

A Design Process for the Internationalization of Conceptual Basis of Professional Nursing

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Abstract

Nurses are expected to provide culturally competent care. Many health care organizations support the need for more emphasis on cultural competency in nursing academia. Institutions of higher education have begun encouraging more course internationalization and globalization to help accomplish this goal. The purpose of the current article is to describe the steps involved in the internationalization of NURS 3630: Conceptual Basis of Professional Nursing course at Albany State University. This course is a part of the required courses within the Darton College of Health Professions Post-Licensure Registered Nursing program and was purposefully selected for internationalization. Conversations between nursing faculty, the Office for International Education, and nursing leaders occurred in the decision-making process. Course objectives and assignments were recreated or altered to have a more cultural and global focus. Four student learning outcomes were addressed in the internationalized course. Positive student feedback regarding course information learned and usefulness was received at the end of the semester. Future suggestions for the course include integrating culture grading rubrics, pretest and posttest administration, faculty professional development, course design team collaboration, and student input.

Keywords: internationalization; nursing; education; curriculum; globalization; culture

The Albany State University's Department of Nursing offers a post-licensure registered nursing program. The post-licensure program is offered for individuals who have already obtained an Associate of Science Degree in Nursing and are seeking a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. The program is entirely online. This paper describes the steps involved in the internationalization of NURS 3630 Conceptual Basis of Professional Nursing.

Background

NURS 3630, an eight-week course, is described as follows:

This course examines the dynamic transformation in nursing through the exploration and investigation of major nursing issues. These issues are examined within the context of nursing history, nursing theories, nursing philosophy, legal issues, political activism, health care delivery systems, and the delivery of culturally competent patient care. (Albany State University, 2020). The university offers at least one cohort every A and B term. Upon successful completion of the course, students earn three semester credit hours towards their bachelor's degree. Thirty to forty students typically are enrolled in the class (about 15-20 students each 8-week term). However, due to an increase in program enrollment, three cohorts were offered Fall 2020 semester; two- A-term sections and one B-term section. A total of 69 students were enrolled during the first semester of NURS 3630 being offered as an internationalized course.

Placement Within the Curriculum

Students enroll in this course during the first semester of the RN-BSN curriculum. NURS 3630 was purposefully selected for course internationalization for several reasons. First, the course is required of all RN-BSN students for degree completion. Second, the faculty anticipated that students could use this course's cultural and global information in future classes by completing an internationalized first-semester foundational course. Third, given that the RN-BSN program is entirely online, purposeful selection within this program helped include online university students in the university's internationalization efforts.

Significance

According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)(2017), information learned about diverse cultures and perspectives is especially beneficial because it can be used in health care. Given that nurses work in various environments, nursing curricula should include aspects of globalization and internationalization. According to Jibeen and Khan (2015), course internationalization expands students' educational value.

Nurses are expected to provide culturally competent care. Culturally skilled nurses can provide more culturally appropriate and sensitive care to patients. Conversely, cultural unawareness between patients and their nurses can often cause patient compliance problems, thus negatively influencing patient care (Black, 2020).

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Prevention Information Network (2020), "Cultural competence is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services; thereby producing better outcomes." A portion of the ASU's Department of Nursing's statement of philosophy includes the following. *"..increase the number of nursing graduates who are adequately prepared to enter the healthcare workforce and provide holistic, culturally-competent care..."* The need for culturally competent nurses relies heavily on nursing faculty equipping student nurses with knowledge about culturally competent care.

Dr. Madeleine Leininger's Cultural Care Diversity and Universality Theory (also known as the Culture Care Theory) focuses on equipping nurses to provide culturally appropriate and unbiased care to diverse patients. Dr. Leininger began formulating this theory in the late 1970s with her dissertation work. Dr. Leininger deemed a new care approach necessary due to the lack of studies from diverse cultural perspectives (McFarland & Wehbe-Alamah, 2019).

Dr. Leininger's theory encourages nurses to investigate and gather patient data about the patient's particular cultures and then formulate nursing care based on the information discovered. The cultural investigation of the patient provides the nurse with a holistic, inclusive summary of the patient's history (Petiprin, 2020). There are three aspects of culturally appropriate patient care: cultural preservation/ maintenance, cultural care accommodation/ negotiation, and cultural care repatterning/restructuring.

