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Abstract

Creighton University College of Nursing (CON), consistent with the University mission, focuses on the unique journey of each student to seek the truths and values essential to a fulfilling human life. Inspired by this mission, the faculty of the CON decided to integrate spirituality into the one-year accelerated nursing curriculum (ANC). The diversity of the student population, along with the rigor and intensity of the program, required collaboration among nursing faculty to accomplish the integration. The ANC Integrated Spirituality Model was developed and used as an organizing framework. This model integrates the Creighton University College of Nursing selected Ignatian values as the foundation. Specific student activities involving spirituality and reflective practice were identified for each of the three semesters of the ANC to promote leveling of the student learning activities. The establishment of a reflective practice was identified to envelop the organizing framework and provide a critical tangible proficiency for support and evaluation of the integration of spirituality across the ANC curriculum and an ongoing resource for future nursing practice.

Introduction

Creighton University College of Nursing launched its Accelerated Program in 1975 and has over 40 years' experience in preparing professional nurses in an intensive one-year program for individuals who hold a non-nursing bachelor's or higher degree. Creighton University is founded in the principles of the Jesuit Catholic tradition and is

committed to educating students to be innovative leaders in providing healthcare for individuals and populations. Students graduating from the College of Nursing are challenged to become "creative scholars, reflective and compassionate practitioners, collaborative professionals, and global citizens through personal and professional formation anchored in social justice."

The foundation for this approach to mission is generally found within undergraduate courses in theology; however this opportunity is not available in a one-year program where students already hold a bachelors degree. A gap was identified between assuring students receive spirituality-focused education during their course of study and fulfilling the rigorous requirements of the accelerated nursing curriculum (ANC). To bridge this gap, the ANC faculty formed a task force to explore approaches to integrating spirituality into the curriculum. Using a collaborative process, ANC faculty identified an opportunity to close the gap, using the common thread of Ignatian spirituality to firmly link courses together. This work resulted in a new model to guide the process, titled the ANC Integrated Spirituality Model.

The College of Nursing is committed to four Ignatian values that personify the mission: 1) Finding God in All Things, 2) Women and Men for and with Others, 3) Faith that Does Justice and 4) Cura Personalis (care for the whole person). Ignatian values, holistic nursing practice and spiritual care are interconnected in the new model, then integrated collectively into the ANC by employing reflective practice. The model presented in this paper illustrates the intentional process to integrate spirituality in every course throughout the ANC one-year program of study. The overall goal is for graduates to leave the program equipped with a deeper understanding of spirituality that helps them to discover meaning in future practice and influence the greater good.

Background and Significance

Spiritual care has been embraced in professional nursing since Florence Nightingale practiced in the mid-1800s. Today, the American Nurses Association (ANA) integrates spirituality and spiritual care as a dimension of nursing practice. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) recognizes the importance of teaching these concepts as a dimension in patient-centered care. The AACN "Essentials of Baccalaureate Education" states that Bachelor of Nursing (BSN) students should be prepared to understand the multiple physical, psychosocial, cultural and spiritual needs of their clients. Additionally, BSN graduates are prepared to conduct comprehensive

assessments of health and illness, including a spiritual assessment.⁴

Seasoned nurses engaged in practice recognize the importance of learning the skills required to complete a spiritual assessment and provide supporting spiritual care. For example, Canfield et al. conducted individual interviews among critical care nurses who identified a need for further education and resources to assist them in providing spiritual care.⁵ It is also possible that nurses may have interactions with clients they do not recognize as being spiritual, such as listening, touch, or allowing time. 6 Burkhart and Schmidt emphasized that nurses continue to communicate their need for education about how to provide spiritual care.⁷ Therefore, teaching the concept of spirituality is an important consideration for future nurses, and a curriculum tailored to include and embrace it is vital. "In nursing, spirituality is defined as a growth process through transcending from 'who one is' toward 'who one will become' by searching for meaning and purpose in life, and/or experiencing a sense of connectedness with self, others, nature, literature, arts and/or a power greater than oneself."8 These authors suggest educational and reflective programming as a central way to increase spiritual well-being. This mirrors an important consideration identified for the Creighton model, the inclusion of the nurse's spiritual well-being in addition to the ability to provide spiritual care through reflective practice.

