

## Developing Cultural Competence as Part of Nursing Studies: Language, Customs and Health Issues

**Authors :** Mohammad Khatib, Salam Hadid

**Abstract :** Introduction: Developing nurses' cultural competence begins in their basic training and requires them to participate in an array of activities which raise their awareness and stimulate their interest, desire and curiosity about different cultures, by creating opportunities for intercultural meetings promoting the concept of 'culture' and its components, including recognition of cultural diversity and the legitimacy of the other. Importantly, professionals need to acquire specific cultural knowledge and thorough understanding of the values, norms, customs, beliefs and symbols of different cultures. Similarly, they need to be given opportunities to practice the verbal and non-verbal communication skills of other cultures according to their cultural codes. Such a system is being implemented as part of nursing studies at Zefat Academic College in two study frameworks; firstly, a course integrating nursing theory and practice in multicultural nursing; secondly, a course in learning the languages spoken in Israel focusing on medical and nursing terminology. Methods: Students participating in the 'Transcultural Nursing' course come from a variety of backgrounds: Jews, or Arabs, religious, or secular; Muslim, Christian, new immigrants, Ethiopians or from other cultural affiliations. They are required to present and discuss cultural practices that affect health. In addition, as part of the language course, students learn and teach their friends 5 spoken languages (Arabic, Russian, Amharic, Yiddish, and Sign language) focusing on therapeutic interaction and communication using the vocabulary and concepts necessary for the therapeutic encounter. An evaluation of the process and the results was done using a structured questionnaire which includes series of questions relating to the contributions of the courses to their cultural knowledge, awareness and skills. 155 students completed the questionnaire. Results: A preliminary assessment of this educational system points an increase in cultural awareness and knowledge among the students as well as in their willingness to recognize the other's difference. A positive atmosphere of multiculturalism is reflected in students' mutual interest and respect was created. Students showed a deep understanding of cultural issues relating to health and care (consanguinity and genetics, food customs; cultural events, reincarnation, traditional treatments etc.). Most of the students were willing to recommend the courses to others and suggest some changes relating learning methods (more simulations, role playing and activities).

**Keywords :** cultural competence, nursing education, culture, language

**Conference Title :** ICN 2016 : International Conference on Nursing

**Conference Location :** London, United Kingdom

**Conference Dates :** September 29-30, 2016