2.15: Types of Texts You Are Expected to Read

In university nursing programs, much of your time will be spent interacting with texts of all types, lengths, and delivery methods. In academic terms, text refers to anything that conveys a set of meanings to the person who examines and/or creates it. You might have thought that texts were limited to written materials such as articles, books, magazines, and newspapers. Those items are indeed texts — but so are movies, paintings, television shows, songs, political cartoons, online materials, advertisements, maps, works of art, and even rooms full of people. If you can observe something, explore it, find layers of meaning in it, and draw information and conclusions from it, you are observing a text.

As a student in a university nursing program, the most common types of text that you are exposed to are peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and grey literature. Check out Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Types of nursing texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
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<td><strong>Peer-reviewed journal articles.</strong></td>
<td>Articles in these types of journals have undergone a rigorous and usually anonymous peer review, meaning that experts in the field have reviewed the manuscript for quality. Articles can be classified as primary or secondary. Primary articles are considered the original source of material; these sources usually include research articles and sometimes personal reflections. Secondary articles include literature that refers to the original source material; these usually include review articles that focus on multiple studies. These journal articles are typically the best types of text used to support your scholarly writing, as these sources are considered to be of high quality. Oftentimes, you are required to use primary sources.</td>
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Books are hard-copy or electronic resources that are often used in courses as required reading material. Some books are peer-reviewed, but most are not. Most books are considered secondary sources.

Use of books to support your scholarly writing tends to be inferior to a peer-reviewed journal article because books are secondary sources, and sometimes the quality and current relevance are questionable. However, there are times when books are considered a seminal text and provides a detailed description of a concept or theory.

Grey literature includes various types of text that are produced outside of academic channels. Examples include governmental documents, speeches, policies, blogs, websites, and newsletters. Most would categorize World Health Organization Guidelines, College of Nurses Standards of Practice, and Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario Best Practice Guidelines as grey literature. These types of texts may go through a version of peer review, but it is typically not anonymous.

This type of literature is sometimes used in scholarly writing, particularly when discipline-specific knowledge and statistics are necessary.

Activity: Check Your Understanding

The original version of this chapter contained H5P content. You may want to remove or replace this element.

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