All students at Creighton must fulfill requirements within the university core curriculum, including an introductory theology course. In the past, students admitted to the accelerated program were required to complete an introductory theology course prior to matriculation. This would occur either by transfer of credits or enrolling in courses that would satisfy the requirements before enrollment. Even though a wide variety of courses were accepted for transfer, it was a common concern for perspective students, potentially delaying their entry into the program and generating additional cost.

The broad approach to meeting the requirements for students with diverse previous learning experiences was both an opportunity and a challenge in curricular development. From the faculty perspective, while opportunities for rich discussion and deeper understanding existed, it

was difficult to find the starting place or common ground to launch nursing-specific spirituality content. Faculty recognized an intentional and consistent approach was necessary, and a task force was created to identify such an approach. In 2015, the nursing faculty organization supported a change allowing students to enter the program without a theology pre-requisite, but only did so with the assurance that spirituality be integrated into the existing curriculum.

The accelerated faculty were tasked with identifying the integration process within their curriculum. All full-time faculty teaching in the ANC program were invited to join the task force, and nearly all agreed to participate. A core group of eight faculty were led in the process by the track-leader for the ANC program with the specific goal of developing an intentional integration for spirituality into the current curriculum. The College of Nursing chaplain also served on the task force, providing leadership and guidance around Ignatian values and Jesuit tradition. Her contributions also provided a unique perspective and an important lens to examine the integration.

As work began, new ideas emerged from rich discussions among task force members. For example, the integration could provide new and also intentional opportunities for students to identify the role of spirituality in their personal experiences and future practice. Task force members also felt the integration should be flexible enough to support each student's unique journey yet remain clearly guided by program outcomes and standards of professional nursing practice.

Task force members teaching in nearly every course identified existing spirituality-linked content and assignments across the curriculum. A review of the literature identified multiple resources and approaches related to spirituality and spiritual care. As work began, members agreed that reflective practice would become an integral component of the integration plan. It became clear that no one course, committee, or list of resources would be sufficient to accomplish the broader goal of intentional integration across the entire curriculum. Task force members recognized a framework was needed to guide the integration, one that was both school-specific and

broadly conceptualized to bridge student learning to future professional nursing practice. The "ANC Integrated Spirituality Model" illustrates the framework that was developed. The model is grounded in Ignatian values that connect to learning outcomes that affect the greater community through reflective practice.

A second review of the literature supported model development. Christoffersen completed a qualitative study among educators and administrators in accelerated nursing programs to ascertain best approaches to teaching with the unique cohort. Student learners within accelerated programs are dissimilar to traditional nursing student learners in several ways. Themes that accelerated students demonstrate according to the authors include: extreme organization, engage students through active listening, mutual respect, engage via life/work experience, effective pedagogy adaptations and early immersion into the nursing role. This requires faculty teaching in these programs to adapt their traditional classroom approaches and to welcome changes from their previously established methods of instruction.9

Accelerated nursing programs have had success meeting educational requirements while tailoring programs to meet the needs of accelerated program students. A reflective practice framework was found to be effective by one accelerated program, allowing them to better operationalize classes and modify their clinical rotation model. It also led to the introduction of four semester themes to address content saturation within the curriculum and employ student-centered pedagogies that valued students' prior experiences.¹⁰ Accelerated students challenge educators with differences from traditional students. They bring their past experiences, established strengths and expectations and can be more demanding.¹¹ Implications for faculty are to abandon teacher-centric methods in favor of active learning and the use of technology, be prepared and extremely organized, be present with students and immerse them into the profession. Additionally, faculty should use the unique characteristics of the students to develop equally unique courses that recognize their high level of motivation and acknowledge their past work and life experiences.¹²

The task force recognized that developing a pedagogy that is threaded and leveled across the curriculum needed to link educational and professional standards. Bennett and Thompson provide a literature review to discuss teaching spirituality to student nurses that supports this approach. Their review identifies multiple standards and measures of spiritual care within the nursing discipline along with models for teaching spirituality. Additionally, integrating spirituality and a spiritual care pedagogy in nursing education is challenging to assess, measure and evaluate. To accomplish this, task force members sought to include outcome measurement while keeping Jesuit Catholic tradition as central to the model.

