Report and Recommendations of the Pathways Nursing Major Committee

Members: Candy Dato (chair), New York City College of Technology
        Alice Akan, Lehman College
        Mary Ellen McMorrow, College of Staten Island
        Jacqueline Nichols, Borough of Manhattan Community College
        Lorraine Sanders, Hunter College

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Introduction

The Pathways Nursing Major Committee was formed as part of the CUNY Pathways Resolution to recommend for approval to the University Office of Academic Affairs no fewer than three and no more than six courses that will be accepted as entry-level courses for beginning the nursing major by all colleges that offer the nursing major. The overall purpose is to provide and support clear pathways for nursing, which is one of the larger transfer majors.

The committee spent considerable time reviewing and discussing the similarities and differences among the nursing programs in CUNY. The focal points of concerns about transfer problems were examined. Some of the special issues related to nursing were also noted. There are three types of nursing programs: associate degree; generic baccalaureate degree; and RN to BS. The RN to BS programs account for the high numbers of transfers in the nursing major. Students complete their Associate degree at a community college or senior college, pass the NCLEX licensing exam, and then enter an RN to BS nursing program to complete their baccalaureate degree. In New York State there is a broadly accepted articulation agreement among associate and baccalaureate nursing programs wherein RNs with an associate degree are given 60 credits toward the baccalaureate degree (30 for general education and 30 for nursing courses).

Nursing programs are highly regulated by the Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department. In addition, nursing programs meet the criteria for accreditation by either the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

After careful consideration of existing constraints related to the nursing programs and the issues related to students who transfer within CUNY, the committee was able to identify several courses that could be recommended as entry-level courses for students beginning the nursing major by all colleges offering the nursing major. These courses are recommended for both associate and generic baccalaureate programs. In this manner students in RNBS programs would already have taken the courses in the associate program from which they graduated. The real issue of how each nursing program can work with these recommendations was acknowledged but was viewed as being beyond the scope of the committee’s work.

The committee recommends five courses as follows.

English
Early in the committee’s meetings the members agreed upon the importance of English composition for nursing majors. Documentation in writing of client health care needs and status is essential for practice. Written communication also involves a critical analysis that is fundamental for both practice and as a foundation for other courses. Issues of academic integrity were addressed in terms of students ability to follow acceptable methods of citing sources.

The committee reviewed the Recommendations on Common Core Structures that were disseminated in December 2011. The committee agreed that the learning objectives matched those that were important for nursing. There was discussion about having two English Composition courses recommended as that is the recommendation for the common core. Some programs have only one English composition course at this time, sometimes with a second course that is a literature course. Having one English Composition course identified for entry level nursing students would meet any concerns about transfers.

English Composition - Learning Objectives

After taking this course a student will:

1. Read and listen critically and analytically, including identifying an argument’s major assumptions and assertions and evaluating its supporting evidence.
2. Write clearly and coherently in varied, academic formats (such as formal essays, research papers, and reports) using standard English and appropriate technology to critique and improve one’s own and others’ texts.
3. Demonstrate research skills using appropriate technology, including gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing primary and secondary sources.
4. Support a thesis with well-reasoned arguments, and communicate persuasively across a variety of contexts, purposes, audiences, and media.
5. Formulate original ideas and relate them to the ideas of others by employing the conventions of ethical attribution and citation.

Anatomy and Physiology

The committee reviewed Anatomy and Physiology which is a required sequence of courses for all nursing programs. The area of difficulty for transfer students is in the organization of content within the sequence. It was noted that there are not a large number of students who transfer between nursing programs at this level; however, with the advent of the Pathways Initiative it may become a more common practice. At this time students may need to repeat the first level course if they transfer between colleges, presumably due to the differences in content organization. The committee reviewed the outlines of all of the Anatomy and Physiology courses in the colleges that have nursing as a major and also conferred with some biology professors. It was determined that a small amount of reorganization of content (for most colleges) would bring the courses into a cohesive sequence of content between Anatomy and Physiology I and II (not within each course). It was also determined that the topics covered will
require a total of 8 credits/12 hours over two semesters. The content division outlined below is taken from the outline of content in the majority of the courses across the colleges.