Cultural care preservation/maintenance refers to actions that support patients in retaining cultural practices and values to help them maintain well-being, recuperate from sickness, face disability, or death (Butts & Rich, 2018). Cultural care accommodating/negotiation refers to enabling or assisting professional activities and decisions geared to help patients and their families of a specific culture negotiate with skilled caregivers to meet desired health care outcomes (Butts & Rich). Cultural care repatterning/restructuring denotes how health care providers can work with patients, families, and the community to promote lifestyle modifications to achieve different health patterns (McFarland & Wehbe-Alamah, 2019).

Internationalization in Higher Education

According to DeWit, Hunter, Howard, and Egron-Polak (2015), internationalization of higher education is defined as "the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of post-secondary education to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society." The internationalization process in higher education offers opportunities for student and faculty growth regardless of a specific discipline. For example, nursing educators can incorporate global student learning objectives into nursing courses to strengthen nursing students' cultural competency and global awareness (Mulready-Schick, 2019).

There is limited literature identifying methods that schools of nursing use to help produce culturally competent nurses (Creech et al., 2017). Creech et al. (2017) conducted a study that requested nursing faculty implement at least one cultural competency objective into their Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) curriculum. The longitudinal study lasted for two years. Pretest and post-test results were compared. Results indicated that the number of courses with at least one cultural competence increased, and the DNP students' transcultural self-efficacy tool scores increased. The results of this study help support the need for more efforts to improve nursing students' cultural competency by implementing more culturally based education into nursing education curricula.

A study conducted by Lonneman (2015) investigated the effectiveness of six instructional strategies on nursing students' cultural awareness levels. The strategies were varied and included activities such as journal critiques and a personal history reflection paper. The outcome of this study revealed an increase in students' perceived cultural awareness self-efficacy, indicating effective teaching strategies implemented in this particular study. As a result of this study, the researchers contend that nursing faculty should increase student cultural awareness efforts.

Many nursing organizations support internationalization (Mulready-Shick, 2019). The National League for Nursing (NLN) places particular emphasis on promoting global awareness. The NLN recommends incorporating global competencies in nursing programs and increasing faculty global resources (2017). Incorporating internationalized courses in nursing curricula is one way to increase future nurses' awareness of diverse cultural aspects.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) is another organization that supports culturally competent nursing. A part of this organization's *The Changing Landscape: Nursing Student Diversity in the Rise Policy Brief* (2017a) includes how exposure to different perceptions and viewpoints helps provide better workplace relationships. A survey that the AACN conducted (2017b) reported that approximately 30 percent of all bachelor's and graduate nursing students come from assorted backgrounds. The results of this study support the need for more cultural relevancy in nursing courses, such as with the internationalization of NURS 3630.

The Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)(2020) is a primary accrediting agency for nursing education. One of the organization's standards is that *"the curriculum includes cultural, ethnic, and socially diverse concepts and may include experiences from regional, national or global perspectives."* Nursing programs are evaluated on this and many other standards and criteria during ACEN site visits. According to ACEN (2020), diversity concepts include *"Knowledge about persons, communities, regions, countries, cultures, and ethnicities other than one's own."* Nursing programs that cannot demonstrate this cultural aspect within the curriculum may receive a non-compliant status in meeting this criterion. The ASU Department of Nursing receives

accreditation from this agency, furthering the rationale for internationalizing courses.

Practical Application/Methods

University Support

According to Musil (2006), individual courses' internationalized alignment goals should align with departmental and university goals. The Office of International Education (OIE) at ASU fosters a very encouraging environment for student and faculty study abroad programs and course internationalization. The OIE at ASU has an outlined Comprehensive Internationalization Strategic Plan (CISP) Framework. According to the American Council on Education (ACE) (2021), Comprehensive internationalization is defined as "a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate policies, programs, and initiatives to position colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected." Since increasing the number of internationalized courses is one focus area of this CISP framework, the OIE offers numerous resources, professional development, grant funding, and course internationalization guidance. For example, a dedicated course shell within ASU's learning management system is specifically designed with various faculty resources when internationalizing courses.

Departmental Support

The Albany State Department of Nursing already had a few internationalized undergraduate nursing courses before the internationalization of NURS 3630. Some of these classes included Adult Health II, Geriatric Nursing, Community/Public Health Nursing, and Nursing Research. In addition to these internationalized courses, selected faculty and students participated in various study abroad trips.

Planning Process

After the decision to internationalize the selected course, discussions between faculty, program director, department chair, and the Office for International Education began. Following these discussions, the process of internationalizing oneself began. According to Sanderson

(2008), faculty must know and accept cultures other than their own. Numerous university professional development sessions and opportunities were attended, including a Spring 2020 Jamaica Study Abroad trip. Many culturally relevant and historical tourist sites were visited as part of the study abroad travel, allowing for novel faculty cultural experiences.

