

COLUMBIA COLLEGE
Practical Nurse Program
Mastery Learning and the Practical Nurse Olympic Games

What is Mastery Learning?

Mastery learning is a model of education that was designed to increase student learning outcomes and thereby increase student graduation rates.

In this model of education, the nursing program team establish a Mastery Learning daily test pass level that each student must reach. These tests are marked in class each day and students are able to quickly find out what questions they got wrong. Students are then able to concentrate on what they do not know or understand.

Students whose morning test results fall below the Mastery Learning level must attend tutorial classes that afternoon. They will remain in the tutorial class that afternoon until they can demonstrate that they now understand the test question(s) that was incorrect and are now able to meet Mastery Learning requirements. This ensures that students have the necessary knowledge and skills as they move forward each day of classes.

Student final exams for each course will be written on a Monday. If they do not pass the final exam they will be required to attend tutorial classes the remainder of that week until they can demonstrate that they now understand the final exam test questions that were incorrect and are now meeting Mastery Learning requirements. This ensures that students are able to demonstrate the required knowledge and skills from one set of courses prior to starting the next set of courses.

Columbia College has set aside 500 tutorial hours that are available to students who need it at no additional cost. This ensures that students are able to get additional help throughout the program when they experience difficulty.

Columbia's goal is to have by far the highest student graduation rate of any nursing program in Alberta and in Canada. Achieving one of the highest graduation rates in Canada means that a higher portion of our nursing students should be able to successfully enter the nursing profession than students attending other colleges.

To our knowledge Columbia College's nursing program is only the third educational institution in North America to be delivered using the Mastery Learning method. We are the first in Canada.

100% of Columbia's Practical Nursing students passed the last national exam. For a college to achieve a 100% student pass rate on one national exam should increase the likelihood of achieving a 100% student pass rate on a future exam.

What is the Practical Nurse Olympic Games?

In addition to Mastery Learning, all nursing students attend weekly Practical Nurse Olympic Games activities.

Columbia College follows a kind of Olympics approach to its games. Students can have fun participating in a series of hands-on, nursing-related activities to build on the knowledge and skills they have acquired in their regular courses. Olympic Games activities were added to the nursing program to help ensure that when students move into their field-based practicums they will better remember what they learned earlier in the program. This is meant to greatly increase their confidence, ability to perform in a nursing role, and successfully complete the program.

We are not aware of another nursing program in Canada that has established weekly games activities throughout the program.