In their theory of spiritual care in nursing practice, Burkhart and Schmidt suggest that a reflective practice post nurse-patient encounter can be framed by application of Ignatian spirituality.¹⁴ The reflection is operationalized through the Examen process—an exercise that looks to human experience as the material where meaning and a sense of sacred can be found. These authors studied a student's ability to provide spiritual care and his/her spiritual well-being and reflective practices post-spiritual encounter. The study was conducted within a spiritual care educational and reflective program run concurrently with a clinical transition capstone practicum. By using retreats, web-based discussion, and four survey instruments, an understanding of spirituality was more clearly described. These actions increased student awareness of patient spiritual need as part of daily practice and their ability to provide spiritual care in complex family encounters. Additionally, findings suggested that the program may have affected students' existential wellbeing.15

Pennington, Crewell, Snedden, Mulhall and Ellison describe an Ignatian pedagogy model developed and utilized in a nursing curriculum. ¹⁶ The goals of the pedagogy were to assist students in self-reflection, self-actualization and personal formation. They surveyed students, alumni and faculty to examine the use and acceptance of the strategy. Students reported that the most memorable component of the model was reflection, while faculty indicated the most important component was a desire for further education about incorporating the model into

their course. This parallels the intention of the Creighton Integration Model.

Model development

At the outset, the task force envisioned a model that was student-centric, designed with guideposts for learning and tangible expectations that are clearly articulated as students' progress through the program. A second goal was to have students envision reflective practice as an essential component of their future professional practice. The group also sought a mechanism for faculty to clearly identify where their teaching contributions "fit" and how they linked to spirituality within the curriculum. Finally, the plan needed an evaluation component, a way to measure the process of integration and student progress. To accomplish these goals, the task force determined the best way to set course was to incorporate the university and College of Nursing's core values first, followed by interrelated concepts. The final model design evolved from this basis and consists of four dimensions: core values, related themes, student outcomes and guiding principles. The dimensions are conceptualized within the sphere of reflective practice.

Central to the development of the ANC Integrated Spirituality Model are the core values. At the heart of the model is the Jesuit Catholic tradition, the foundation for the university. The four Ignatian values connected to the College of Nursing's mission surround it: Finding God in All Things, Women and Men for and with Others, Faith that Does Justice, and *Cura Personalis*. These core values are essential to the mission of both the College of Nursing and the university.

The second dimension, spirituality themes, are interconnected, descriptive ideas that guide our ways of learning, knowing and doing. These are linked to each of the four Ignatian values and listed with them in the corresponding quadrant. The value Finding God in All Things includes the themes of Jesuit Catholic traditions, a higher power, reflective practice, a sense of "must" or "more," and spiritual practices. Likewise, the value Women and Men for and with Others connects to diversity, humility, moral courage and servant leadership. Faith that Does Justice links with experiential learning, ethical practice, social justice and the greater good, our calling/passion for

nursing, and solidarity. The remaining value, *Cura Personalis* embodies the themes of holism (of body, mind and spirit), self-awareness, spiritual health, spiritual values and an openness to one's own vulnerability.

The third dimension, student outcomes, is intended to describe "what it looks like" and "what we want to happen" when students are able to assimilate the associated values and extend them into their professional practice. The task force identified outcomes that connect to each of the four Ignatian values and their descriptive themes. Examples of outcomes from the Finding God in All Things quadrant include: perceive ability to provide spiritual care, grow in cultural humility and reverence, demonstrate integrity and ethical practice and become confident, competent and compassionate leaders. These outcomes set the stage for answering the question "how will we know," by providing a structure to measure student awareness and application of the themes.

The fourth dimension adds an additional layer to the model to demonstrate the context of nursing education and the broader, worldview of nursing as a profession. This context includes service to others that impacts health and the greater good among populations in community and global settings. This context also includes the knowledge and skill of the nursing discipline built through education as professional nurses. Four nursing education specific documents serve as cornerstones for the Creighton College of Nursing and are listed in the model: the BSN program objectives, the AACN Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice, the ANA Code of Ethics and the Creighton University Code of Conduct.