The goal of the internationalization of NURS 3630 was to address four course learning outcomes; professionalism, nursing process, therapeutic communication and intervention, advocacy, and evidence-based practice. Table 1 below illustrates the learning outcomes alignment with culturally relevant assignments used for course internationalization.

Table 1
NURS 3620 Course Learning Outcomes Alignment Used for Internationalization

Learning Outcome	Assignment
<p>Professionalism Synthesize knowledge from the humanities, natural and behavioral sciences, and nursing in meeting human responses to maintain wellness and/or prevent illness.</p>	Globalization Assignment
Learning Outcome	Assignment
<p>Therapeutic Communication and Intervention Apply the theories of communication, teaching-learning, leadership and problem-solving to clinical decision-making and provisions of care.</p>	<p>Considering Culture: When You Don't Speak the Patient's Language. Sociocultural self- assessment.</p>
<p>Evidence-Based Practice Relate nursing theories to the care of selected clients in clinical situations.</p>	<p>Considering Culture: When You Don't Speak the Patient's Language. Discussion Questions.</p>

Teaching Activities

Part of the Albany State Department of Nursing's mission statement includes the following "*...learning activities support the holistic development of students as learners, leaders, and contributing members of society who embody the ideals of professional nursing in a global society.*" Musil (2006) suggests several questions for consideration when planning goals for course internationalization. One of these questions for reflection is, "What teaching strategies should be employed to enhance students' global learning in this course?" Before internationalization, the NURS 3630 course emphasized preparing the registered nurse for entry into Bachelors of Science in Nursing role responsibilities, transitions, and practices with little to no emphasis on culture and globalization. A few pre-internationalization course activities included a code of ethics, a professional nursing roles paper, a workplace incivility group project, an American Nurse Association assignment, and a nursing profession timeline.

During the planning phase of internationalization, culturally relevant course textbook unit objectives emphasizing culture and globalization were selected for course integration. Course textbook teacher resources and the Internet were used to create and integrate more culturally relevant assignments for the internationalization process. Musil (2006) recommends that faculty deliberately plan to develop activities to assess student learning outcomes. Therefore, specific activity alignment addressed the course outcomes and unit objectives. Innovative internationalization activities and assignments included a Globalization paper, a When You Don't Speak the Patient's Language assignment, a Sociocultural Self-Assessment, Cultural Stereotypes, and discussion questions. A brief explanation of the assignments is mentioned below.

Globalization Writing Assignment

Globalization in the health care field "is the process in which the events, activities, and decisions of a region in the world can have important effects on people, societies, or connections of another region of the world" (Dorri, Abedi, & Mohammadi, 2020). Dorri, Abedi, and Mohammadi conducted a study that revealed nine effects of globalization

on nursing. Researchers of this study concluded that globalization in nursing is unavoidable; therefore, globalization can be viewed as an opportunity for growth or, subsequently, a peril. Given the importance of globalization in health care, students were asked to research nursing as a global profession. Students were asked to compose a 400-500-word count paper citing if they agreed that nursing has a role in global health care initiatives. The globalization project addressed course module objectives such as; *comparing early definitions of nursing with contemporary ones and identifying the characteristics of a profession.*

Considering Culture: When You Don't Speak the Patient's Language Assignment

The United States is becoming a more diverse society. Nurses must be able to provide competent care to non-English-speaking patients. Studies have indicated more adverse care in patients who do not speak English as their primary language (Divi, Koss, Schmaltz, & Loeb, 2007). Students were assigned to complete a case study chapter assignment wherein the case study patient did not speak the same language as the nurses. Students answered questions about ethical considerations, situational management, and problem-solving. This assignment was chosen because it addresses the module objective: *Identify strategies in providing care to patients who do not speak English.*

Stereotypes Paper Assignment

Students were asked to choose a media portrayal of a cultural stereotype and write about the stereotype depicted in the media clip. Students were asked to elaborate on whether the media clip influenced or did not influence their cultural perceptions. This assignment addressed the module objective of *recognizing how environmental factors such as family, culture, social support, the Internet, and community influence health.*

Sociocultural self-assessment Assignment

Students were assigned the Challenges of Understanding Your Own Cultural Beliefs-Sociocultural Self-Assessment from the course textbook. This particular assignment required students to assess their

cultural practices and beliefs. The student addressed the module objectives to *explain behavioral responses to illness and what influences these behaviors* by completing this assignment.

