Midterm Essay:  
Information Literacy

My ultimate career goal is to work as a midwife, delivering babies and providing preperi-, and post-natal care to women and families. I have several more prerequisite courses to take at Seattle Central, then will apply to a graduate-level Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner Nurse-Midwifery program. I hope to take ten credits per quarter over the next several quarters so I may apply to graduate school in the Autumn of 2009. Journals that could be helpful to someone in this career include *Journal of Nurse-Midwifery*, *Journal of Midwifery and Women’s Health*, and *British Journal of Midwifery*. Practitioners can use the journals to stay current on the presentation of new research and critiques of the existing research in the midwifery field.

The article I chose, “Providing Oral Nutrition to Women in Labor,” was published as a Clinical Bulletin by the American College of Nurse-Midwives in the May/June 2008 issue of the *Journal of Midwifery and Women’s Health*. The article examines the practice of withholding oral nutrition to women in labor, a practice that has routinely taken place in the United States for more than sixty years. In the mid-1940’s, research indicated that the vomiting of food and drink while under general anesthesia administered during childbirth was a primary contributor to serious illness—and even death—for birthing women. The article explores why, despite substantial improvements in obstetric anesthesia practice—so many over the past forty years, in fact, that the modern risk of pulmonary aspiration in obstetric patients is so rare, it would be difficult to undertake a randomized clinical trial to determine if a causal relationship between oral intake and maternal mortality exists (Journal of Midwifery and Women’s Health (JMWH), 2008)—a large percentage of U.S. hospitals continue to maintain nothing-by-mouth policies. The article then answers the question: How should midwives manage births with respect to oral
nutrition? Math in the article includes chronology and dates, time, conversions between decimals and percentages, greater-than/less-than equations, concentrations of solutions, and mathematic explanations of metabolic rates of energy consumption. These types of math come from basic arithmetic, basic and intermediate algebra, and statistics and probability.

Contextually, the math in the article is imbedded in the larger text to explain changes over time in oral nutrition practices. For example, the first part of the article discusses a chronological history of providing oral sustenance to birthing women and the numbers, and corresponding percentage, of facilities that restrict oral intake during labor. Next, the authors describe the effect of oral intake on labor as research study results using use intermediate algebra to describe the volume and calculate the concentration of carbohydrate solutions administered intravenously in controlled trials comparing aspiration rates in women who receive oral versus intravenous nutrition. Finally, using statistics and ratios, the authors depict former rates of aspiration during general anesthesia, and probability to predict what current rates may be if women were allowed unrestricted oral intake of nutrition while in labor.

Most of the math in the article I fully understood—chronology of dates, time, conversions between decimals and percentages, and greater-than/less-than equations are elements that I am very comfortable working with. I was able to better understand the explanation of carbohydrate solutions in the article because of the section on quantity-rate tables in this quarter’s intermediate algebra course. Refresher courses in chemistry and/or biology would be helpful for me to remember the exact step-by-step process to replicate the some of the solutions explained and provide additional context for understanding the metabolic rate of energy consumption. Additionally, a statistics class would allow me to better understand the significance of the studies’ results in the larger context of the practice of midwifery.
Many providers and practitioners find medical journals useful and valuable because they outline and explain some of the most recent research findings. This journal article will be helpful to me as a professional nurse-midwife managing a birth because it outlines and explains the most up-to-date research regarding oral nutrition for laboring mothers. When I am managing a birth and need to determine whether to freely allow, restrict, or even prohibit the mother’s oral intake, I want my decisions to be based on the most recent, relevant research and be medically sound. Clinical journals provide this information, and as my career progresses and the information learned while a nurse-midwifery student becomes more and more dated, I expect that I will rely on journals more and more heavily to keep me up to date on advances in the midwifery field.

**WORKS CITED & BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**CITED:**


**BIBLIOGRAPHY:**


*Journal of Nurse-Midwifery*, American College of Nurse-Midwives 44.6 (Nov-Dec 1999).

*Journal of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health*, Association for Pre- and Perinatal Psychology and Health 22.1 (Fall 2007).