For Anatomy and Physiology I the content will include cells and tissue, and muscular, skeletal, immune, and nervous systems. For Anatomy and Physiology II the content will include circulatory/cardiovascular, respiratory, urinary, endocrine, reproductive, digestive, lymphatic and integumentary systems.

Anatomy and Physiology I - Learning Objectives

After taking this course a student will:

1. Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a life or physical science.
2. Apply the scientific method to explore natural phenomena, including hypothesis development, observation, experimentation, measurement, data analysis, and data presentation.
3. Use the tools of a scientific discipline to carry out collaborative laboratory investigations.
4. Gather, analyze, and interpret data and present it in an effective written laboratory or fieldwork report.
5. Identify and apply research ethics and unbiased assessment in gathering and reporting scientific data.
6. Understand and describe the basic physiological principles of cells and tissue, and muscular, skeletal, immune, and nervous systems.
7. Understand, identify, and describe the basic anatomical structures associated with cells and tissue, and muscular, skeletal, immune, and nervous systems.
8. Develop basic dissection and laboratory techniques relevant to the field of anatomy and physiology.

Anatomy and Physiology I and II - Learning Objectives

After taking this course a student will:

1. Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a life or physical science.
2. Apply the scientific method to explore natural phenomena, including hypothesis development, observation, experimentation, measurement, data analysis, and data presentation.
3. Use the tools of a scientific discipline to carry out collaborative laboratory investigations.
4. Gather, analyze, and interpret data and present it in an effective written laboratory or fieldwork report.
5. Identify and apply research ethics and unbiased assessment in gathering and reporting scientific data.
6. Understand and describe the basic physiological principles of circulatory/cardiovascular, respiratory, urinary, endocrine, reproductive, digestive, lymphatic and integumentary systems.
7. Understand, identify, and describe the basic anatomical structures associated with the circulatory/cardiovascular, respiratory, urinary, endocrine, reproductive, digestive, lymphatic and integumentary systems.
8. Develop basic dissection and laboratory techniques relevant to the field of anatomy and physiology.

Mathematics

The committee easily agreed that math skills are crucial for nurses for both their practice (accurate calculation of drug doses) and as a basis for coursework in both the sciences and nursing courses. The committee also noted that the level of math skills vary within the discipline and most nursing programs devote considerable time and energy to assuring the basic math competencies of students. Mathematics coursework is also of importance for the quantitative reasoning, logical analysis, and critical thinking aspects of the work. The transfer issues with mathematics are related to the variation in how the learning outcomes are embedded in a wide array of both nursing and mathematics courses. Having an accepted entry level mathematics course will prevent students from having to take additional mathematics courses that often repeat content.

Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning - Learning Objectives

After taking this course a student will:

1. Interpret and draw appropriate inferences from quantitative representations, such as formulas, graphs, or tables.
2. Use algebraic, numerical, graphical, or statistical methods to draw accurate conclusions and solve mathematical problems which include differential analysis.
3. Represent quantitative problems expressed in a natural language in a suitable mathematical format.
4. Effectively communicate quantitative analysis or solutions to mathematical problems in written or oral form.
5. Evaluate solutions to problems for reasonableness using a variety of means, including informed estimation.
6. Apply mathematical methods to problems in other fields of study.

Psychology

The committee agreed that psychology was an important fundamental science for nursing students and that it lays a good foundation for both other courses and for a multitude of nursing practice situations. There are some variations in psychology course requirements among nursing programs. All programs require developmental content; however, this is sometimes taught in nursing rather than psychology courses. The committee agreed that an introductory psychology course would contribute to the ease of transfer for nursing students.

Introduction to Psychology – Learning Objectives
After taking this course a student will:

1. Understand biological and genetic processes underlying human behavior.
2. Analyze and evaluate research methods that make Psychology a science, including the advantages and disadvantages of each research method, as well as how they are complementary.
3. Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises with regard to both research and therapy.
4. Understand basic psychological theories, principles, and concepts, including major classic and contemporary approaches to the study of behavior.
5. Explain how individual differences influence beliefs, values, and interactions with others.
6. Apply psychological concepts and principles to their own lives and experiences.
7. Demonstrate awareness of major factors involved in perception, motivation, learning, and behavior.