NCS1101 Planning and writing your essay
Maureen Buckingham – Senior Learning Adviser
Start with lots of questions

Consider the following questions:

- What exactly are you being asked to do?
- What type of assessment is it?
- What steps will you need to take to do it?
- What questions do you need to answer?
- Which sources will you need to consult? Where will you look?
- What is specified by the assessment criteria?

The Task

**Scenario:**

"Regimented busy, does, say be very graduated, nurse. "Un birthing environment for nurses is really busy and many can be expected to deliver all the care in their shift. Sometimes I/d often to the most important tasks such as medication administration and wound dressing and knew the 'other things' as the next nurse, they may not be as long as we, it's okay. All the nurses do it, no one will say anything to you about missing care. Anyway, if you sign off that it has been completed, no one will even know."

REMINDER: the scenario is provided purely for your understanding of "missed care" and how it can happen. You do not need to refer to the scenario in your essay.

So what are you being asked to?

Read the scenario and critically discuss if "missed care" is an important issue in the nursing literature and explain how it relates to a nurse's accountability and responsibility. Use the current literature and the NMC codes and standards to support your discussion.

Are there any additional instructions?

You must complete your essay in Cadmus!

So where from here?

Review the marking rubric
Breaking down the task

There are three parts of the question to consider:

1. **Instruction** words tell you how to approach the question. They include verbs like ‘discuss’, ‘analyse’ & ‘explain’.
   - Each requires a different type of answer.
2. **Content** words describe your topic. These include key noun phrases, adjectives and verbs.
   - You use these when you begin your research.
3. **Focus** words set the parameters for your answer. They include place, time and type.

Defining the instruction words

**Discuss** Identify issues and provide points for and/or against

**Explain** Relate cause and effect, make relationships between things clear/evident; provide why and/or how

Read the overview article

**Read the scenario and critically discuss if “missed care” is an important issue in the nursing literature and explain how it relates to a nurse's accountability and responsibility. Use the current literature and the NMBA codes and standards to support your discussion.**

Word count: 2500

Focus/Parameters

**Missed nursing care: Magnet versus non-Magnet hospitals**

Dr. Anna J. Rakowski, RN, PhD, FANN, LCNS

The objective of this study was to examine whether the existence of Magnet hospitals made a difference in missed care and patient satisfaction. The study was conducted at two Magnet and two non-Magnet hospitals. The data were collected using the National Quality Forum's Patient Safety Indicators (PSIs). The results indicated no significant difference in missed care rates between the Magnet and non-Magnet hospitals. However, the Magnet hospitals had higher patient satisfaction scores. The study also found that the Magnet hospitals had a more collaborative culture and a stronger focus on patient safety. These findings suggest that the existence of Magnet hospitals is associated with better patient outcomes. Further research is needed to determine the mechanisms through which Magnet hospitals achieve better patient outcomes.
Read the other 2 articles

Improving Nursing Care: Examining Errors of Omission

Available from CINAHL Database

Then you will need to conduct more research

Review the slides from last week's workshop run by the SNM Librarian

Must have at least 8 peer reviewed journal articles of 5 years or less (aim for 12+)

Must use codes and standards

Follow the steps in Cadmus

Start thinking and planning

Now that you understand the task start to THINK. Brainstorm your ideas – create a concept or mind map of what you already know and start the research process.

- As you research, you will start to form your stance/position on the statement. This will become your thesis.
- Why? Claims supported with evidence
Planning and research is key

A 2500 word critical essay involves a lot of pre-writing planning and research

Planning is a must…..

Download the Planning template from Module 5 of the online academic skills modules

Convert your initial concept map into your plan
You can copy and paste your plan into your Cadmus notes page.

Planning template

Get ready for Academic Success!

ESSAY PLAN

Sequence of Essay | Supporting Information
---|---
Introduction: | Click on tabs here to enter your notes
1. Topic | In-text references (parentheses) and notes to support this idea
2. Context/Significance | Click on tabs here to enter your notes
3. Purpose/Thesis | In-text references and notes to support this idea
4. Structuring | Write a topic sentence in full
Key Idea 1/2: | In-text references (parentheses) and notes to support this idea
Back and forth process

It will be a back and forth process of researching, skimming and scanning academic sources, reading, critically analysing literature on both sides in order to build your plan/refine your thesis and decide on your arguments/main ideas and their order in your plan.

