Introduction

During my time in the RN-BSN program at The University of North Georgia, the professors and clinical instructors repeatedly addressed eight different learning outcomes they wanted us to achieve during our course of study in this program. For me, it’s been a longer road than initially thought as I started the BSN program in Spring of 2010, took a few courses with a few years off, and then returned in the Spring of 2014 to complete the program. When I first started, I can say that I thought the classes were not as time-consuming as they have been once I started back this past semester, but I have learned more in these last two semesters than previously in the others. From learning to master a complete head-to-toe, full body assessment, to volunteering and spending time at a health clinic/school setting in our community, this RN-BSN program has definitely been nothing short of a rewarding experience that has helped me to develop skills that I will use throughout my professional nursing career. There have been many challenges throughout this program, with managing classes at school with a full-time, night shift nursing job, as well as learning the ropes of online classes which I was not familiar with. This past semester, I not only started back my last three classes to complete my BSN degree at the University, but also begin a new position by transfer as Labor & Delivery Nurse at Northeast Georgia Medical Center. To say that this semester was nonchalant and not busy is a serious understatement. I quickly learned that essentially working five days a week, trying to wake up early and deny sleep to get school work done, while trying to have a somewhat normal life outside of school and work and plan a wedding was not going to work well. I had to block out the fun activities of a normal life, and simply focus all of my time on learning the ropes of my new nursing job and classes to complete my BSN degree. I can say, without a doubt, that each of the courses I have taken throughout completing my RN-BSN degree have challenged me to
expand my ways of thinking, think more critically, moreover use evidence-based skills to analyze nursing as a whole. What I originally thought would be a four-semester plan of study has drawn out to something much longer, but I am thankful for the chance to come back and complete the program. This essay will enlighten everyone on how each class I took during the BSN program at UNG has allowed me to meet each of the eight learning outcomes originally discussed when I started the program in 2009.

Outcome 1

Plan and implement safe, effective, ethical, evidence-based practice activities in primary, secondary and tertiary settings promoting health as well as preventing and reducing mortality, morbidity, and health disparities from physical and mental health problems in individuals, families, communities and populations.

One example of how I have met this outcome would be in completing my community clinicals for my Nursing in the Community class. To complete the clinical hours needed for this course, I was placed at Buford Academy in the school clinic with second through fifth graders. I worked in the clinic to address the needs of these children whether big or small. I assisted the school nurse with daily medications, annual hearing and vision screenings, and any cuts, scrapes, or illnesses the kids had while at school. I was also able to create a new flyer to send home with parents about head lice, head lice awareness, and how to properly treat the infestation, which greatly benefitted both the clinic and the school. In completing this project, I assisted the clinic and school in getting the word out about head lice and providing information to the families on treatment which is needed to put a stop to this issue. After completion, I could look back and see how I planned and implemented a project and goal with safe, effective, ethical, evidence-based
practice, while also assisting the community in preventing and reducing health disparities from physical problems among students and their families in a particular community population.

**Outcome 2**

**Demonstrate and evaluate effective communication with patients, peers, colleagues, families, communities and interdisciplinary teams.**

Having effective communication as a nurse is something that was constantly brought up throughout nursing school. By far, this is one of the most important tools to have in your career as a nurse, especially to improve quality of care for each patient. The bachelor’s program is an extremely beneficial time to develop proper communication skills through various assignments and school activities, but especially during community and practicum clinicals and time spent at the hospital with other nurses and physicians. Our weekly postings on the discussion boards have also been a huge help in quality communication. Another way in which effective communication can be demonstrated and evaluated is through time spent with patients and their families. You don’t realize how much this can affect your overall care until you’re in the setting, spending time with the individuals, and providing their care. Having our clinical instructors evaluate us after each semester was also beneficial to our effective communication because they could give us feedback on the things we needed to work on to improve these skills. With the feedback of our professors and the tips and constructive criticism from those preceptors and individuals we worked with in our clinical settings, both assisted me in forming effective communication with my patients, peers, colleagues, families, communities, and interdisciplinary systems.

**Outcome 3**

**Integrate, evaluate and interpret analytical, contextual and holistic thinking through problem solving, diagnostic reasoning and clinical decision-making.**
In my opinion, this outcome was met through various learning activities I completed in two of the courses I took while in the BSN program. The two courses that assisted me in integrating, evaluating, and interpreting analytical, contextual, and holistic thinking through problem solving, diagnostic reasoning and clinical decision-making were the Introduction to Health Policy and the Transformation of Professional Nursing courses taken in my first two semesters in the bachelor’s program. Between the two courses, I learned to better use problem-solving and proper reasoning and decision-making to address various solutions to current health issues and issues to come. I also used critical thinking and increased my awareness to better understand the many changes that can occur in the healthcare field and professional nursing practice overtime. The courses combined provided me with the knowledge, confidence, and resources needed to properly solve problems and deal with any changes to our healthcare system that may occur in the future.

Outcome 4

Build collegial and collaborative caring relationships with culturally diverse individuals, families, communities and populations.

