

**Title:**

End-of-Life Education in Context: Assessing Faculty and Student Characteristics for Educational Research

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**Session Title:**

Perceptions of End-of-Life Care in the Nursing Profession

**Slot:**

E 11: Sunday, 29 October 2017: 4:15 PM-5:00 PM

**Scheduled Time:**

4:15 PM

**Keywords:**

description of a research sample, education research and end-of-life education

**References:**

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2015a). End-of-life nursing education consortium (ELNEC). Retrieved from <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/elnecc/about/fact-sheet>

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2015b). End-of-life nursing education consortium core curriculum. Relias Learning.

Pfitzinger, M. E. (2016, June 21). Evaluating baccalaureate curriculum end-of-life care content based upon End of Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) guidelines (Thesis). University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX. Retrieved from <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/39604>

**Abstract Summary:**

The purpose of the presentation is to describe the faculty and student characteristics to assess when conducting research on end-of-life education. A literature review was conducted to identify key characteristics to assess. Application and outcomes for a dissertation study will be presented.

**Learning Activity:**

<b>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</b>
The learner will be able to identify key characteristics of faculty members and students to assess for research studies focused on end-of-life education.	Faculty Characteristics: years of teaching experience (overall and in baccalaureate programs), years of clinical practice experience, frequency of provision of palliative and end-of-life care in clinical practice, certifications, ELNEC training, and palliative and end-of-life care research focus (if applicable) Student Characteristics: age (interval level), semester of enrollment, courses enrolled in, course repetition (yes/no), religion (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim,

	Hindu, Atheist, None, Other, Prefer not to Answer), previous end-of-life care education (previous course, content in other courses, none), previous experience with the death of a loved one/friend/pet, previous experience caring for a dying loved one/friend/pet, and previous experience with caring for dying patients
The learner will be able to discuss the faculty and student characteristic outcomes from a dissertation study assessing end-of-life content integration within a baccalaureate nursing program.	Study results (faculty and student characteristics) and impact on EOL content integration.
The learner will be able to describe how the faculty and student characteristic outcomes of the dissertation study provided a context for describing the baccalaureate program.	Specific discussion of the lack of faculty member formal EOL expertise and the omission of content focused on dying process. Additional focus on student prior experiences with death and student perceived competence and attitudes toward caring for dying patients.

**Abstract Text:**

**Purpose:** In educational research, characteristics of student samples are frequently reported; however, characteristics of the faculty members are seldom reported. Both faculty member and student sample characteristics offer valuable data to contextualize the findings of the study. For example, information describing the level of experience of faculty members might help explain the success or failure of the teaching strategy being utilized. The presentation has three primary purposes: 1) Discuss process of identifying critically important faculty and student characteristics from existing literature to guide study design; 2) Examine results of educational evaluation study in the context of faculty & student characteristics; and 3) Explore the implications of using faculty & student characteristics to interpret study findings.

**Methods:** The Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model was used to guide a detailed evaluation of end-of-life care content integration within a baccalaureate nursing program. The first step (context) will be described in this presentation. For the context evaluation of the model, faculty and student characteristics needed to be assessed. In order to identify which characteristics were critical to assess, a review of end-of-life educational literature was conducted. PubMed, ERIC, CINAHL, PsychInfo and EbscoHost databases were searched for relevant articles. Any article in which student and/or faculty member characteristics were assessed or discussed in relation to end-of-life education was included in the review. A total of 24 articles about student characteristics and 9 about faculty member characteristics were included in the final review. A synthesis of the literature resulted in the identification of 9 student and 6 faculty member characteristic that were critical in evaluating end-of-life education. Student characteristics included were: age (interval level), semester of enrollment, courses enrolled in, course repetition (yes/no), religion (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Atheist, None, Other, Prefer not to Answer), previous end-of-life care education (previous course, content in other courses, none), previous experience with the death of a loved one/friend/pet, previous experience caring for a dying loved one/friend/pet, and previous experience with caring for dying patients. Faculty member characteristics included were: years of teaching experience (overall and in baccalaureate programs), years of clinical practice experience, frequency of provision of palliative and end-of-life care in clinical practice, certifications, ELNEC training, and palliative and end-of-life care research focus (if applicable).

These characteristics were assessed with demographic questionnaires. The demographic questionnaires were administered to 42 faculty members and over 350 students

**Results:** Findings from the demographic surveys provided a detailed description of the students and faculty members within the baccalaureate program evaluated and helped to contextualize results of the other measures within the study. The 32 faculty members sampled were experienced nurses with a mean of 17.98 years ( $SD= 11.12$ , range 3-44 years) of clinical practice experience and 11.38 years ( $SD=11.2$ , range 1-40 years) of teaching experience. However, only three faculty members had formal training in end-of-life care, and 12.2% reported having research areas either moderately or strongly related to end-of-life care. Detailed assessment of the baccalaureate curriculum revealed that topics related to final hours of life, loss/grief/bereavement, and topics of palliative care were the least integrated within the curriculum. The faculty members' limited expertise with end-of-life care can help to explain the limited integration of these topics into the curriculum. In the student sample ( $n=176$ ), 81.82% reported experiencing at least one loved one/friend death/pet death, and 37.32% reported experiencing at least one patient death prior to or during the semester. Assessments of perceived competence in caring for dying patients revealed high overall perceived competence. Student's prior experiences with death, even for freshman students, could provide an explanation for the high perceived competence across all students enrolled in the program.

**Conclusion:** The results of a literature review allowed for the identification of the critical characteristics to assess to provide a rich description of the study sample. Assessing student and faculty member characteristics relevant to end-of-life care education can provide beneficial contextual explanations for the outcomes of research as well as describing the sample. These faculty member and student characteristics should be incorporated into future end-of-life educational research in order to provide consistent measurement across studies. Assessing these critical characteristic elements will also allow for greater confidence in generalizing findings to other baccalaureate nursing programs.