

NURSING EVOLUTION

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Nursing 190 – Physical Assessment

In Physical Assessment, I truly started to struggle, along with the Mental Health class that we were taking concurrently. I once again found myself lulled into complacency by Physical Assessment's beginning method of returning to basics. What truly helped me in this class were my classmates. We utilized each other as human mannequins to inspect, palpate, percuss, and auscultate. We performed Romberg tests on one another and went through the entire testing of Cranial Nerves. I can honestly say that without their help and our shared sense of purpose, determination, and comradarie, I probably wouldn't have passed.

Nursing 222 – Mental Health

Speaking of not passing! The reason that I was doing so poorly and having issues focusing in Physical Assessment was because I was spending all my time trying to recover from doing abysmally in Mental Health. The fact that one set of symptoms could be the same for numerous and unrelated Mental Disorders confused and frustrated me. I ended up not passing Metal Health the first time and had to retake it. The second time I had a different teacher that I developed a good rapport with which helped me overcome some of my earlier learning stumbling blocks; I passed the second time around. The highlight of my Mental Health experience was my Clinical Instructor. Mr. Creekmur was calm, easy going, and was wonderful at putting all my fears at ease. His knowledgeable explanations and years of experience were much appreciated, and remain some of my fondest memories of that term.

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My Evolution through Nursing School

Nursing 100 – Fundamentals

My journey as a nurse at West Coast really began in Fundamentals. I had taken all the required General Education courses at other institutions and had transferred majority of them. I had also obtained my CAN (Certified Nurse's Assistant) license along my way through a vocational program. Going into Fundamentals, I had no idea what to expect, much like my classmates. I was pleasantly surprised to find that I had a slight leg up on my peers as Fundamentals concentrated mostly on skills that I had learned through my CAN course. I was a bit disappointed that the class had a Skills Lab component instead of time in an actual healthcare setting, but I passed the class with little difficulty and (unfortunately) minimal effort.

Nursing 120 – Introduction to Med Surg

As you may have guessed from my 'unfortunately' mentioned earlier, my time spent in Fundamentals put me 'on my laurels', so to speak. When I came into Intro to Med Surg, I received the shock that was gifted to my peers in Fundamentals: an understanding that I, in fact, knew next to nothing about what I was doing. This term was difficult for me, as my previous bad habits carried into the term. However, I was able to pull it together after the halfway mark, meeting with my teacher to go over the concepts that I was having difficulty understanding. I managed to pass, but just barely. This was my wake-up call to what my chosen educational journey had in store for me. I also had my very first Clinical at Providence Tarzana, and it was lovely. My fellow Clinical mates and I got along together well which made for a positive experience.

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Nursing 201 – Intermediate Med Surg

This time when Med Surg rolled around again, I was ready for it. I had my tried and true group of friends/study buddies, and we had just spent all of Physical Assessment working out the kinks of what everyone's strengths were, knowledge-wise, in our study group. I had Professor (now Doctor) Roces this term and I loved her method of teaching. She was straight to the point, she didn't deviate from her lesson plan, and we were given study guides so we knew what concepts we needed to understand for the tests. We (my friends and I), studied furiously, and I not only passed but I excelled in this class. That result turned out to be a much needed ego boost as I had one of my more unpleasant Clinical experiences, both with my instructor and my Clinical site. We performed our hours in a Sub-Acute Skilled Nursing Facility and I found the work not at all to my taste. However! There was nothing for it but to persevere, so I did awesome in my class and made sure I didn't give my Clinical Instructor any reason not to pass me; everything turned out well.

Nursing 306 – Expanding Family (OB)

My positive experience from Intermediate Med Surg continued into OB; unlike several of my peers, I split OB and Peds into separate terms due to family issues. This became a blessing in disguise as I was able to fully devote my attention to OB. I loved the class, found the subject and material fascinating, and had an absolute blast in Clinical. My instructor for both my class and Clinical was Dr. Hartmann and she was fantastic. I passed her class with no problems and found myself truly looking forward to my Clinical days, which was a welcome change from my Intermediate Med Surg Clinical.

