

## Preparing Undergraduate Nursing and Midwifery Students for Culturally Competent Health Care: A Qualitative Study

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**Abstract :** Engendering cultural competence in nursing and midwifery students is germane to reducing disparities in contemporary health care settings, increasingly patronized by people from diverse background. Professional standards for registration in Australia require nurses and midwives to be culturally competent. Nursing and midwifery academics worldwide are responsible for preparing students for clinical practice, yet limited attention is paid to exploring how students are being prepared to care for a culturally diverse population. This paper provides insight into the perceptions of academics about how they are preparing undergraduate nursing and midwifery students for culturally competent health care. Academics were drawn from a tertiary educational institution in metropolitan Australia. They responded to a generic email indicating their interest in participating in the study. A total of nine academics who have taught undergraduate nursing and midwifery students in a unit that focused on health and illness perspectives for culturally diverse communities; and provided written consent to participate were included. These academics were engaged in a qualitative digitally-recorded semi-structured face-to-face or telephone interviews which lasted for about 45-60 minutes. Interview data were transcribed verbatim. Through constant comparison, three themes emerged: experiences of the teachers, strategies used for preparing students and challenges in preparing students. The participants spoke about their experiences of teaching in the unit and with the students. They faced challenges related to physical and relational space. They utilised a number of didactic approaches in teaching the unit and critiqued the adequacy of the content in preparing students for practice. This study demonstrated that didactic classroom approaches need to be supported with clinical practice and cultural immersion for a meaningful preparation of nursing and midwifery students to care for culturally diverse populations.

**Keywords :** cultural competence, nursing students, preparation, undergraduate

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