Finally, the model is completed by encircling the four dimensions with reflective practice, described as: integrating knowledge from experience, a way of systematic thinking, considering what is known within the context of an event, and part of a lifelong learning process. The model is intended for use in one college of nursing, yet is flexible enough to be replicated by other accelerated programs (see figure 1).

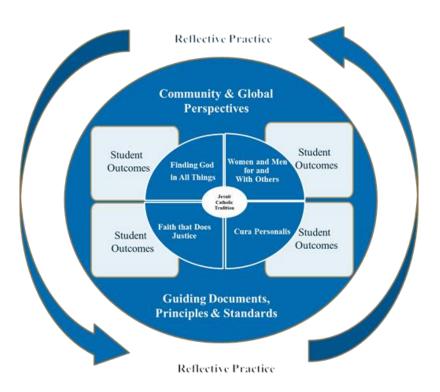


Figure 1. ANC Integrated Spirituality Model

Implementation Plan

Once the dimensions of the model were well-defined, the task force considered next steps to move the initiative forward. A logical approach was to visualize the dimensions of the model in a linear fashion to identify gaps and opportunities to intentionally integrate spirituality into the existing curriculum. This activity resulted in a crosswalk document, aligning the core values and themes to student outcomes and program guidance. Following this work, the task force inserted application objectives along with current and potential teaching/learning activities leveled by

semester. Faculty invested in the collaborative process, choosing to complete this work collectively as a task force rather than assigning it to a few members. Even though it required time and attention, members felt it was important to understand how each course in the curriculum contributed to the whole. Once completed, the crosswalk provided a clear map of the integration plan and faculty quickly achieved consensus on how to accomplish it. The final crosswalk document also included references to each of the program guidance documents and a glossary of defined terms (see table 1 on the next page).

 Table 1. ANC Integrated Spirituality Crosswalk

Ignatian Values & Associated Spirituality Themes	Student Outcomes (Spiritual Awareness)	Crosswalk with Program Guidance			Application to Nursing	ANC Course Activities		
	Students	CU-BSN Program Objective	ANA Code of Ethics	BSN Essentials	Students	Semester 1 Introduction	Semester 2 Application & Demonstration	Semester 3 Competency
Finding God in All Things Jesuit Catholic traditions Higher power Reflective practice "Must" or "More" Spiritual practices	Are comfortable expressing spiritual concerns Intentionally reflect on one's experience	6	1, 8	I, VI, VIII, IX	Meet university learning outcome #5 (deliberative reflection)	Spiritual retreat and self-spiritual assessment	Consistent and deliberative Reflections	Pre- and post conferences through reflective journaling
Women and Men for and with Others • Diversity, relationships • Humility • Moral courage • Servant leadership	1. Integrate resources, anticipate referrals, and include team in provision of spiritual care 2. Grow in cultural humility and reverence 3. Are responsive to the unique needs of others	1, 2	3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9	III, IV, V, VI, VIII	Demonstrate moral courage in advocating for individuals, families, and populations	Case studies related to dignity, worth, biases, judgments and religious differences	Cultural Competency in Nursing Certificate	Reflective journal – working with diverse populations
Faith that Does Justice Experiential Learning Ethical practice – social justice, greater good Calling – passion for Nursing Solidarity	1. Gain greater awareness of self 2. Are attentive, reflective, compassionate and loving 3. Demonstrate servant leadership 4. Demonstrate integrity and ethical practice	3, 4, 7	2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9	II, III, IV, V, VI, VIII, IX	Practice is congruent with the CU Code of Conduct and the ANA Code of Ethics	Spiritual content	Ethical issues in public health discussion board	Ethical reflection pairing each Ignatian value with an ANA Code of Conduct.
Cura Personalis Body, mind and spirit — Holism Self-awareness Spiritual Health Spiritual values Calling — passion for Nursing Openness to one's own vulnerability	Develop spiritual self-awareness and moral consciousness Develop a healthy life balance Become lifelong learners Become confident, competent, and compassionate leaders Recognize their calling as an extension of God's presence	6	5	I, VII, VIII	Identify specific examples of how they have developed in leadership, confidence and compassion.	Spirituality assessment health assessment activities	Reflective journaling	Weekly log includes identification of spiritual care

