

Students stick around for hands-on healing

by Shane Arman - Thursday, January 08, 2009

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/1603/students-stick-around-for-hands-on-healing/>

By the end of the semester, many students seek a reprieve from the stress of schoolwork.

In this case, enrolling in class over winter break might just provide students with some healing.

University of Wisconsin Oshkosh nursing students who take the three-week interim course Nursing 303 — Healing Practices gain insight into how and why alternative therapies are used when treating ill patients.

Nursing 303 features hands-on activities and speakers, with exercises in acupuncture, guided imagery and biofeedback.

“Typically the guest speaker will offer an experience related to the modality or treatment,” instructor Rosann Geiser said, adding that acupuncture is a popular demonstration offered during the course.

“The practitioner brings some needles along, and then a volunteer is able to have the acupuncture treatment,” Geiser said.

Other therapies include using non-physical methods to provoke physical healing. Guided imagery helps patients relax by prompting them to visually “attack” a disease or imagine improved health in their mind.

While some students have reservations about the effectiveness of alternative medicines, others are generally interested and eager to learn more, Geiser said.

“I was skeptical after some of the reading, but I thought it would be an interesting class,” said Ashley Johnson, a junior enrolled in the class.

Students have the opportunity to practice relaxation methods on a patient and digitally monitor if the patient is going into a deeper state of relaxation by interpreting respiratory changes and heart rates.

“Biofeedback is a method where you see the results of what you’re doing, graphically on a computer,” Geiser said.

Interim courses like Nursing 303 are becoming more popular; 4,451 students enrolled for January interim classes.

“Students, particularly in the fall interim, really like to take advantage of being here,” Assistant Director of Academic Advising Bryan Bain said. “They’ve had three weeks off. If they don’t take interim classes, they’re off for another four weeks.”

Seven weeks off can make it harder for students to readjust to a full-credit load their next semester, Bain

said.

“It’s one less class you have to worry about during the semester,” Johnson added.

Three-week interim classes are offered every January and May.

“The benefits are that you can focus intensely on one subject at a time,” Academic Adviser Ann Kunkle-Jones said.

Jones said students have to realize the content is taught quickly and requires elevated focus.

“You are cramming 14 weeks of class into three weeks time,” Kunkle-Jones said. “If you miss a day, it’s like missing a whole week of class.”

But if students are up for the challenge, interim can be a rewarding experience.

“If they are willing to devote the three weeks, they can get a lot out of it,” Kunkle-Jones said.