

## Assignments 2 & 3

**Value: 40% each**

Submit assignment via link in the Assessment section of the course home page

**Due Date** : Negotiable (suggested completion after Units 4 and 8)

### Purpose

It is becoming increasingly important for registered nurses to assume a leadership role in a changing health care system. Hence, registered nurses must be able to assess and act to fulfill their own learning needs in order to work to their full scope of practice. To complete this assignment, consider an issue or trend in **nursing or health care** and choose **one** of the options from the bulleted list below. Your papers must be scholarly in presentation, reflective of course content, and although they may be related to one another, they must not be duplications.

**The following is a brief description of each type of paper/project. Please refer to the assignment expectations assessment section below for a detailed description of each type of paper/project.**

***Note:** There is a 10 page limit for all written papers excluding title and reference pages. (with the exception of the professional portfolio):*

### Paper/Project Options:

- **Position Paper:** presents an arguable position on an issue with the goal of convincing the audience that this position is valid. The position paper is related to course content; be clear as to difference between a position paper, discussion paper, and an issue paper
- **Discussion Paper:** discusses a situation or dilemma representing a variety of views; consists of a reasoned defense of the recommendations. The discussion paper is related to course content; for example one could frame a question and then proceed with discussion of the answer.
- **Issue Paper:** presents a balanced view of a situation or dilemma in which both sides of the situation are clearly articulated. The issue paper is related to course content that follows the framework from your textbook - Framing and Analyzing the Issue.
- **Literature Review:** is an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers; the purpose is to convey to what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic, including the strengths and weaknesses. The literature review is related to course content.
- **Website Critique:** is a formalized, critical appraisal of a website; the goal is to turn critical reading into a systematic evaluation in order to deepen insight into that website. This is an analysis of several (5-7) interesting Web sites that relate to a particular issue and or take a position on that issue. Critique the verifiability of information in each web site including the authority of the Web site. Compare and contrast how the issue is presented, and provide an executive summary of each Web site.

- **Professional Portfolio:** is a convenient system to tell the story of one's career. It might include: original documents (e.g. resume/curriculum vitae, professional association memberships, license/board results), supporting materials (e.g. letters of recommendation, publications, presentations, certifications, job descriptions, evaluations), and collateral pieces (e.g. thank you letters, articles and books you have read). This is a beginning professional portfolio. Portfolio should not exceed a 15 page limit including title page and any appendices (this page limit is an exception to the 10 pages as stated above).

## Assignments Expectations

### What is a Position Paper

A position paper presents an arguable opinion about an issue. The goal of a position paper is to convince the audience that your opinion is valid and worth listening to. Ideas that you are considering need to be carefully examined in choosing a topic, developing your argument, and organizing your paper. It is very important to ensure that you are addressing all sides of the issue and presenting it in a manner that is easy for your audience to understand. Your job is to take one side of the argument and persuade your audience that you have well-founded knowledge of the topic being presented. It is important to support your argument with evidence to ensure the validity of your claims, as well as to address the counterclaims to show that you are well informed about both sides.

### Writing a Position Paper

#### Issue Criteria

To take a side on a subject, you should first establish the arguability of a topic that interests you. Ask yourself the following questions to ensure that you will be able to present a strong argument:

- Is it a real issue, with genuine controversy and uncertainty?
- Can you distinctly identify two positions?
- Are you personally interested in advocating one of these positions?
- Is the issue narrow enough to be manageable?

#### Analyzing an Issue and Developing an Argument

Once your topic is selected, you should do some research on the subject matter. While you may already have an opinion on your topic and an idea about which side of the argument you want to take, you need to ensure that your position is well supported. Listing out the pro and con sides of the topic will help you examine your ability to support your counterclaims, along with a list of supporting evidence for both sides. Supporting evidence includes the following:

- Factual knowledge - Information that is verifiable and agreed upon by almost everyone.
- Statistical Inferences - Interpretation and examples of an accumulation of facts.
- Informed Opinion - Opinion developed through research and/or expertise of the claim.
- Personal Testimony - Personal experience related by a knowledgeable party.

In considering your audience, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is your topic interesting?
- Can you manage the material within the specifications set by the tutor?
- Does your topic assert something specific and propose a plan of action?
- Do you have enough material to support an opinion?

#### Organization

Your introduction should lead up to a thesis that organizes the rest of your paper. There are three advantages to leading with the thesis:

- The audience knows where you stand.
- The thesis is located in the two strongest places, first and last.
- It is the most common form of academic argument used.

