Southern New Hampshire University

COCE: Department of Nursing and Healthcare Professions

**Case Study Guidelines**

Another strategy to relate theory to practice is the use of case studies. The purpose of a case study is to apply what you learned (theory) to a virtual real-world situation through testing and proposing solutions to the case. You may have a problem to solve and will present potential solutions and alternative solutions. Or, you may have a situation to analyze and describe why (or why not) certain events were effective or successful. Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. In processing a case study, you will have to apply reasoning, critical thinking, and analytical skills to identify underlying problems, causes and/or related factors, make decisions, and manage conflict and change. Students are expected to test assumptions and find creative ways to consider all the facets contributing to analysis of the case.

**Preparing the case study** [adapted from Buchbinder, Cox, & Casciani, 2014]: (a) Read the case study to identify the main point and key players. Highlight the main points and identify themes. Review, asking questions: What is really going on? What are the problems? What is the main issue? How do the problems relate? What are the underlying issues? How or why these issues developed. (b) Research the problem or issue you have identified to help frame the issue and to make connections to secondary issues. Use journal articles, and not website-based sources. (c) Decide how to “solve” or manage the issue. Consider who should be involved; what their responsibilities might be, strengths and weaknesses, and so on. (d) Identify at least two alternative solutions and analyze their strengths and weaknesses, (or describe why or why not they would be effective). (e ) Select the best alternative and explain how you will measure effectiveness.

**Writing the case study** [adapted from Buchbinder et al., 2014]: (a) Include a background statement to introduce what you will write about. Summarize the scenario, but do not restate the scenario. Identify key points, the stakeholders, setting and situation. (b) Discuss the specific issue and secondary issues and how they relate. Support your analysis and explain your reasoning. (c) Describe the role perspective contributing to your solution, identifying strengths and weaknesses. (d) Describe alternatives and the pros and cons of these. (e) End with a conclusion that addresses how to evaluate the effectiveness of the solution or describe how effective measures should be measured. Some case studies may conclude with a discussion of implications from the case.

Papers should include a title page, 2-4 pages of writing, and a reference list. Double-space, using Times New Roman 12 pnt font, one-inch margins, and APA style of writing and citations. Please refer to the rubric about case studies to appreciate how you will be evaluated on your report.