Discussion questions

In addition to the assignments above, students were assigned discussion questions throughout the course. Some examples of culturally relevant discussion questions include:

1. Effective nursing care requires nurses to strive for cultural competency. Is it possible to learn about another culture without learning to stereotype? Explain your response.
2. Do stereotypes always hinder cultural competency? Can stereotypes be a beginning step to cultural competency? Can one truly be culturally competent without awareness of one's own stereotypes?
3. Try to identify your own cultural group's response to illness. What are your family's characteristic responses to the illness of a family member?

As a part of the planning process, a syllabus course goal was added to the university syllabus template that included the following:

The Conceptual Basis of Professional Nursing is an internationalized course. Through careful selection of unit objectives, the five-course learning outcomes will be encompassed in the internationalization process. Learner-centered instruction and assignments will be provided to help meet course objectives and enhance students' global knowledge and cultural competency. The student will examine the dynamic transformation in nursing through exploration and investigation of major nursing issues. These issues are examined within the context of nursing history, nursing theories, nursing philosophy, legal issues, political activism, health care delivery systems, and the delivery of culturally competent patient care. Instructions for selected assignments will require students to incorporate various aspects of nursing education, healthcare, culture, ethics, and religion from world regions outside the United States.

Results

The initial implementation of the internationalized course design occurred in the Fall 2020 semester. There were three 8-week class cohorts. After each 8-week term, students enrolled in all three cohorts were asked to complete a course evaluation of the internationalized course and assignments. A total of 33 students responded to the survey. The survey consisted of 3 questions detailed in the following paragraphs.

Question 1

The Concepts of Professional Nursing course you have just completed was an internationalized course. Through careful selection of unit objectives, four-course learning outcomes were encompassed in the internationalization process. Learner-centered instruction and assignments were provided to help meet course objectives and enhance students' global knowledge and cultural competency. Do you feel this course increased your cultural competency? The purpose of question one was to evaluate students' perceptions of the internationalized course's relevancy and gather their opinions on whether their cultural competency level increased. Thirty-three survey participants responded to question one.

All survey participants noted that they felt the course increased their cultural competency.

Question 2

The purpose of question two was to gather information about which assignments the students most enjoyed. Participants responded to the following multiple-choice question:

Which culturally based assignment did you most enjoy?

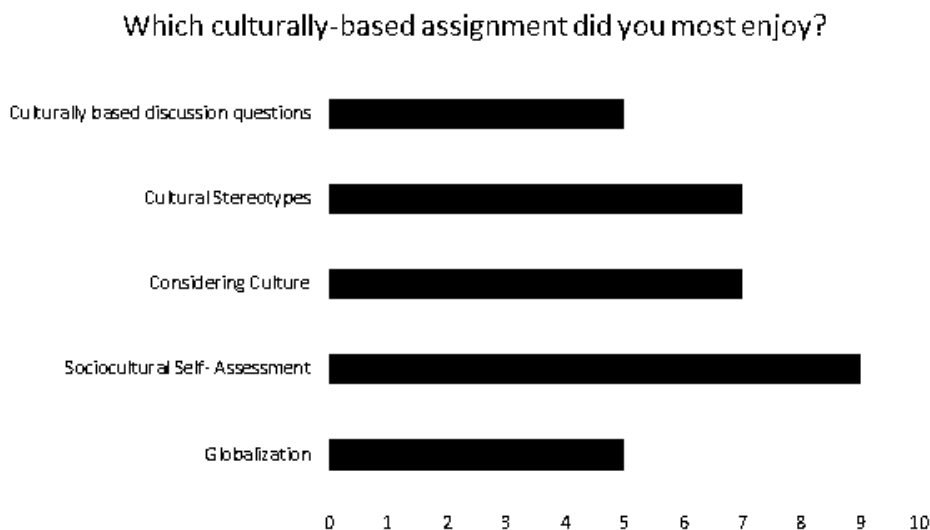
- Globalization (Do you agree nursing has a role in global health care?)
- Sociocultural Self-Assessment (Understanding your own cultural beliefs)
- Considering culture (When You Don't Speak the Patient's Language)
- Cultural Stereotypes (Media influence)

- Culturally based discussion questions

See figure 1 below

Figure 1

Question 2: Which culturally based assignment did you most enjoy? N=33



Question 3

What are your overall thoughts on taking an internationalized course?

The purpose of this open-ended question was to provide students with the opportunity to express their opinion on the internationalized course. Students voiced sentiments such as;

"This course helped me to understand the importance of being a culturally competent nurse as well as how to care for those of different cultural backgrounds and beliefs. This will ultimately prepare me to become an efficient nurse."

