



From

# IGGY'S DESK

To Yours

The Latest in Nursing Education from Donna D. Ignatavicius, MS, RN, ANEF

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### WELCOME TO IGGY'S DESK

I hope you've read previous issues of *Iggy's Desk*. If you have, welcome back! If not, I hope you enjoy the new ideas in this issue and in our archived issues at [www.diassociates.com/backissues.html](http://www.diassociates.com/backissues.html). Each newsletter presents updates and innovative ideas that you can use immediately in your practice as a nurse educator.

Although *Iggy's Desk* is currently provided at no cost to you, we will be charging a small subscription fee in 2010 for 4 quarterly e-newsletter issues. This fee will help offset the cost of design and preparation required for each issue. Look for information about how to subscribe in the December, 2009 issue. Thanks for your continued support of our work to promote nursing education!■



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### PROMOTING STUDENT SUCCESS: HELPING STUDENTS ANALYZE THEIR TEST-TAKING HABITS

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Students often have difficulty taking NCLEX®-style test questions. Sometimes they misunderstand what the question is asking. At other times, they don't recall information or misread the item. Some students have a habit of changing their choices from the correct answer to one that is incorrect.

To help students analyze the areas where they need to improve and better understand their test-taking habits, have them use the form on the last page of this newsletter (Courtesy of Patricia Spurr, EdD, RN). If you want to download and print the test analysis form, see [www.diassociates.com/media/forms/StudentTestAnalysis.doc](http://www.diassociates.com/media/forms/StudentTestAnalysis.doc). After the students have completed the form, review the results with them and jointly develop an action plan for helping them improve!■

## NCLEX® TIPS AND UPDATES

### Update on Pilot Testing for New Alternate Item Formats

In 1994, the NCLEX® changed from a paper-and-pencil format of selected response (multiple-choice) items to computer adaptive technology using the same type of item format. However, selected response items limit the measurement of higher order thinking.

In a study by Wendt and Kenny (2009), new graduates (both RN and PN) agreed that constructed response (alternate) items are more realistic and allow them to better demonstrate their competence. Examples of currently used constructed response items on the NCLEX® include:

- Completion
- Drop and drag
- Hot spot
- Select all that apply
- Arrange in order

Recently, Wendt and Harnes (2009) reported the results of pilot testing of new constructed response items, such as:

- Video interaction
- Animation inclusion
- Graphics interaction
- Decision task item sets

While these newer formats take advantage of available computer technology, they are expensive to develop and require more time for graduates to complete. Their advantages include:

- Ease of use by today's "tech savvy" graduates
- Better indication of higher order thinking
- Well understood by students regardless of primary language

More constructed response items are likely to be tested and seen on licensure exams in the near future to make new graduate testing more authentic and reflective of today's practice.

See Page 5 for References

## HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE TEST BANKS

Donna D. Ignatavicius, MS, RN, ANEF

Most textbooks have multiple ancillary materials, including test banks that are available as CDs, secure web resources, or both. When using test banks to develop your tests, keep these tips in mind:

- Maintain security of all test banks, even older ones, to keep them from appearing on e-Bay or other web sites. Lock up CDs or printed tests when not using them or when you aren't at your desk. Do not allow students access to secure instructor web resources.
- Don't take all your test items from test banks. Develop your own questions to include on the test.
- Review each test bank item carefully to determine if it is a valid, well-written question. Some items are categorized as "application or higher" cognitive levels when they are actually knowledge and comprehension.
- When reviewing a clinical test bank item, ask yourself:
  - Does the stem include a clinical scenario?
  - Does the question require an action or decision by the nurse (e.g., assessment, prioritization, health teaching, delegation, intervention)?
  - Does the item require the student to focus on patient or staff safety?
  - Does the item require the student to recall or understand two or more concepts to answer it? If so, it's likely at the application level.
  - Does the item require the student to critically think to put concepts together?
- If the answer to any of the above questions during your test item review is "no," edit items

as needed if you want to use application or higher type questions.

- Be sure to include constructed response as well as selected response items (see NCLEX Tips and Updates in this issue of *Iggy's Desk*). ■

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## SEEKING GRANTS FOR FUNDING SUPPORT IN NURSING EDUCATION

### Part 2: Decorating the Package - Writing a Grant Proposal\*

Your project is defined. The funding sources are located. Now what? It is time to officially write the proposal using the potential grantor's criteria. Remember, the potential funding agency has only your grant proposal to use when determining whether you will be funded. Though writing the proposal may take some time, this is your area to shine – to show off your project!

Each agency will ask for different requirements in a grant proposal; however, some commonalities are expected. It's important to your success to read the grant requirements carefully and to know the deadline for submission. Remember: To write a successful grant, you must meet the **exact criteria** the agency has requested.

Some common requirements include:

- statement of need,
- project's goals (outcomes) and scope,
- method(s) of evaluation,
- timeline, and
- budget.

