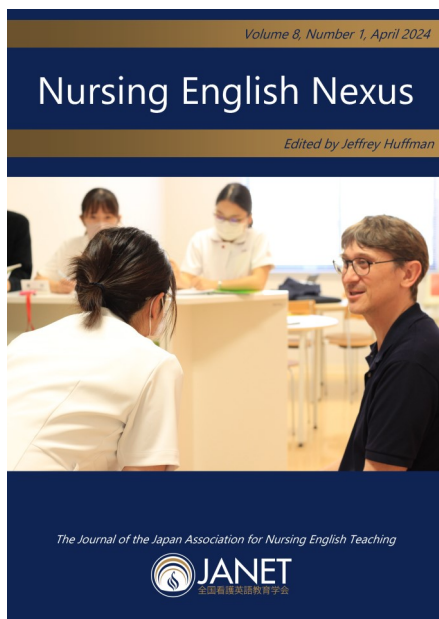


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Incorporating International Education into a Nursing Skills Laboratory

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The Imperative of International Education for Nursing Students

According to recent statistics provided by the Immigration Services Agency (2024), the population of foreign residents in Japan surpassed 3.22 million at the end of June 2023, hitting a record high. Therefore, it is imperative that each future nurse in Japan possesses a robust understanding of multicultural patient care. As a result, numerous nursing educational institutions have started improving their English-language education initiatives.

In light of this, IMS (*Imusu*) Yokohama International Nursing School in Kanagawa Prefecture implemented a unique approach involving collaboration between international nursing education and English education in a nursing skills laboratory (hereafter, "skills lab"). Starting in the 2022 academic year, the school has introduced a new curriculum framework consisting of three pedagogical approaches called "3+one": 1) promotion of ICT education, 2) enhancement of simulation education, 3) international nursing education, and the "+one" is a seminar that stimulates the students' spirit of inquiry (IMS Yokohama International Nursing School, 2023). The international nursing education component aims not only to improve the students' English communication skills, but also to give each student the ability to care for patients of diverse backgrounds and languages in various multicultural health care settings.

International Education Class

To implement the international nursing education component of the new curriculum, the school has

developed an International Education class where students learn English, cultural differences, and nursing skills in the same setting. In this class, skills lab teachers and international nursing teachers collaborate to teach the students. International nursing teachers are individuals who have practiced nursing overseas or gained experience in caring for foreign patients in Japan, and who can teach both cultural considerations and English. In 2023, 90-minute International Education classes were offered six times for first-year students and once for second-year students. Each class varies in terms of the clinical content and skills targeted, but the following is an example of the flow of the blood sugar measurement class designed for second-year students.

Description of International Education Class on the Topic of Blood Sugar Measurement

By way of advance preparation, students learn about blood sugar measurement in class in advance and prepare for the procedure in Japanese. For the first half of the 90-minute class, the students, in uniform, are divided into groups of 4–5 in the skills lab room and practice blood sugar measurement in Japanese under the supervision of the skills lab teacher, with the students taking on the roles of both the patients and the nurses. In the second half of the class, the international nursing teacher gives a 20-minute lecture on English phrases used in blood sugar measurement, along with relevant cultural considerations. For example, they learn phrases such as "I will measure your blood sugar level. Have you ever done it before?" If it is the patient's

first time, they are encouraged to show the equipment and explain the process using simple English words and gestures. The international nursing teacher informs them that Muslim women do not show their skin to men who are not family members, and that in some cultures people do not like to have their bodies touched. Therefore, they learn to ask permission first, such as, "May I touch your (body parts)?"

Both the skills lab teacher and the international nursing teacher emphasize that the priority in English communication for nurses is not to use English phrases perfectly, but to alleviate patient anxiety and to provide safe and comfortable nursing care. In the following 20 minutes, the students role-play as English-speaking patients and nurses. The specifics of the scenario are not provided; only the patient's name (Mohammed) is given. The students are required to imagine the cultural background of the patient and navigate communication on their own. In the last few minutes of the class, each group reflects on and shares their experience with each other.

Significance of Role-Playing Practice in Skills Lab

These International Education classes can be evaluated as effective teaching methods via discussion of the following points.

Prior Learning in the Native Language

In this class, students engage in role-plays in the lab after undergoing prior learning in their own language. This is an important factor in communicating confidently in English. For example, learning the flow beforehand will assist students in executing the sequence correctly and prevents them from opening the alcohol pad sachet before asking, "Do you have an allergy to rubbing alcohol?"

According to a study at Yokohama City University School of Nursing, after acquiring knowledge and skills in vital sign measurement, students role-played with mock foreign patients

(who are their English teachers), and more than 60% of the students' self-evaluations and those of the mock patients were in agreement that the activity was effective. This suggests that by first acquiring solid knowledge and skills, and then conducting role-playing activities with the patient's cultural needs in mind, both parties (patient and nurse) were able to have a satisfactory experience (Ochiai et al., 2017).

Active Learning

In this class, students engage in role-plays without scenarios, requiring them to imagine the patient's background and navigate the conversation on their own. This is a style of active learning, and there is research on the effects of active learning for nursing students.

Ishida and Nakamoto (2020) found a strong morphological association between the words "consider/think" and "patient" when analyzing worksheets submitted after an active learning activity for nursing students. This indicates that the activity encourages students to consider the feelings of the patient and develop empathy, which helps nurses to "put themselves in the subject's shoes and be aware of the subject's needs." Active learning can therefore be said to enhance empathy towards patients and cultivate multicultural competencies of nursing students.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that students have a very limited amount of class time at a three-year nursing school, this collaboration between skills lab teachers and international nursing teachers enables provision of efficient classes where students can acquire comprehensive multicultural competencies. Alternatively, English teachers themselves could play the role of mock foreign patients in the skills lab setting. Another variation would be having the students conduct a role-play in a general English class just after the students have learned the relevant skill in skills lab. A more

synergistic effect can be expected if interdisciplinary collaboration like this can be implemented.

Although similar approaches may already be underway at other universities, I hope this case study will provide additional ideas to enhance nursing English education.

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