#### Generic Sample Outline for a Position Paper

### Introduction

- Introduce the topic
- Provide background on the topic
- Assert the thesis [your view on the issue]

### Counter Argument

- Summarize the counterclaims
- Provide supporting information for counterclaims
- Refute the counterclaims
- Give evidence for argument

### Your Argument

- Assert point #1 of your claims
- Give your opinion
- Provide support
- Assert point #2 of your claims
- Give your opinion
- Provide support
- Assert point #3 of your claims
- Give your opinion
- Provide support

### Conclusion

- Restate your argument
- Provide a plan of action

[Reference: University of Hawaii-West O'ahu. (1998). Writing a position paper. UHWO Writing Center]

---

## What is a Discussion Paper

A discussion paper is a formal discourse or exposition on a topic in which there is an exchange of views culled from the literature. A discussion paper differs from a position paper in that a discussion paper consists of the reasoned defense of your recommendations. In order to offer your own recommendations on an issue, you must present a variety of opinions or recommendations based on the literature. Your goal in writing a discussion paper is to formulate and share your own opinions so that your recommendations are a natural extension of your paper.

### Writing a Discussion Paper

There are a variety of things a discussion paper can aim to accomplish. Many features of good discussion writing invite comparison and contrast of specific authors, clinical practice, or different interpretations of a nursing issue, such as telehealth. Discussing the significance of both what is common and what is different will prompt you and the reader to new insights.

A good discussion paper is modest, and makes a small point, but it makes that point clearly and succinctly, and it offers good reasons in support of it. In other words, your paper must offer recommendations. It can't consist in the mere report of your opinions, nor in a mere report of the opinions of the authors you discuss.

A discussion paper usually begins by putting some thesis or argument on the table for consideration. Then it goes on to do one or two of the following:

- Criticize that argument; or show that certain arguments for the thesis are no good
- Defend the argument or thesis against someone else's criticism
- Offer reasons to believe the thesis
- Offer counter-examples to the thesis
- Contrast the strengths and weaknesses of two opposing views about the thesis
- Give examples which help explain the thesis, or which help to make the thesis more plausible
- Argue that certain authors are committed to the thesis by their other views, though they do not come out and explicitly endorse the thesis
- Discuss what consequences the thesis would have, if it were true

- Revise the thesis, in the light of some objection

Your paper has to show some independent thinking. Try to come up with your own arguments, or your own way of elaborating or criticizing or defending some issue we looked at in this course. Merely summarizing what others have said won't be enough.

### Proposed Outline of a Discussion Paper

#### Introduction

- Briefly highlight the most salient points of your topic
- State your main thesis on the topic for discussion

#### Background

- Provide background information from the literature on your general topic area

#### Definition and Scope

- Provide a definition of your topic Outline the scope of the topic-does this affect all of Canada, or just your province or your health care region? Explain.
- How do nurses or the health care system factor into the topic?

#### Benefits and Challenges

- Describe the benefits to nurses or the health care system
- Describe the challenges that nurses [or other health care providers] face in this topic
- What does the literature say about the benefits and challenges?

#### Impact and Implications

- What is the impact on nurses or the health care system?
- How will this affect human resource management?
- What other implications do you foresee; what does the literature say about implications?

#### Recommendations

- What do you think needs to be done next?
- Who do you think should be involved?
- What are the recommendations from the literature?
- Would you agree or disagree with the literature and why?

#### Conclusion

- Restate your thesis
- Provide a summary of your recommendations

People very often attempt to accomplish too much in a discussion paper. The usual result of this is a paper that's hard to read, and which is full of inadequately defended and poorly explained claims. So don't be over-ambitious. Don't try to establish any earth-shattering conclusions in your paper.

[Reference: Pryor, J. (2004). Guidelines on writing a philosophy paper. Princeton University.]

---

### What is an Issue Paper?

An issue paper differs from a position paper or a discussion paper in that an issue paper consists of a balanced view of a situation or dilemma in which both sides of the situation are clearly articulated. Because authors will often disagree about the kinds of solutions that should be implemented in remedying the situation or dilemma, you are expected to provide an overview of the various points of view found in the literature regarding how this issue should be resolved. Based on your literature review, you will be expected to discuss how you believe this issue should be resolved and provide your own rationale.

### Writing an Issue Paper