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Nursing 480 – Advanced Med Surg

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Finally, I reached my Advanced Med Surg and I couldn't be happier. I had always carried an interest for the ICU and it was in this term that I was able to explore that passion. My Clinical Instructor, Professor Esmaili at Verdugo Hills, was fantastic. She was calming, extremely intelligent, helpful, and flexible enough to work with us without letting some of the other students take advantage. She started me out in the Emergency Department, even though I knew that wasn't "my type" of nursing. However, in retrospect, I appreciate that experience because even though I didn't really care for the pace, it was nice to know that I did it and didn't need to be intimidated of that unit anymore.

After 3 weeks of ED shifts, Professor Esmaili finally let me go to the ICU and it was everything I'd hoped. The delicate balance between life and death. The intimate relationship between the nurse and their (usually) 2 patients. It wasn't the harried rush of the ED, nor was it the ambling pace of Med Surg. ICU had the calm stillness, like the eye of a storm. I loved that we were able to go so in-depth because of the low nurse-patient ratio. I further appreciated that both of my patient who passed away during my time there had DNR orders, so I had a chance to acclimate to the dying process without all the fuss and commotion of codes being called. Further, I loved the nurse that I worked with, Sebastian.

Advanced Med Surg class was a different story. As with my Intro Med Surg, I struggled again. I'm unsure if it was because I'd gotten lazy from my Public Health term or if I just wasn't ready for the all-inclusive manner in which Professor Modina taught. She was extremely tough and demanded the best from you. However, she also was always willing to take the time to help

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Nursing 307 – Developing Family (Peds)

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Similarly to OB, I found that I seemed to have a knack for PEDs as well. Both subjects fascinated me because unlike Med Surg or Mental Health where you can have patients of all ages and conditions, OB and PEDs were small, specific snippets of people's lives. I found my PEDs class with Professor Dyer extremely fascinating and while I didn't grasp the material as easily as I had OB's, I actually did even better grade-wise because I had to put in more effort. The love of my PEDs term was my Clinicals, with Professor Roberts at Northridge. She let us go to a PEDs floor, a daycare attached to the hospital, the NICU (my personal favorite), and the PACU. It was and remains the Clinical that I've felt the most in, as I got to experience the joys of a child recovering and the utter devastation of when you lose such a tiny, innocent little life. It remains one of my most moving Clinical rotations to date.

Nursing 340 – Public Health

After my PEDs term, I wasn't quite sure how to take Public Health. It was the first term where we had an experience of guiding our own educational experience. We were given a Clinical site and then decided our own hours and shift in tandem with that site. I had a small group at my site (4 of us, including me), as we bonded fairly well. While I very much enjoyed the chance to educate people and the Leadership class that we took, I found that I felt underutilized at my Clinical site which frustrated me. However, I also understood that not all nursing is fast paced, hospital based practice and when you are placed at a site that functions as an Adult Day Care, majority of the work one must do is paperwork. I appreciated the opportunity to learn a new facet of nursing, but found that that particular setting wasn't for me.

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you if you needed it. By far she was my toughest class instructor, but I also feel like I learned the most from her and I respect her immensely.

Nursing 493 – Integration of Nurse Concepts

After I had cleared all of the actual Nursing Corse classes, I found myself in N493 with Khan this term. This class is intense. It pulls from my entire three year journey at WCU, and Dr. Khan works at an almost punishing pace; throwing facts out to you like he's reading a grocery list. I find myself continually humbled by him, as the sheer amount of data and understanding of medicine that he has mastered is mind-boggling. I am finding that this class isn't difficult in the traditional grade sense, but that this class was what Modina was prepping us for in Advanced. It is a take no prisoners schedule and I've had to step up my studying to at least 8 hours a day to keep up. However, I can see the light at the end of the tunnel and it is amazing to see how I've improved from the each subject's class. This class more than any others has really pulled into sharp focus the journey I've taken from my shaky roots to now still feeling humbled by my profession, but knowing with an absolute assurance of spirit that this is what I'm meant to do. I love nursing, and West Coast University has helped me find the best nurse that I can be right now, while opening my eyes to the knowledge that I will be a lifelong learner of my craft; and honestly, I wouldn't have it any other way. I feel blessed to be able to be of aid to those in their most vulnerable moments. That's why I became a nurse and that is what has kept me going, helping to develop me into the nurse that I am today.