

Career Pathways Assessment  
Eliezer Urbano  
NUR 401

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I took a long time before choosing to become a nurse. While progressing through my first bachelor's degree, I was not completely sure about my future career. At first, I thought I was trying to become a doctor. I thought that all I needed was to be bright and be interested in medicine. I never experimented with my future because I thought I knew exactly what my career would be. But when I delved into the medical setting and branched out my education, I started to learn that I valued more than just being smart and enjoying the medical field: I found that I enjoyed the holistic care of patient. I made a transition to nursing due to my heart for patients. However, I feel the need to progress in my education to improve my competency in nursing. Now I am entering a new Bachelor's program for Nursing, and I need to identify what I will do with this program. In order to do that, I need to recollect my experiences in schoolwork and professional life, and break down what was valuable about them. I need to look at myself and acknowledge what I have done well so that I continue doing so. I need to understand my weaknesses so that I can improve upon them.

### **Educational Experiences**

My educational background formed the base of my career in nursing. However, when I was beginning my education, I was not sure I would become a nurse. In high school, my favorite subject were Biology and other sciences, so I thought that I should study to work in the medical field. My first steps were to take advanced classes in science: Advanced Placement in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics classes. I did well in my selected science classes, graduated from high school with high ranking, and received transfer credit for college. My parents and other adult figures in my teenage life noticed my studiousness and interest in science, so they encouraged me to become a medical doctor.

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I was accepted to Old Dominion University with a motivation to prepare for medical school. Based on my interest in Biology and the stories of those who went on to medical school, I chose my major as Biology “by default.” Studying biology made the most sense with the classes I wanted to take and the prerequisites for entering medical school. My minor, on the other hand, was not as straightforward. I began building a Chemistry minor also “by default,” but I never enjoyed Chemistry. I suppose my lack of passion for that subject eventually surfaced when I could not handle with a higher-level chemistry course. At the time, I felt I had to rush to graduate, so I changed to a Psychology minor; I had some credits from previous coursework in Psychology. In retrospect, my change to a Psychology minor introduced me to a “warmer” science that deals with people. I found that I enjoyed understanding how people have feelings and perceptions much more than understanding the workings of a chemical reaction. In a way, the change in my minor also began a change in the direction of my career path.

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Changing my minor and having some experience in a hospital (which I will describe later) left me with some doubt about my motivation to become a medical doctor. I still applied to medical school because I thought I should finish what I had started in college, but I was already wondering if I should consider a different path. Ultimately, I was not accepted into medical school. I spent some time in the workforce and reflecting on my experience: I enjoyed science, I enjoyed the human element, and I still felt I should work in the medical arena. Nursing became apparent, so I applied to nursing school at Thomas Nelson Community College. I learned how to apply my scientific knowledge to a living person, and how to talk to clients. Now, I’m continuing my education in nursing because I feel that I can continue on this career path.

### Work Experiences

My work experience affected both my educational and career path. I am a new nurse with only one year of experience, so my actual nurse experience is still thin. However, I have experience prior to nursing that taught me skills that I use in my practice today. As mentioned above, I had some work experience in the hospital. My first experiences were as a volunteer and a physician's scribe in an emergency department. I wanted to get a taste of how professionals interact with clients in a medical setting. As a volunteer, I followed medics and nurses. I realized then that nurses work the closest with patients, whether patients appreciate their presence or not. It was the nurse that observed the patient through the day and tried to make the patient as comfortable as possible. When I worked as a physician's scribe, I worked close to the doctor instead. I was surprised how what little direct care doctors performed with the patient, as they could only spend so much time with each patient. I realized that there was disparity in my image of a doctor versus what the role actually was: the doctors were not the people dotting at the patient's bedside. Acknowledging this disparity, I began change my career path to nursing and later applied to nursing school.

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Today, I am a nurse at Mary Immaculate Hospital's medical floor with one year under my belt. It is also my first experience as a working nurse. Many of my classmates in nursing school were decisive in what type of position they wanted, such as a transition to home care or surgery. On the other hand, I wasn't so sure what specialty to commit to. I wanted to get a taste of a wide range of nursing specialties, so I thought it would be best to work on a medical-surgical floor. Passing medications, patient assessment, and communicating with physicians seem to be my primary responsibilities in my position. In return for performing my duties, I'm practicing nursing techniques and learning to recognize signs or symptoms of disease in a practical setting. At the moment, I do not have any special certifications or positions and I feel I

am still trying to get used to my new role. As a result, there is still much room – and need – for improvement.

### Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses

In order to create goals, I should also recognize my strengths and weaknesses. One strength that has helped me through school is my ability to bear down and work hard. The results of hard work manifested when I completed my first Bachelor's degree as Cum Laude. I have pride in being able to complete a task that is given to me. Then, my experience as a volunteer and as a nurse today taught me another strength: I found that I care about patients. **Completing a task to care for patient is merely performing work, but to for a patient.** If I am not busy with passing medications or catching up in documentation, I feel that it is important to sit in with patients and hear out their thoughts. At the least, the patient might need someone's presence, and I am in a position to give my presence. I may be more thankful that I have this strength because I don't think a nurse could be good without caring about a patient.

