing appropriate and available services to address health-related needs” and “Assists the patient and family in becoming informed consumers about the options, costs, risks, and benefits of treatment and care” (2004, p. 42). In my previous nursing practice, on a medical surgical unit, I routinely referred patients and families to other resources. I assessed the patient’s outward needs for services as well as their verbalized concerns to assist them in obtaining the appropriate resources. I provided education about treatment and costs as well as education on risks and benefits of treatment and care in my practice as a nurse, both at work in the hospital and on a personal level in caring for a family member.

Standard 15: Leadership

Standard 15, leadership is defined as: “The registered nurse provides leadership in the professional practice setting and the profession” (ANA, 2004, p. 44). One of the measurement criterion listed by the ANA in this standard is “Demonstrates a commitment to continuous, lifelong learning for self and others” (2004, p. 44). I am fulfilling this criterion by continuing my education and by planning for future professional development through goals, specifically in my goal towards teaching nursing education. There is also some measurement criteria listed in the standard of leadership that I can relate to my previous nursing practice. The activities listed

include: “Engages in teamwork as a team player and a team builder”, “Works to create and maintain healthy work environments in local, regional, national, or international communities”, and “Exhibits creativity and flexibility through times of change” (ANA, 2004, p. 44). In my past nursing practice I engaged in teamwork by working and collaborating with the other nurses and staff. I was always willing to help others with tasks or offer suggestions for problem solving. I worked to maintain a healthy work environment by contributing a positive and friendly attitude and by being thoughtful and respectful to others. I exhibited flexibility through times of change by being open-minded to changes within the staffing or policy changes within the hospital. I helped out the hospital as a whole by being willing to be flexible in needed changes and by offering to work extra hours as needed or attend necessary training sessions.

Goals

Five Year Goals

My five year goals for my professional development are centered on completing my Bachelor’s degree in nursing and obtaining more clinical experience. Specifically, five-year goal number one is to complete my Bachelor’s Degree in Nursing by May 2012 with at least a 3.75 grade point average. My plan to complete this goal is to follow my RN to BSN plan and work hard towards good grades to maintain a 3.75 grade point average. My method of evaluation towards progress of this goal will be the actual grades and completion of the courses and the final completion of the program. In allowing for revision of these goals, there may be personal or professional situations that arise that would require a need for me to take fewer classes therefore pushing back my anticipated completion date. There may also be courses or assignments that I struggle with, therefore hindering my goal of a 3.75 grade point average. If these situations arise I will revisit my RN to BSN plan (P. Miller, personal communication,

September 29, 2010) and adjust accordingly or, if I am struggling, I will utilize appropriate resources for help in assignments or courses.

My second five-year goal is to obtain clinical experience in various areas of a hospital setting. I am interested in practicing in pediatrics, specifically pediatric oncology. My interest in pediatric oncology began after caring for a nephew diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma. In my research on pediatric oncology nursing, I read an article discussing the experiences of pediatric oncology nurses. The article states that as the nursing shortage continues, the demand for pediatric oncology nurse will also continue (Linder, 2009, p. 29). My plan to meet my goal of practicing in pediatric oncology begins with applying to a pediatric oncology unit of a hospital and obtaining employment. I will then complete unit specific orientation and obtain specialized certification for oncology nursing as required for the position. My timeline for achieving this goal is to obtain a position within one year. My method for evaluating progress toward this goal will be attainment of a nursing job in pediatric oncology and successful completion of orientation and education to receive specialized certifications.

Ten Year Goals

My ten year goals are focused on becoming a nurse educator in a college. In planning for this goal I will first obtain my Master's Degree in Nursing. Specifically, my first ten-year goal is to enroll in a Master's Degree program after completion of my Bachelor's degree and after obtaining some clinical experience and to complete the program within two years. Ferris State University offers a Master's of Science in Nursing (MSN) program with specialty concentration options for advanced leadership roles including a concentration in nursing education (Ferris Catalog-Nursing MSN, para. 2). Because my ultimate goal is nursing education, it will be very important for me to obtain a Master's degree. Warren and Mills (2009) state that nurses should

be prepared at the Master's level to promote professional practice in the service setting and to serve as clinical instructors (2009, p. 204). My plan to meet the goal of completing a MSN program will begin with enrollment to Ferris State University's Master's degree program at a time appropriate to my personal and professional life. Because the program consists of completing 36 credit hours, I will plan to complete at least six credit hours each semester to complete the program in two years. My method for evaluating my progress towards this goal will be successful enrollment into the program and successful completion of individual courses each semester. I must allow for revision of this goal by considering personal or professional circumstances that may arise during the course of the program. Should a circumstance arise in which I am unable to successfully complete the planned six credit hours per semester, I will adjust my goal and plan accordingly in order to complete the degree.

My second ten-year goal is to become a nurse educator in a college of nursing after obtaining my Master's degree in Nursing. My interest in teaching coupled with the increased need for nursing faculty strengthens my desire to fulfill this goal. Allen (2008) discusses the issue of nursing faculty shortage in an article. She states that the shortage of faculty is due to many reasons but began with the national nursing shortage which emerged in 1998 and peaked in 2002 (p. 35). As a result of the shortage, there was an increase in nursing programs and in enrollment into nursing schools. With an increase in student enrollment comes a need for an increase in nursing faculty (Allen, 2008). Allen (2008) discusses several other reasons for the nursing faculty shortage in her article such as expected increases in current faculty retirement. She states that the main reasons for the lack of nursing faculty include increased age of current faculty, less compensation for academic teaching, and too few master's and doctoral-prepared nurses to fill the nurse educator positions (p. 36).

My plan for fulfilling my goal of becoming a nurse educator will begin with my previous goal of obtaining my Master's degree in Nursing. I plan to fulfill the Ferris MSN program requirements by taking the required courses with my specialty concentration in nursing education (Ferris Catalog-Nursing MSN, para 2). I will then obtain employment as a nurse educator in a nursing school. My method of evaluating my progress towards completion of this goal will be first to complete my MSN. I will then evaluate this goal simply by my ability to gain employment in a faculty position at a college for nursing.

Conclusion

My professional development plan is an opportunity for me to look at and evaluate my current and previous professional behaviors as well as plan for the future. Because nursing is such an indispensable part of the health care team, it is important for me, as a professional, to analyze my behaviors and compare them with the behaviors outlined in ANA's *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* (2004). It is important that I practice according to these behaviors in order to provide the best possible, ethical care for my patients. It is also very important, as a professional, to have a plan for professional and career development. My professional development plan has given me the insight to look at my future and make a plan, along with a method of evaluation, to reach my goal of becoming a nurse educator.

References

- Allen, L. (2008). The nursing shortage continues as faculty shortage grows. *Nursing Economics*. 26(1), 35-40.
- American Nurses Association. (2004). *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* Washington D.C: Author.
- Ferris State University Catalog. *Nursing MSN Program*. [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from http://myfsu.ferris.edu/cp/render.UserLayoutRootNode.uP?uP_tparam=utf&utf=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ferris.edu%2Fhtmls%2Fcolleges%2Falliedhe%2Findex.cfm.
- Linder, L. (2009). Experiences of pediatric oncology nurses: The first year of hire. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*. 26(1), 29-40. doi: 110.1177/1043454208323913.
- Personal development plan. *A Dictionary of Nursing*. 2008. Retrieved September 30, 2010 from Encyclopedia.com: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O62-personaldevelopmentplan.html>.
- Warren, J. I. & Mills, M. E. (2009). Motivating registered nurses to return for an advanced degree. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*. 40(5). 200-207. doi:0.9999/00220124-20090422-01.