"Being culturally competent as a nurse or in healthcare as a whole is very important to understanding different groups and ethnicities. It is critical for positive patient outcomes and provider relationships to be learned about individuals before making generalizations or being stereotypical. The course was very enlightening; it shed light on my own cultural beliefs about other groups."

"I thought it was extremely interesting and made me think a lot about myself and how to be a better nurse for people. Thank you!"

Discussion

The NURS 3630 internationalization included culturally relevant learner-centered assignments and activities during four weeks of this eight-week course. Assignments were graded utilizing the program assignment rubric, and discussions were assessed using the program discussion rubric. Four culturally relevant assignments and discussion questions were integrated into the course for internationalization. The 8-week NURS 3630 course was internationalized in Fall 2020. The results of the student end-of-course survey revealed positive responses from students. All the students indicated they felt this course increased their cultural competency. Student feedback regarding their most enjoyable assignment varied with the Sociocultural Self-Assessment (Understanding Your Own Cultural Beliefs), with the highest score from all the other assignments and discussions. Perhaps this assignment was most enjoyed due to the self-reflection required to complete the paper. Self-reflection allows individuals to investigate and reflect on beliefs, values, and perspectives most desirably from an objective viewpoint. According to Black (2020), cultural assessments help individuals assess themselves and more easily recognize any preconceptions regarding cultures that differ from their own. Comments revealed students' viewpoints on the course's overall internationalization as a positive experience. Students indicated the course's information was very engaging and applicable to their working in a nursing environment.

Limitations

There were three identified limitations in this initial internationalized course design process. One main limitation of this design process was the absence of culturally relevant rubrics. The small number of students who participated in the course evaluation survey at the end provided a very subjective view of the course design. Additionally, assessments were formative in nature rather than both formative and summative.

Future Suggestions

There are several recommendations for this course's internationalization course design improvement. These suggestions apply to faculty, instructional designers, and students. They are outlined in the subsequent paragraphs.

Grading Rubrics

Using the experiences learned from the first internationalized course offering, the course can be offered with the same assignments and papers preceding 8-week terms. However, culturally relevant grading rubrics should be used in future classes to efficiently capture the internationalized course's impact on students' cultural competency levels, knowledge level about different countries, and student understanding of the nursing profession from an international viewpoint. Numerous culturally emphasized grading rubrics are available online and from various organizations for faculty use when conducting student assessments.

Pre/Post-test

Another faculty suggestion is to have students complete pre and post-tests to evaluate their learning level after completing the internationalized course. Pretest and post-test results can be compared to provide a more specific indication of student learning. Results could reveal the effectiveness of implemented instructional strategies, any changes in intercultural competence, and other pre and post-learning facets, such as country-specific knowledge, general cultural knowledge, and differences in approaches to nursing outside of the United States.

Professional Development

Faculty professional development would help ensure the course execution and organization are evidence-based and meet student learning needs. According to Leask (2014), faculty who are inexperienced with the internationalization process should be mentored by faculty experienced with this process. Additionally, academic leaders can incorporate internationalization workshops throughout the academic year to help

promote faculty development in the course and curriculum internationalization.

Course Design

Faculty seeking to internationalize courses should ensure quality in the course design. According to Lenert and Janes (2017), appropriate course design is one way to promote quality in course delivery. Financial resources and institutional support help support quality in online instruction (Lenert & Janes). Moreover, formative and summative assessments are a necessary course design component to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of course concepts.

Student Input

Conducive learning environments include activities that encourage student input from different backgrounds and positively affect educational outcomes (IDEA, 2021). Providing students with the opportunity to share information about their respective cultures can increase student engagement and learning opportunities. Additionally, peers enrolled in the course will benefit from learning about their peers and culture.

Information from students that took the internationalized course regarding how they applied their learning to nursing practice after graduating would be helpful. This could be accomplished by administering an assessment of new nurse graduate perceptions of the impact of the internationalized course on their nursing practice. Faculty could then make course design improvements influenced by graduates' feedback.

Conclusion

The process of internationalizing NURS 3630 was a noteworthy and meaningful event for students. The information presented from the internationalization of this course is quite applicable to the nursing discipline. The course allowed students to view nursing from a global perspective while taking time to assess their various client cultures, gather pertinent information, and provide culturally appropriate nursing care. Enrollees applying cultural information learned from this course will help advance nursing knowledge and practice, regardless of their working environment.

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