What is a Discourse Community?

In my opinion, a discourse community is described as a group of people who communicate about their similar interests that they have in common with each other. This definition, I think, gives a good understanding of how a discourse community possibly begins. Discourse communities take place all over the world and play a key role in communication. Because each person is involved in at least one discourse community in his life, it is important to understand the definition of this term. By being involved in more than one discourse community, a person can learn much more by having a part in all different types of communities. In the article called “The Idea of Community in the Study of Writing”, the author, Joseph Harris says that people do not have to leave one discourse community for a different one but can be a part of another discourse community all at the same time (Harris 589).

Characteristics of a Discourse Community

There are many characteristics of a discourse community but there are three main ones we will look at. The first characteristic of a discourse community is to have similar goals throughout the group. These goals do not only have to be written down in documents, but they also can be communicated orally by the members. The next characteristic is the importance of communication between the members. Examples of communication are through meetings and correspondence. But communication can also occur indirectly through newsletters. The last characteristic of a discourse community is the importance of members that make up this group. Different levels of members are within each community. Members come and go all the time either by their own choice or because of their death. But either way, it is then required that these members must be replaced by other people(Swales 471-473). The importance of replacing members is to continue the discourse community.

Nursing as a Discourse Community

A discourse community is a part of many different career paths. My field of study is in the career of nursing. The same common characteristics that were described of a discourse community can also be used to describe the discourse community in the field of nursing. Between nurses some common goals do not necessarily need to be written down because good nurses automatically understand these goals. For example, common goals include caring for patients, doing what is best for them throughout their time of stay, and fully completing the required tasks during their shift. Communication has to occur for the job of nurses to be fully completed and for important information about patients to be understood by other nurses. Also, when nurses leave for whatever the reason may be then, it is required of the healthcare facility to find qualified replacements for those nurses.

Communication Using Technology in Nursing
Technology has become very useful in communication for not only nurses but also for CNAs especially in the last few years. And as always with technology it improves all the time. In the past, charting was done by handwriting the patient’s information and some charting is still done that way. But now it can be completed using computers and other devices. CNAs now chart on automatic hand holds and now most recently they complete their charting by using a screen that is attached to the wall and looks similar to a computer screen. With these better charting systems, the nurses are instantly able to look up that information that was charted on their computers. This helps the nurses to be able to know how they can best care for the patients by knowing how much they have eaten, what they ate, and what medication would be best for their patients.

Today, instant communication has been extremely beneficial for not only the nurses but also for the other workers in the healthcare facilities. Radios are a prime example of instant communication. Nurses and CNAs are required to have their radios on and carry them throughout their shift. Radios are used in many types of situations whether in an emergency where more help is required for the situation to be taken care of or in asking a simple question to other workers. For nurses and CNAs, it is a great thing to know that no matter where they are they can always have contact with other nurses and CNAs and receive help in whatever situation may occur.

**Texts Used in Nursing**

Not only do the nurses use charts for their patients but CNAs also use charts for the patients that they take care of during their shifts. Charts are used to show how the patient’s health has improved or decreased over a certain amount of time. Also, charting is completed on the amount that was eaten during a meal or even for a snack during the shift. Behaviors of the patients are very important to chart on too. Charting is essential in a medical facility because this keeps every patient’s information organized as well as the patient’s information is then easy to access by nurses or other health care providers. Charts provide information over past behaviors of patients that can help the workers’ interaction with them become more successful. Also, knowing which medication was given to which patient at what certain time and the reason the medication was given is important. A discourse community has expectations for nurses. Nurses need to know the importance of charting during their shift at a medical facility. They also need to be aware of the negative effects if charting is not completed or done correctly. If nurses do not complete their charting correctly then, this can affect the care.

Different types of communication in discourse communities are used for nursing. Journals are another one of these types and are written all the time about the career of nursing by professors who teach nursing courses or by nurses themselves. Another type of text for communication used in the field of nursing is journals. Important topics and information are written in the form of articles and published in different medical journals. The article called “Analysis of the Nursing Workforce Crisis: A Call to Action” is a journal that talks about the importance of nurses in the workforce today and sadly the shortage in the amount of nurses in the world (Bleich et al.1). Also, the authors talk about a few ways that might help with this shortage. The authors are all Registered Nurses and most likely members of this discourse community. Some statistics and definitions as well as pictures that pertain to the material that is found within the article are given in an easy and organized way for readers to find out the overview of the subject. The
presentation of the article is put together and written in a very organized way for the readers. This article was published in *The American Journal of Nursing* and is an example of a discourse community in nursing.

**Works Cited**