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On the other hand, I also have my weaknesses, which seem to amplify when I am working. **At the base of my weaknesses is my shyness.** In social and professional life, this shyness prevents me from making input that is relative to my own needs. Sometimes, I am carrying information in lieu of another person, but I slow down because I feel awkward approaching the destination for the information. One branch of this weakness leads me to make it difficult for me to say "no." Occasionally, the most therapeutic action for a patient is to deny a request, but I am so shy and un-confrontational that I avoid saying a plain "no." In a similar vein, another weakness I have is that I have difficulty delegating. Again, I have difficulty expressing my own needs and feelings. I understand the rules behind delegation **to RN and CAN,** but I have difficulty making a task known because of my underlying shyness. Unfortunately, I can't

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improve my skill of delegation by studying a textbook; all I can do is push myself to delegate. Summing up my strengths and weaknesses, I see that I value the completion of work and my relationship with the patient. Yet, I want such a good relationship with my patients that flaws in my personality hinder my efficiency. It seems that I need to find a balance.

### **Involvement with Professional or Community Groups**

My path to nursing has brought me through some involvement in organizations and in the community. While pursuing my Biology degree, the main organization I was involved with was Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED), the Pre-Medical Student Honors Society. Again, I was following the steps to apply to medical school at the time. AED's primary audience were students like myself, but we were also open to those who were interested in allied health services. I involved myself deeply in the club and held officer positions, including Publicity Chair and Fundraising Chair. For a shy individual like myself, this leadership role was a trial for me: I had to be visible to our members, interact with them, gather opinions, and take action based on the opinions. In order to find fundraising opportunities, I had to search the community. I had to "step out" of my comfort zone in order to perform well. I would say the result of my fellow officers and my work took form when we were able to send representatives to AED's National Convention, and I was able to join as one of the representatives. Being a leader was a heavy amount of responsibility, but the work furthered our chapter as a whole.

Recently, the only organization I have involvement with is Neko Incorporated, which manages special interest conventions in the Hampton Roads area. The organization is not directly related to nursing or the medical field, but I believe I learned some skills that I use as a nurse. I usually join the "Artist's Alley" committee, which opens stands for exhibitors to display and sell their crafts. As a committee member, I work in part of a team that secures a venue, sets up the

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alley, and enforces rules for fair competition between artists. The Artist Alley must be successful because it draws people to the convention. Thus, after every day of the convention, I have to analyze what went well and what didn't work. Then, I relay to my teammates and committee head what the information. The information helps us improve the Alley. In nursing, we assess, make nursing interventions and evaluate endlessly in a similar fashion. Working at conventions with Neko Incorporated is my first taste of this process.

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### Path Identification

A general path in the BSN can be based on my education, work experiences, and strengths and weaknesses. In the program, I primarily want to gain more knowledge to apply to my practice. I would like to identify signs earlier know more appropriate nursing interventions. I need to continue to hone my leadership skills. Professionally, I also want to become clearer in the direction of my nursing career. I need to explore my options and learn about specialties. For my own personal growth, I hope that the BSN will help me become more confident in my skill and knowledge, perhaps to help overcome my shyness.

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### Goal Setting

In order to build on my experiences in this nursing program, I have considered some goals to work on aside from my coursework. I know that in order to progress in my education, I will need to improve my research skills in order to obtain quality information. In prior research papers, I felt as if I tended to borrow small amounts of information. I also believe that I usually used Google as my main tool for finding information. When I continue onto a Master's program, searching for data with only Google as my tool will probably be insufficient. Another educational goal that I have made is that I need to improve my ability to process information and

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surmise the most important points. In other words, I need to know how to “step back and take in a large picture.” When I’m in the middle of a project, sometimes a detail stops me. For example, I may be planning a trip and I become bothered by the transportation at my destination. I might become stuck on specifically which company or method of travel I would use, and I have difficulty considering any other part of the planning. Thankfully, other people are usually traveling with me and assist me with the planning, but I can be caught in details and have difficulty working around the details. I think getting stuck on details affects my efficiency and makes it difficult for me to maintain a leadership role.

I also chose some professional goals that I can work on as I progress in my BSN. In my year working on the floor, I have heard that I can rise in rank by achieving a new Clinician level. I believe I need at least a BSN to reach a new level, but I think that I can prepare while studying for my major. Also, since I never had a clear path in nursing, another goal I have is that I explore my options for nursing. At this time, I am most interested in teaching. Meanwhile, I also think that specialties would be interesting to be involved with. I need to reach out and decide what is best for me.