With the crosswalk completed, three short-term action items were identified. First, the College of Nursing Chaplain compiled the list of spirituality and spiritual care resources into an organized guide that was listed on each ANC course home page as an active link. The second was to expand spirituality content during the initial orientation session for each new ANC cohort. To set the stage for the integration, a "mini-retreat" format was developed that allowed for extended content and completion of a spiritual self-assessment. The remaining short-term action was to share the work of the task force with faculty and staff, accomplished with a presentation at the annual College of Nursing fall faculty and staff retreat. The model and crosswalk were introduced as part of a faculty development activity.

At the same time the spiritual integration model was being developed, a different task force began work on a reflective writing rubric that could be used across the curriculum for all tracks in the BSN program. The rubric was intended to serve as a guide to assess written reflective journal assignments found in nearly every course. Because the work of the two groups was clearly aligned, they began to have joint discussions, allowing the work of each to inform the other. The final reflective writing rubric became an important assessment tool that contributed to the overall ANC spirituality integration plan.

With short-term action items accomplished, the task force turned to more intermediate actions to continue development while operationalizing the activities outlined in the crosswalk. These activities included garnering support from College of Nursing leadership and standing committees, identifying opportunities for scholarship and dissemination and applying for an internal grant to fund faculty development and support the implementation plan. Task force members felt that writing the proposal would push the team to further organize approaches and define the outcomes we hoped to measure throughout the integration.

The team was successful in securing funding for one year. In addition to boosting faculty development activities and expanding student spiritual retreats, the evaluation plan for the grant guided the identification of measurable outcomes. Throughout the one-year course of the grant, we chose the spiritual assessment tool to be used consistently in practicum settings, explored methods of reflection and surveyed students on their understanding of spiritual care. We piloted the reflective writing rubric and identified a strategy to level it at intervals throughout the program. We reviewed and updated the crosswalk document, adjusted the agenda for orientation retreat and continued to meet monthly as a task force. At the completion of the grant, we were prepared to finalize the integration.

Applying the Model

The final steps for integration coincided with a planned curricular change in the undergraduate ANC program. Faculty found that the same practice of connecting mission to student outcomes used in model development provided structure and guidance moving into the new concept-based curriculum. The crosswalk made it easier to align concepts with program standards and visualize them within the sphere of the greater community. Having integration activities identified, leveled and mapped for each course decreased the burden on faculty preparing for upcoming courses. The structural components of the integration were finalized and implemented with the first cohort of students admitted under the new curriculum that is currently underway. Outcome measures were identified and operationalized for each of the activities.

An orientation seminar introduces students to Catholic Jesuit Ignatian history and foundation. During the seminar, the Ignatian charisms adopted by the College of Nursing are presented and linked to the ANA Code of Ethics. Students are introduced to spiritual assessment in their initial foundations course (both didactic and practicum) with application completed at multiple intervals during subsequent rotations. A Blessing of the Hands ceremony precedes the beginning of clinical experiences. Each subsequent semester includes a reflective writing exercise that asks students to explore their experiences from the perspective of their past, present and future professional development. The assignment is assessed using the undergraduate program reflective writing rubric. Spiritual assessment and reflective practice competency will be evaluated in the final capstone practicum through weekly preceptorship logs, their portfolio project and a

final engagement seminar. The purpose of the final seminar is to explore whether students perceive they can engage in reflective practice and provide spiritual care to self and their clients as professional nurses. The seminar will also serve as an opportunity to reinforce the fourth dimension of the model: connecting the context of nursing education to the broader, worldview of nursing as a profession.