Be sure to find out what the grantor's goals are and then highlight how your project's outcomes align with these. Many funding agencies also encourage the grant writer to begin a relationship with them long before the actual proposal is submitted.

The *statement of need* is your opportunity to demonstrate why your project should be chosen. What makes your school or project the most deserving? Talk about your organization and what makes it

## CLINICAL TIPS AND QUIPS

### Exploring New Models of Clinical Education

For decades, nursing faculty have used the same model of patient pre-assignment, lengthy care plan grading, and supervision of 8 to 10 students for a specified clinical experience. Because these activities do not prepare students for today's nursing practice, clinical education reform is needed (Ridenour, 2009). Consider trying one or both of these ideas:

- Student self-selection of patients based on student strengths
- Increased clinical rotations in community-based settings

For the *self-selection model*, the student:

- Assesses own strengths and areas for improvement.
- Selects patient assignment on day of clinical practicum, also known as JIT (just-in-time).
- Evaluates own clinical performance for the experience.
- Develops a plan for improvement with target dates.
- Communicates all steps of the process with the clinical instructor.

Most nursing programs place their students in highly acute health care settings, including critical care. However, almost half of all patient care is provided in the community. Examples of *community-based settings* that can provide enriching student experiences include:

- Ambulatory care clinics
- Telehealth
- Home health and hospice
- Long term care
- Same day surgery
- Urgent care centers
- Hemodialysis centers

Two faculty concerns about using community-based settings are that 1) they may be limited, and 2) the care is not as acute as in a hospital setting.

See Page 5 for References

## TECH TIPS AND TOOLS

### Twitter to Improve Student Learning and Thinking\*

Let's Tweet! Twitter is a Web 2.0 tool that allows users to communicate instantly through brief questions or thoughts of 140 characters or less. If you haven't already done so, you can join Twitter at no cost with a few simple clicks at [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com). Twitter keeps students engaged in your classroom and allows *all of them* to actively participate in the learning process. Here's just one way you can use it with a class of any size:

1. Using [TweetDeck](#), open your Twitter feed on a computer connected to an LCD projector.
2. Ask students to open TweetDeck on their mobile phones and computers.
3. During class, ask students to individually post 1 to 3 questions about the studying/reading that was due for today's class. The questions should represent content that students don't understand or are confused about.
4. Assign students to groups of 3 to 5 and have them analyze and answer the tweets that were posted on the TweetDeck.
5. Have each group tweet their responses to the posted questions.

Finally, here are some general tips to keep your account safe and under control:

- When setting up your account, 'skip' all offers.
- Under "Settings" click on "Account" and scroll to the bottom. Check "Protect my updates" as this cuts down on unwanted visitors.
- You and your students may find it easier to search the posts if you create a [Hashtag](#) for each class
- Set up a mobile device in Twitter under "Settings" and "Devices"
- Get an unlimited texting plan for your mobile phone if you don't already have one (usually \$5 to \$10 a month)

\*Contribution by Tim Bristol, PhD, RN

unique. The project's *goals and scope* should be well defined and emphasize how the project will make a difference for students or the institution. Be certain the reviewer can discern who will benefit from the grant and how. Describe at length, and in measurable terms, *how the project will be evaluated*. How will you determine if the project has been successful? Be realistic because you will be held to these standards when you receive the grant. The *timeline* should flow smoothly and be reasonable. Include who is accountable for each step of the project. The *budget*, a critical piece of the proposal, should itemize each item's cost. Verify the charges for the items requested to ensure that the budget is neither too high nor too low in relationship to the overall project. Be as inclusive as possible with detailed explanations. Don't forget items such as annual maintenance fees, shipping, and personnel costs. If there are "in-kind" or matching funds being used, be sure to include this detail, too.

Once the proposal is written - review, review, and review! Have others review it and provide constructive feedback. Ask them if the proposal describes the project and the institution well enough to visualize your concept. Provide them with the proposal criteria to compare. Ensure there are no typographical or grammatical errors. Re-examine what criteria the grant reviewers will use and make certain your submission has enough explanation for each area. Much like the wrapping of a gift, make sure your proposal is "pretty," well defined, and delivered on time.■

**"To write a successful grant, you must meet the exact criteria the agency has requested."**

### References

Foundation Center (<http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/index.html>)

United States Department of Health and Human Services: National Institutes of Health ([http://grants.nih.gov/grants/writing\\_application.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/writing_application.htm))

\*Contribution by Rhonda Hutton, RN, MSN

## IGGY PRESENTS NEW WEBINARS IN FALL

Starting in September, Donna “Iggy” Ignatavicius will offer two series of three interactive webinars on best practices for evaluating student learning and performance:

- **Series A:** How to Develop an Evidence-Based Clinical Evaluation Process
- **Series B:** How to Develop and Analyze NCLEX®-Style Test Items

Webinars are very cost-effective ways to increase your faculty’s knowledge and skills!