### **Planning to Achieve Goals**

An action plan is required to achieve my goals. I think the central thing I can do for my goals is to place myself in a leadership role once again. In practice, this means that I need to become more deeply involved with my employment. Becoming a leader would help me reach two ends: I can develop my delegation skills and “big picture” analysis skills while meeting requirements to rise in clinician rank. I think I can also consider becoming a preceptor for new hires when I gain enough experience on the floor. But while I help others go through change, I should consider that I am also going through change; having guidance through these changes is

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also a must. It may be beneficial to seek out a mentor at work to help guide me through the process. Building a relationship with educators at work would also help me decide how much I would enjoy teaching. Meanwhile, to compliment my education, I need to become better acquainted with library tools. Learning to use databases effectively and learning to interpret the data in reports would allow me to practice process details and help me stay informed for my practice.

### Conclusion

The changes that I make to my routine revolve around the amount of time use my leisure time. I don't have my own family right now, so there is no management that I need to make with children. My hobbies include playing video games and traveling to conventions and gaming tournaments. Fitness has also been increasingly important to me since becoming a nurse. Both video games and traveling to conventions require time and money, so I unfortunately have to curb both activities while studying. It sounds simple to limit video game playing, but it is easy to be engrossed in video games. I think that using an hour a day instead of 3 hours a day would be enough for a break between studying, but not so excess as to distract me from doing work. Meanwhile, for traveling, I may have to skip my convention-traveling season for the next year or two while I am in the BSN program. Instead of traveling to several conventions, I should limit my travel to one or two conventions and plan around them. The money that I save by decreasing both activities would have to go to my tuition. Since I also work full time, I need to make use of my days off and waking hours to study. Without some sacrifice, I can't achieve any goal. As for my exercise, however, I will try to not make any change - I think that I should maintain my fitness as much as possible.

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The consideration of my education, work experience, strengths, and weaknesses led me to an underlying theme: I have the capacity to be a leader, but I need to continue developing the skills to be one. In both education and work experience, I see I was able to work hard, but struggled to make decisions. Leaders must both be able to apply themselves and make quick decisions. Meanwhile, in the organizations I've been involved, I maintained leadership positions. So, even if I feel that I am a weak leader now, I still have potential to be one. Perhaps the most painful lesson of this introspection was admitting that I avoid confrontation even though the situation is appropriate. As a young person who is actively building on his career, I can't allow myself to struggle in social situations. A good nurse should be able to speak for himself and for others. In conclusion, I have drawn a new value in leadership that I should take with me into this BSN program.

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#### Honor Pledge

"I pledge to support the Honor System of Old Dominion University. I will refrain from any form of academic dishonesty or deception, such as cheating or plagiarism. I am aware that as a member of the academic community it is responsibility to turn in all suspected violators of the Honor Code. I will report to a hearing if summoned."

Name: Eliezer Urbano

Signature: Eliezer Urbano

Date: October 18 2014

**GOOD WORK ON THIS ASSIGNMENT ELI, IT IS NICE TO GET TO KNOW YOU A BIT BETTER, DESPITE THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT. YOU HAVE MUCH TO OFFER, AND MANY YEARS AHEAD OF YOU. YOUR GOALS ARE REALISTIC AND ATTAINABLE..BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF..YOU MIGHT**

BE YOUR OWN WORST ENEMY, TOO SELF CRITICAL. WITH TIME YOU WILL RISE TO THE OCCASION. hd

Career Pathways Assessment Grading Rubric

Grading Criteria	%	Comments	Points
Introduction	5%	WELL STATED AND CLEAN	5%
Educational Experiences (formal/informal)	10%	A JOURNEY WHICH HAS DEFINED YOU..AND THE EXPERIENCE IS VALUABLE	10%
Work experiences/summary of learning	15%	VERY NICE..AND GOOD SUMMARY OF LEARNING	15%
Self-assessment (values,interests,strengths, weaknesses)	10%	PERSONAL AND INTROSPECTIVE; HOPEFULLY REVEALING FOR YOU TOO	10%
Professional/Community activities	10%	GOOD	10%
Educational Path	5%	ALTHOUGH VARIED YOU ARE WHERE YOU ARE..	5%
Specific educational and professional goals	10%	REALISTIC;ATTAINABLE	10%
Discussion of plan for goal achievement	10%	WELL THOUGHT OUT	10%
Conclusion	5%	NICE SUMMARY	5%
Correct Grammar, essay writing, spelling, punctuation	10%	FEW ERRORS; PUNCTUATION AND	8%

		SENTENCE STRUCTURE	
Correct use of APA format, including adherence to page limit, ODU SON Title Page 0 errors = 10% < 2 errors = 9% 2-5 errors = 6% 6-9 errors = 4% 10 or > errors = 0%	10%	DOUBLE SPACE THE TITLE ON TITLE PAGE, O/W FEW ERRORS - SEE COMMENT ABOUT ACRONYM USE..	9%
Final Grade:	100%		97%