The educator's role in modeling reflective practice requires ongoing development. ANC faculty hold short monthly "huddles" that include a 2-3-minute group reflection and a quick overview on the topic. Monthly meetings also provide an opportunity for a quick debrief on how reflective practice has been modeled in practicum settings. The team values these short but meaningful moments and recognizes faculty commitment to incorporating these practices is critical when educating future professional nurses to do the same. Because self-care is an important component of reflective practice, a presentation on "finding your sacred space" was provided at the annual faculty and staff retreat, and a national speaker on the topic is scheduled to present at our annual research day. The commitment of the college leadership remains constant and supports these ongoing efforts.

Notes

Future Directions

Longer-term integration planning is ongoing. As the first year reaches completion, the workgroup will evaluate activities and prepare summary documents. The successes and lessons learned will influence teaching strategies going forward. The task force views the integration as an iterative process that must adapt to changes in the academic landscape.

Further scholarship and dissemination opportunities may exist as the integration becomes increasingly embedded in our curriculum, outcome measures are evaluated, and processes are adapted. A text on reflective practice became a guide as the ANC Integrated Spirituality Model and its implementation moved from idea to action. It begins with the sentence "educators are agents of change."xvii The ANC faculty collectively set out to identify how and where spirituality was being taught within the curriculum. Along the way, learning occurred that was far greater than imagined, and faculty remain engaged and committed to integrating spirituality into the curriculum. The value of reflective practice is clearly identified as each member of the faculty seeks to become an educator who is an effective agent of change. Through the promotion of Jesuit values as a foundation, this can be incorporated into students' future professional practice. The integration model serves as a process guide to connect mission to student outcomes within the dimension of spirituality and spiritual care in nursing education.

¹ "Mission and Values," Creighton University College of Nursing, accessed July 14, 2017, https://nursing.creighton.edu/about/mission-and-values.

² Ibid.

³ Lisa Burkhart and William Schmidt, "Measuring Effectiveness of a Spiritual Care Pedagogy in Nursing Education," *Journal of Professional Nursing* 28, no. 5. (2012): 315, https://www.professionalnursing.org/article/88755-7223(12)00051-8/pdf.

^{4 &}quot;The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice," American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2008," accessed July 14, 2017, http://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/Publications/BaccEssentials08.pdf.

⁵ Christina Canfield, Debi Taylor, Kimberly Nagy, Claire Strauser, Karen VanKerkhove, Stephanie Wills, Patricia Sawicki, and Jeanne Sorrell, "Critical Care Nurses' Perceived Need for Guidance in Addressing Spirituality in Critically Ill Patients," American Journal of Critical Care 25, no. 3 (2016): 210.

⁶ "Higher Education—Learning What It Means to Provide Spiritual Care," American Nurses Association, 2017, http://www.theamericannurse.org/2016/11/01/higher-education/.

⁷ Burkhart and Schmidt, "Measuring Effectiveness of a Spiritual Care Pedagogy in Nursing Education," 320.

⁸ Ibid, 316.

⁹ Jean Christoffersen, "Teaching Accelerated Second-degree Nursing Students: Educators From Across the United States Share Their Wisdom," *Nursing Forum* 52, no. 2 (2017): 114.

- ¹⁴ Burkhart and Schmidt, "Measuring Effectiveness of a Spiritual Care Pedagogy in Nursing Education," 316.
- 15 Ibid, 320.
- ¹⁶ Karen Pennington, Judy Crewell, Traci Snedden, Margaret Mulhall, and Nicole Ellison, "<u>Ignatian Pedagogy: Transforming Nursing Education</u>," *Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal* 2, no. 1 (2013): article 6, 35.
- xvii Gwen Sherwood and Sara Horton-Deutsch. Reflective Practice: Transforming Education and Improving Outcomes (Indianapolis, IN: Sigma Theta Tau International, 2012), 3.

¹⁰ Charles Walker, Donna Scott Tilley, Suzanne Lockwood, and Mary Beth Walker, "An Innovative Approach to Accelerated Baccalaureate Education," *Nursing Education Perspectives* 29, no. 6 (2008): 348.

¹¹ Christoffersen, "Teaching Accelerated Second-degree Nursing Students," 113.

¹² Ibid, 116.

¹³ Victoria Bennett and Margo Thompson, "Teaching Spirituality to Student Nurses," *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice* 5, no. 2 (2015): 31.