Be sure to check [www.diassociates.com](http://www.diassociates.com) for specific content information, costs, and registration. And, don’t forget, we now take credit cards! Space is limited, so please be sure to sign up soon!

If any of the scheduled dates are not convenient or if you want customized webinars just for your faculty, call Donna today at 505-867-4270 or e-mail her at [donna@diassociates.com](mailto:donna@diassociates.com) to discuss options that will work for you. ■

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### References

#### **NCLEX® TIPS AND UPDATES**

##### **Update on Pilot Testing for New Alternate Item Formats**

Wendt, A. & Harmes, J.C. (2009). Evaluating innovative items for the NCLEX®, Part I: Usability and pilot testing. *Nurse Educator*, 34(2), 56-59.

Wendt, A. & Kenny, L.E. (2009). Alternate item types: Continuing the quest for authentic testing. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 48(3), 150-156.

#### **CLINICAL TIPS AND QUIPS**

##### **Exploring New Models of Clinical Education**

Ridenour, N (2009). Clinical education reform: Re-envisioning the workforce. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 48(8), 419-420.

## RESOURCES FOR NURSE EDUCATORS

- August, 2009 issue of *Journal of Nursing Education*

This issue presents new approaches to clinical education, including an article on concept-based learning activities as a way to help develop students’ clinical judgment. The editorial challenges nursing educators to rethink new models for clinical education.

- Cassata, L.C. & Cox, T.M. (2009). Evaluation tool for clinical nursing textbooks: Bridging content analysis with evidence. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 48(6), 301-309.

This article describes the development and use of a tool to evaluate the content of major clinical nursing textbooks. While the sample tool seems somewhat cumbersome and lengthy, the critical areas for evaluation require the evaluator to ensure that a book’s content is evidence-based.

- National League for Nursing. (2008). *NLN Think Tank on Transforming Clinical Nursing Education*. New York: Author. Retrieved August 14, 2009 from [http://www.nln.org/facultydevelopment/pdf/think\\_tank.pdf](http://www.nln.org/facultydevelopment/pdf/think_tank.pdf).

This document is the result of ideas generated by nursing education experts, and encourages all of us to think “outside the box.” Old models of clinical education need to be abandoned and newer models, such as the ones suggested in this newsletter’s “Clinical Tips and Quips,” need to be developed and tested.

- Rankin, M. (2009). The Twitter experiment at UT Dallas. *Monica Rankin’s Homepage*. Retrieved August 14, 2009 from <http://www.utdallas.edu/~mrankin/usweb/twitterconclusions.htm>.

This page describes a history teacher’s use of Twitter in the classroom. The web site (short video) cited in her first paragraph is also worth exploring. Students in Dr. Rankin’s class report their reactions and experiences with Twitter.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### Upcoming DI Associates, Inc. National Conferences

**February 19-20, 2010\***  
(Pre-conferences 2/18)

**REBUILDING YOUR NURSING CURRICULUM:  
INTEGRATING THE EVIDENCE INTO  
NURSING EDUCATION  
EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL  
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO**

**July 23-26, 2009\*\***  
(Pre-conferences 7/22)

**BOOT CAMP FOR NURSE EDUCATORS®  
EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL  
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO**

\*The brochure for this conference can be found on [www.diassociates.com](http://www.diassociates.com).

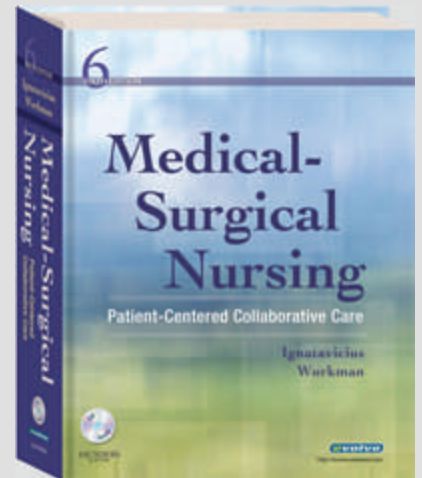
\*\*The brochure for the July 2010 Boot Camp will be posted and mailed in early January 2010.

For more information, contact us at [info@diassociates.com](mailto:info@diassociates.com).

### NEWEST EDITION OF "IGGY" REFLECTS NURSING EDUCATION TODAY!

The new 6<sup>th</sup> edition of *Medical-Surgical Nursing: Patient-Centered Collaborative Care* by Ignatavicius and Workman is available for your review and adoption. This student-friendly edition has been completely revised and includes these major highlights:

- Unique collaborative approach to patient care
- Increased emphasis on clinical decision-making
- Concise "need-to-know" content that is very readable
- Human Needs focus to help students connect fundamental concepts and practice application
- Special icons to indicate Joint Commission National Patient Safety Goals
- Complete teaching/learning package to help faculty best meet students' diverse learning preferences



**Contact your Elsevier sales representative to be sure you get a review copy of this leading textbook!**

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