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Comparing Foundational and Advanced Nursing Textbooks: Implications for Curriculum Design and Accreditation Alignment

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ABSTRACT

This comparative review evaluates three recent nursing textbooks representing distinct curricular orientations: a comprehensive pre-licensure medical-surgical reference, a theoretically grounded gerontological nursing text, and an advanced post-licensure surgical nursing resource. Each is assessed for theoretical coherence, evidence-based currency, pedagogical design, and alignment with accreditation standards. Findings indicate that each text occupies a discrete and complementary niche within nursing education, with implications for course adoption decisions across program levels.

Keywords: clinical judgment, evidence-based practice, gerontological nursing, medical-surgical nursing, nursing education, textbook evaluation,

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INTRODUCTION

Textbook selection in nursing education carries significant curricular weight, shaping how students develop clinical reasoning, integrate evidence-based content, and construct professional identity. Three recently published or forthcoming texts address overlapping yet distinct domains of nursing practice. This review evaluates *Lewis's Medical-Surgical Nursing*, 13th edition (Harding et al., 2026); *Nursing for Wellness in Older Adults*, 10th edition (Miller, 2025); and *Surgical Nursing in Practice* (Yip & Smith, forthcoming), across four dimensions: theoretical coherence, evidence-based currency, pedagogical design, and alignment with national accreditation frameworks, including the AACN Essentials (2021) and the Next Generation NCLEX® Clinical Judgment Measurement Model (CJMM).

OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

Lewis's Medical-Surgical Nursing, 13th Edition

Harding and colleagues' 1,792-page comprehensive text (Elsevier, 2026) is among the most widely adopted pre-licensure nursing resources in North America. The 13th edition adds three new chapters—addressing social determinants of health, LGBTQ+ patient care, and ventilator support—reflecting a broadened conception of medical-surgical nursing. The text integrates frameworks from the 2020–2030 *Future of Nursing* report and the AACN Essentials, and its redesigned Pathophysiology Maps and NGN-aligned case studies make it responsive to current licensure demands.

Nursing for Wellness in Older Adults, 10th Edition

Miller's text (Wolters Kluwer, 2025) is structured around the author's original Functional Consequences Theory (FCT), which orients nursing practice toward maximizing function, wellness, and quality of life in older adults—shifting focus from illness management to proactive well-being. The 10th edition strengthens cultural responsiveness and features multipart unfolding case studies that evolve across care settings, mirroring the complexity of real-world gerontological nursing.

Surgical Nursing in Practice

Yip and Smith's forthcoming Springer volume targets post-licensure professionals, clinical leaders, and nurse educators. Organized around constructs from Kitson et al.'s (2021) Caring Life-Course Theory—including Capability, Care Trajectory, and Care Provision—each chapter provides theoretically grounded analysis of advanced surgical nursing practice. Contributions from experienced clinicians and scholars, integrated with case studies and simulation

insights, position the text at the intersection of scholarly inquiry and clinical application.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Theoretical coherence.

Nursing for Wellness in Older Adults demonstrates the strongest theoretical coherence among the three texts, grounded in a single original framework that permeates every chapter. *Surgical Nursing in Practice* adopts an external theory (Kitson et al.'s CLT) as a structural scaffold, yielding coherence that varies somewhat across its multi-author chapters. *Lewis's* draws on multiple overlapping frameworks—the nursing process, AACN Essentials, Healthy People 2030—a defensible pluralism for a comprehensive survey text, though less theoretically unified than the other two.

Evidence-based currency

All three texts reflect current standards. *Lewis's* is the most explicit, incorporating updated national and international guidelines and a timely new COVID-19 section addressing neurologic sequelae and long COVID. Miller's gerontological text integrates current evidence at the level of functional assessment and person-centered care. *Surgical Nursing in Practice* draws on recent research and technological advances, though as a pre-publication title, its evidence base cannot yet be fully assessed.

Pedagogical design

Lewis's offers the richest instructional apparatus: Pathophysiology Maps, specialty boxes (Biologic Sex Considerations, Genetics in Clinical Practice, Promoting Health Equity), interprofessional care features, and unit-ending CJMM-aligned case studies. Miller's unfolding case studies—evolving across settings and time—are arguably more pedagogically sophisticated for developing iterative clinical reasoning. *Surgical Nursing in Practice* is designed for advanced reflection rather than foundational acquisition and is therefore unsuitable as a primary undergraduate text.

Accreditation alignment

Lewis's is the most explicitly aligned with AACN Essentials, Healthy People 2030, and the NGN CJMM—making it the most immediately useful for programs demonstrating curriculum alignment to accreditors. Miller's text aligns well with competencies related to population health, equity, and person-centered care, but its NGN mapping is implicit and requires deliberate faculty scaffolding.

Surgical Nursing in Practice is better aligned with continuing education and advanced practice frameworks than with pre-licensure accreditation standards.

CONCLUSION

Lewis's Medical-Surgical Nursing remains the strongest option for pre-licensure medical-surgical nursing courses, offering the comprehensiveness and NGN alignment that accreditation-conscious programs require. *Nursing for Wellness in Older Adults* is the recommended primary text for gerontological nursing courses and programs emphasizing wellness-centered models of care; its original theoretical framework also carries scholarly value for graduate seminars in nursing theory. *Surgical Nursing in Practice* is best positioned as a graduate-level resource or professional development reference in surgical specialty practice. Faculty adopting any of these texts would benefit from pairing them deliberately with course design decisions that make accreditation alignment and clinical judgment development explicit—particularly where the text's own framework does not foreground these outcomes.

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