Structure of your essay

Introduction (100 -150 words approx)
Main Idea
Main Idea
Main Idea
Main Idea
Main Idea
Conclusion (100 -150 words approx)
References
Note: You can choose whether or not to include headings in your essay

Introduction

- Introduce topic
- Context
- Purpose/thesis
- Structure/Focus
  on the essay
Body paragraphs

Body paragraphs must include evidential support (from current literature and codes and standards).
Each paragraph should be limited to the discussion of one general idea. This will allow for clarity, readability and direction throughout the essay.
It is important to note that each paragraph in the body of the essay must have some logical connection to the thesis statement in the introduction.
It is also important to explain how and why the evidence supports the thesis.

Write body in paragraphs

T…..Topic sentence (One sentence that explains the idea for that paragraph)
E…..Explain (Flesh out the idea a bit more)
E…..Evidence (Provide research to support the idea)
L…..Link (Link the idea back to your topic by explaining how the evidence is significant to the topic)

Clear and logical transitions vital

“Transitions are the mortar that holds the foundation of the essay together. Without logical progression of thought, the reader is unable to follow the essay’s argument, and the structure will collapse. Transitions should wrap up the idea from the previous section and introduce the idea that is to follow in the next section.”
(Owl Purdue, 2018, para. 5)
Conclusions

- Restates the topic.
- Sums up the key arguments in relation to topic/thesis.
- No new ideas.
- Finishes with statement to broader topic/suggests solution and ties into the introduction or background.

To summarise:

The structure of the strong critical essay is held together by the following.

- A clear, concise, and defined thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay.
- Clear and logical transitions between the introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Body paragraphs that include evidential support.
- Evidential support
- A conclusion that does not simply restate the thesis, but readresses it in light of the evidence provided.

Conclusion

Make a final point which tells the reader what to think or do.
Why should the reader adopt your point of view?

Academic Style

Features of Academic Writing

- Written in the third person (no I, we, us, our, you)
- Formal language
- Objective language
- Precise and specific vocabulary
- Clarity and conciseness
- Tentative language
- Accuracy
- Coherence and cohesion
- Correct in-text referencing and paraphrasing
- Accurate reporting words
A word on referencing

- In-text:
  - Surname and year only for paraphrasing e.g. Smith (2014) stated..... or
  - The objective of nursing care is to resolve actual health problems, prevent potential problems and maintain a patient’s healthy state (Phillips, 2013).
- End-text: review ECU Quick Referencing Guide and follow the format depending on the source type
  - http://ecu.au.libguides.com/referencing
  - Referencing for Beginners Resource

Proofing and editing

- Editing focusses on the structure of your ideas within paragraphs i.e. What you say.
- Proofreading focusses on the grammar and punctuation.
  - If this is not your strong point, go to this site for the rules:
    - https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/6/
  - and this site for online practice exercises:
    - https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/
  - Download a free version of Grammarly
    - https://www.grammarly.com/native/windows

Formatting

- You need to write your assignment in Cadmus.
- You do not need the ECU cover sheet or Table of Contents, but you still need to put a title page.
- You still need to conform to academic writing structure and style and write in paragraphs with headings (if you choose).
- Left aligned, double spaced and use a first line indent for each paragraph.
- Main headings bolded and on the margin. Sub-headings (if used) indented and bolded.
- Your assignment saves automatically in Cadmus, but don’t forget to click the SUBMIT button when you are submitting your assignment.

Turnitin

You can use the Turnitin practice site in the Online Academic Skills (module 7 under the Paraphrasing tab) if you want to check your similarity score.

Turnitin Practice
What will the marker be looking for in my answer?

That you have planned, researched and written a well structured academic essay that critically discussing all aspects of the topic and provides recent, credible evidence from nursing literature and the codes and standards to support your argument.

Exemplars

Have a look at the exemplars of essays from a previous semester (on a different topic) on the Blackboard site to give you an idea on what a critical analysis essay looks like and the expectations.

Just remember, every essay is different and these essays are not perfect (and will probably have some minor errors). It is a guide only.

Good luck!
Further assistance

Cadmus Help Button?

General assignment drop-ins

Studiosity (access from Blackboard home page under My Communities)

Referencing queries: library@ecu.edu.au

General learning support queries
learningadviser@ecu.edu.au