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Statement of Equivalency
Nursing Assistant

Written by Shannon Lanzrath, Nursing Assistant Mentor

About the Statement of Equivalency Author

This Statement of Equivalency was written by Shannon Lanzrath, part-time faculty member in the Nursing Assistant department at Ridgewater College. Shannon has been a faculty member at Ridgewater since 2010 and mentors the Nursing Assistant (NA 1612) course at Sibley East high school. Shannon has been a mentor for College in the Schools courses for one year, working with a high school instructor who has been with our program since 2010.

Academic Freedom

Ridgewater College is a unionized environment. As part of the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) contract, page 121, "A faculty member must follow course outlines as developed by and with colleagues in the department(s). The faculty member shall have the right to freely discuss the faculty member's subject in teaching, to choose teaching methods consistent with available resources, to evaluate student performance, to select library and other educational materials consistent with available resources, and to research and publish. The faculty member is entitled to freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to adequate performance of other academic duties."

Nursing Assistant instructors are required to use the course materials and assessments developed and approved by the Minnesota Department of Health. We do allow the high school to use a different textbook. This was approved by the (now retired) Nursing Assistant Coordinator. We have also partnered with our Nursing department to create supplemental materials to assist students who may need additional tools and resources to understand course content. We do not require that everyone use the same grading scale/criteria in the classroom portion of the course, though it is naturally very similar. We do, however, require the same scale/ criteria be used for the clinical portion. While materials and assessments are the same, instructors are granted academic freedom in the course delivery.

Student Learning Outcomes

How are the learning outcomes for your course developed within your department?

The learning outcomes for this course were created back in 2011 when the college was required by the Minnesota State College and Universities System Office to have course outlines for every course. As instructors we felt that the learning outcomes needed to be based on Minnesota Department of Health guidelines and the requirements. When achieved and when students successfully pass the course, students will be able to sit for the certification exam. When the outcomes were complete, all proposed changes went through our institution's Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC).

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How do you make sure that the high school instructor is teaching to the student learning outcomes?
We are fortunate that the Nursing Assistant program continues to have dedicated faculty who are passionate about this program, who are trained regularly by the Minnesota State Department of Health. As a department we adopted the practice of using Minnesota Department of Health materials to maintain consistent instruction and our outcomes are aligned to that curriculum. Through mentoring the high school instructor, these same expectations are also passed onto them and put into practice. During the site visit, we evaluate that the materials are current and continuing to be used in their course delivery.

How are department revisions to student learning outcomes communicated to high school teachers?
In spring 2019 new course materials and assessments were created by the Minnesota Department of Health, updating the entire curriculum. This information is being implemented college wide in summer 2019 and will be available to our high school instructor by fall 2019 for implementation in January 2020. As with any updates to the curriculum or Minnesota Department of Health guidelines, they are communicated in a timely fashion to our high school instructor, allowing time to review, ask questions, and implement into their courses.

Syllabus Review

When are new syllabi reviewed, approved, and by whom?
The syllabus is reviewed and approved for new instructors before the course begins by the assigned mentor.

Detail the approach to evaluating new syllabi, to ensure it is complete.
The high school instructor uses a required syllabus template. This has eliminated the possibility of instructors missing required elements and has made our review of the syllabus much easier.

Beyond the initial review, explain how the department ensures the high school syllabi are up to date?
During the site visit, mentors are required to evaluate course materials and syllabi to make sure they're still current and up to date. We then fill out the Site Visit Reporting form noting the review took place.

Discuss any important differences between the on campus course and the high school course.
The high school course and the college course are identical and have no significant differences.

Assessment Review

Describe how you make sure that your high school teacher's assessments are comparable in rigor to those on campus?
In the Nursing Assistant program, the high school instructor uses the same assessments as the faculty in the Nursing Assistant department on campus. They include:

- Exams
- Quizzes
- Labs
- Clinical Assignments

During the site visits we review course materials again to make sure that they're continuing to use the approved course assessments. Our content is highly regulated by the Minnesota Department of Health, but as mentioned under Academic Freedom, the instructor permitted to include additional assignments and activities that were created by the Ridgewater College Nursing department. These are aligned with the course learning outcomes in an effort to enhance delivery and understanding of state requirements.

Grading Standards

Describe your department's philosophy on grading & how you communicate it to your instructor. How do you make sure that grading standards are comparable between you and the high school teacher?
The high school instructor is welcome to use their own grading scale and criteria for the classroom portion and the overall grade calculation. The clinical component uses a department approved criteria that all classes —including CIS—use and has a specific scoring guide to ensure college level standards. Like the on-campus course, students in the high school class are also required to pass exams with a score of 80% or higher based on standards set by the Minnesota Department of Health. Students are allowed two (2) retake attempts. Graded work is also reviewed at the site visit to monitor grading criteria and college level assessment.

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Theoretical/Philosophical Orientation of the On-Campus Departments

What is your department's approach to the discipline and how is it reflected in the high school course?

The Nursing Assistant program was designed to allow students who may not often have an opportunity for post-secondary education, to learn a skill set that allows them a career opportunity when successfully completing the course and certification exam. This course is often a "stepping stone" into other areas of health care, often resulting in students earning additional degrees in other health related fields. Knowing that the Nursing Assistant department is responsible for providing a foundational course that other disciplines in health care are built upon, is reflected in every aspect of our course delivery and overall philosophy. Because our high school instructor uses the same materials and works in collaboration with our department, we have seen our philosophy in action with the high school course.

How do concurrent enrollment courses, instructors, and students fit into your discipline's goals, outcomes, or structure? How does your department build relationships with high school teachers and students?

We have strong partnerships with our local communities and area high schools. We have sent our faculty into high schools to teach this course (as part of our Post Secondary Enrollment Option, PSEO), building long term relationships that lead to repeated course offerings. Our partnerships also extend into community health organizations like nursing homes, long term care facilities, hospice, community hospitals, etc. With these continued partnerships, we often see the doors open for continued opportunities both in job placement as well as students looking for a career change, expressing interest to take our courses.

Shannon Lanzrath
Ridgewater College
Nursing Assistant Faculty

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