

Expanding Diversity: Disability Related Competency Development for BSN Curricula

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Introduction/Background

Worldwide, 15% of the population lives with a disability, making it the largest minority group in the world.¹ In 2010, 20% of the US population reported a disability.² People with Disabilities (PWD) have poorer health outcomes, including higher rates of early death, chronic diseases, and disparities in preventive screenings.³

To improve the health and healthcare of PWD, the next generation of nurses must be equipped to care for individuals with disabilities across the life span. However, there are no published undergraduate nursing competencies on caring for PWD.

Nursing schools have traditionally assumed that care for people with disabilities has been addressed as part of their overall curriculum. A generic approach fails to recognize the unique needs of the population, the heterogeneity of the individuals, and the complexity of their care, thus contributing to the unconscionable inequities in health and healthcare that exist between individuals with and without disabilities.

Purpose

- ❖ To address the gap in BSN education to better prepare undergraduate nursing students to provide competent care to people with disabilities (PWD)
- ❖ To generate consensus on a set of undergraduate nursing competencies to care for PWD.



Methods

The study utilized a mixed-method non-experimental Delphi survey design. The survey included 43 competencies in 3 domains: Knowledge (13), Attitude (11), and Skills (19). Each domain was divided into four sections: physiologic, communication, environment, and referral. Competencies were rated by experts in the field of disability health on a 5- point Likert scale according to relevancy. The survey was administered online using the *Qualtrics* platform.

Sample

Experts were identified through their research, publications, organizational affiliations, or mutual contacts. 64 nursing faculty, administrators, researchers, advocates and PWD were invited to participate. 73% of invitees completed Round 1.

- 95% female
- 85% white
- 73% did not have a disability

Top three areas of specialty: nursing education, adult health, and advocacy.

Results

- Internal consistency across all items: $\alpha = .959$
- By combining *very relevant* and *extremely relevant*, all but three Skill competencies reached a predetermined consensus of 70%.
- Mean Value of each competency indicated endorsability (range: 3.83 to 4.87). Two Skill competencies had means below 4.0.
- Variability of rater responses and participant comments are being analyzed.

Conclusions

The scholar demonstrated educational and administrative leadership through:

- ❖ recognizing a systemic programmatic gap in pre-licensure education and health care delivery to PWD
- ❖ developing and implementing an evidenced-based methodological research study
- ❖ partnering with a network of consultants and stakeholders
- ❖ disseminating study outcomes at professional and educational conferences
- ❖ ongoing advocacy for innovative changes in BSN curriculum and
- ❖ joining the Alliance for Disability in Health Care Education, Inc., an interdisciplinary organization dedicated to integrating disability-related content and experiences into health care education and training programs.

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