Building collegial and collaborative relationships with culturally diverse individuals, families, communities, and populations has been made easier by several courses taken in the RN-BSN program, but the three that stand out the most to me were the Health Assessment course, Nursing in the Community, and the Synthesis in Professional Practice course. This was evident with research that was completed in the Health Assessment course, as well as my clinical rotations in the community and practicum setting. My clinical rotation for the community setting was in a school, so I was able to see how different children acted/reacted to various things depending on their different cultures, as well as my clinicals in the practicum setting at Camp
Kudzu with kids from all different backgrounds. It is so important that we respect and do our best to understand individuals from different cultures to provide them with the best care we can while under our supervision. It also helps you to build a more trusting relationship with the patient and show them how much you care about them and their outcome.

**Outcome 5**

**Design and implement educational experiences for individuals, families, communities and populations with an emphasis on primary prevention and health promotion.**

An example of how I met the outcome of designing and implementing educational experiences for individuals, families, communities, and populations, while placing an emphasis on primary prevention and health promotion would have to be the community leadership project I completed in my Nursing in the Community course I took last semester. While enrolled in this course, I had to design and implement a project that was both educational and informative for a specific population in the community. In this case, it was students and families of those children with head lice. On the flyer I designed, I implemented a plan in which to recognize head lice, treat it, and rid oneself of the issue. I discussed various ways to do all of these things, listed several ways to primarily prevent head lice, and how to make sure that it is treated correctly and does not return. This will not only ensure cleanliness and proper care for the student diagnosed with having head lice, but will also be advantageous for other individuals in their classroom(s) and their family members. After completion of the project and turning it over to the school and clinic, I received wonderful comments on the flyer and how helpful it would be to the student body, faculty, and parents of those infected with head lice.

**Outcome 6**
Analyze and manage resources for patient care, program planning and impacting the environment of nursing practice.

This outcome, just like many others, is one that I felt I met throughout my time in various courses throughout the BSN program over the last few years. Through the Health Assessment course, the Nursing Informatics course, the Research class, and the Professional Nursing Leadership course, various tools and resources were brought to our attention, as well as analyzed and managed, to assist us in program planning and having an impact on the environment of nursing practice for the care we give to our patients. Whether it was medical equipment, different charting systems and software for hospitals and offices, various articles and journals to back up research found on all things healthcare related, or the change-of-shift report sheets I’m designing for my leadership project, all are resources that affect nursing practice in one way or another. With that said, throughout this program, all the resources that I’ve gained access to has been extremely beneficial in my nursing career, as well as for the time spent in the BSN program. I can only hope that these resources will continue to have an impact on my nursing practice as my career as a nurse takes off!

Outcome 7

Embody the personal and professional attributes of a leader and influence the development of leadership in others.

Understanding and embodying the various personal and professional attributes of a leader, as well as influencing the development of leadership in those around you has been the main focus of the Professional Leadership course I’m currently taking this semester. Thus far, we have learned about proper decision making, effective communication, delegation, and teamwork to name a few things. Although we don’t realize it at times, each of these areas can greatly affect
our workplace and our career as a nurse. In taking this course, I feel as if I have developed additional skills to assist in a leadership role in my career, as well as assist others in gaining leadership expertise as well. I will admit that I’ve always felt as if I had a few skills that could qualify me to be a decent leader, but until taking this course, I didn’t realize what all I lacked in the leadership department. This course has taught me so many skills that will not only be useful in my nursing career but also in life. Bring on the next few weeks!

**Outcome 8**

**Access, appraise, and synthesize current scholarly resources to support evidence based practice.**

This outcome was definitely one that was me during the Nursing Research course I took a few semesters ago. Throughout the course, we had to access various online articles and journals through our library for many research papers and completing research on different topics ourselves. Between qualitative and quantitative research, I learned how to thoroughly evaluate articles and find the good in each article. Alongside the critiques, we had a group project to complete and present for our classmates and professors. The project helped to show off what we had learned while in this class, while also giving us a better understanding of the reasoning behind research and the may benefits it can provide.

**Implications for Practice**

**How have you integrated this knowledge into your nursing practice?**

**How will you use this knowledge to impact the future of nursing?**

Over the past few years, a few semesters completed with a three year break in between, and now the final two semesters to complete my Bachelor's of Science degree in Nursing at the University of North Georgia, I can honestly say that I have thoroughly expanded my knowledge
in nursing, gained various leadership skills and techniques in nursing and life in general, and
gained confidence in myself as a person and in my career as a nurse. Each online course, each
learning activity and discussion, and both clinical rotations have allowed me to gain a better
understanding of the importance of continuing your education and the benefits doing so has to
offer. This program has allowed me to achieve the many goals I had set for myself before
beginning the program, as well as achieving the many outcomes listed above in many different
ways. I hope to continue to use the skills I gained throughout this experience to develop
additional skills overtime and become a stronger leader and nurse in my workplace and wherever
I may go. I’ve also learned that although I may face challenges, have an extremely busy
schedule, and forfeit sleep and fun for a short time, I can still achieve my goals and better myself
if I put my mind to something, pray frequently, and work hard! I’m three and a half weeks away
from finishing this degree...Bring on August 2nd!