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Why I Teach

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Linfield College

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Why I teach

Pam Wheeler, professor of nursing education:

- Ph.D., Portland State University
- Post-master's certificate, Oregon Health & Science University
- M.S.N., Marquette University
- B.S.N., University of Oregon School of Nursing
- Pre-nursing, Willamette University

Academic interests:

Healthcare policy, leadership and management in nursing, professional communication, nursing history, mental health

Like many high school seniors, I wasn't sure what major I would pursue in college. I did know I wanted teaching to be a part of my future, since both my father and paternal grandmother were educators and passionate about their work. Then, during a senior career-day activity, I heard an associate dean of nursing from what is now Oregon Health & Science University talk about nursing. Immediately, I knew that was my path. I realized, also, that I could combine nursing and education in a faculty role. It seemed then to be the best of two careers – and time has proven that to be the case!

It is a privilege to work with students preparing to enter nursing. I teach a course in our program's first semester as well as the final semester, and it's rewarding to witness students' development in their critical thinking and clinical practice. I am frequently in awe of what our seniors describe when they reflect on their experiences with patients and families. They face challenging clinical and ethical situations, and working through these situations provides a base for their professional practice. As I listen to their stories, read their essays and talk with them about their future plans, I know the nursing profession is in excellent hands.

