

Reimagining our Curriculum: Graduate-Prepared Nurses Leading Inter-professional Efforts for Health Equity

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Abstract

Background/Introduction

As nurse educators navigate this strange "post-pandemic" phase, we must reimagine how to teach the social determinants of health to center those most impacted and to improve our inequitable health systems. Building on our accredited RN-to-BSN program, we are launching an innovative MSN program using an adapted model that has the potential to impact academic nursing for health equity advocacy.

Purpose

We will describe our innovative process in developing our population health foundation to prepare Nurse Leaders and Educators to shift from curative to palliative care and to center rural and underserved communities. In partnership with trusted community leaders and experts, we integrated personal and theoretical lessons to create our unique, place-based curriculum model. Our process has pushed us to reimagine beyond the Essentials.

Methods or Processes/Procedures

After conducting focus groups and surveys and reviewing the Social Determinants of Health: Nursing, Health Professions, and Interprofessional Education at a Crossroads (Barton et al., 2020), we synthesized a "Six A's" model: Awareness, Assessment, Assistance, Adjustment, Alignment, and Advocacy with the social-ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to infuse community-centered interprofessional systems practice. We "operationalized" the Six A's by cross-walking them with the core competencies for public health professionals (Council on Linkages, 2021), then mapping them with the AACN Essentials (2021).

Results

Our approach pushed us to articulate specific population health knowledge, skills, and attitudes for graduate-level nurse educators and leaders by identifying varying ecological levels of targeted change (e.g., cross-sector partnerships at the neighborhood, organizational, and policy levels). We are reimaging nursing education that is place-based, community-centered, and interprofessional.

Limitations

We are in the early implementation phase of course development. Evaluation of our processes and outcomes are forthcoming.

Conclusions/Implications for Practice

We are eager to share how our adapted model provided a heuristic tool for reimaging nursing education and designing our program in a way that centers communities, particularly the most marginalized.

Biography

Christine R. Espina, DNP, RN is an associate professor at Western Washington University's RN-to-BSN Program. Her specialty is population health nursing, and her vast scholarly interests include critical digital literacy and workforce development. As an educator, she envisions a healthcare workforce harnessing our collective power to create living conditions for health not just in the clinical setting but through systemic change. She serves on the Whatcom County Public Health Advisory Board, Whatcom Intergenerational High School Board, the Philippine Nurses Association of Oregon and Washington Chapter, and Healthy Whatcom as part of the county's Community Health Improvement Process.

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