

Identifying Peer-Reviewed Articles for Community College Nursing Students

60-minute information literacy session

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Purpose:

Peer-reviewed research is recognized within the medical and healthcare professions as a quality control process ensuring the research conducted is accurate, relevant, and significant. Peer-reviewed research provides healthcare professionals, like nurses, with essential information for diagnosing and treating patients safely and effectively, as well as guiding innovation in patient care. Thus, nurses and nursing students, need to be able to accurately, and consistently, identify peer-reviewed research.

The purpose of this learning activity is to help nursing students practice the following skills that are essential to their success in the nursing program and their future work as a nurse.

- Quickly recognize peer-reviewed research articles that can inform patient care and treatment.
- Interact with colleagues to develop a checklist that aids in the consistent and accurate identification of peer-reviewed research articles. The interaction with colleagues builds team communication skills and results in the creation of a work tool (checklist) that supports informed patient care and treatment.

Tasks:

Pre-session Tasks:

1. Each student reviews the assigned reading (e.g. <https://hartness.vsc.edu/find/articles/peer-reviewed/>)
2. Each student creates their own checklist for identifying peer-reviewed research articles, based on what they learned from the assigned reading. Checklist should include at least four things (aka criteria) that are found in a peer-reviewed article.

Session Tasks:

Note: Small groups will be assigned by the librarian.

3. In a small group, students compare their individual checklists. Students should note similarities and differences in checklists as each member presents. Then, students collaborate to compile a single checklist that the group can use to help them identify peer-reviewed research articles. Students should appoint a spokesperson for their group.
4. Students return to the entire class group and the spokesperson for each small group shares their small group's checklist with the class. Class members and

librarian offer feedback on each small group's checklist to note similarities and differences and eventually, as a class, come to consensus on essential criteria to be included on a checklist.

5. Returning to the same small group, students review a sample of articles (each group will have the same sample of articles) provided by the librarian, and using the checklist, decide if each article meets the criteria for a peer-reviewed research article. Students should keep track of their decisions and appoint a spokesperson for their group. The librarian, when checking in with each group, will assign each group a specific article for a class group report.
6. Students return to the entire class group and each small group's spokesperson explains to the class if it is a peer-reviewed research article by describing how the article meets (or does not meet) the checklist, based on their small group's evaluation. Class members and librarian offer feedback on each group's decision and discuss differences in decisions and other reflections on the process.
7. Each student leaves with a checklist for identifying peer-reviewed research articles and examples of articles that are peer-reviewed research.

Criteria for Success:

- Students collaborate with each other to create a checklist that aids in the accurate identification of the essential components of a peer-reviewed research article.
- Students accurately explain why an article meets the criteria for a peer-reviewed article, using their checklist to support their decision.