

Integrated Nursing Access Program

Jurisdiction: Newfoundland and Labrador

Contact: Susan Gordon

Level: Post-Secondary

Theme: Curriculum/materials

Description of Practice:

The Integrated Nursing Access Program (INAP) provides the opportunity for Labrador Inuit interested in a career in nursing to study in a community based program for the first two years of a 5-year program. Students who successfully completed the two and a half year INAP program at the Labrador-based Happy Valley-Goose Bay campus of College of the North Atlantic carry on the Year 2 of the BN Collaborative program at the College and then move to the Western Regional School of Nursing (WRON) in Corner Brook to complete Years 3 and 4. WRON is a west coast based school offering a BN program in conjunction with Memorial University.

INAP Description

The Integrated Nursing Access Program is described as an integrated, case-based, culturally relevant program that focuses on the development of learning skills for a university environment rather than on content specific learning. The emphasis is on facilitation of teaching and learning outcomes, as they pertain to both knowledge acquisition and skill development, in an environment that allows students opportunities for reflection and self-discovery.

Integrated: This program integrates the components required for entrance into and completion of Year I of the BN (Collaborative) Program. That is, the pre-requisite knowledge (from high-school courses and/or adult basic education courses) and the requisite knowledge [from the Year I courses of the BN (Collaborative) Program] have been deconstructed into their simplest elements and critically analyzed. Subsequently, this knowledge has been reconstructed around five key foci (language usage, aspects of telling stories, aspects of counting, our bodies and the environment, our beliefs and practices). This reconstructed knowledge has then been organized and presented in a series of eight modules that comprise the essence of the Integrated Nursing Access Program.

Case-based: The series of modules contains a number of case studies about an Inuit woman named Maggie. These cases are examples of further cases to be used, that set the stage for personal reflection and group discussion. The questions contained within the case studies are designed to encourage students to interpret their learned knowledge within the context of their own experiences and to share their knowledge and interpretations with one another. This case-based approach serves as the foundation for operationalizing the phenomenological approach alluded to in the description of this program.

Culturally relevant: The series of modules also contains a number of suggested culturally relevant approaches for facilitating knowledge acquisition and skill development. All of these approaches (for example collage constructions, oral or written assignments, tutorial sessions, case-study analysis, discussion forums) were specifically designed to promote shared respect for individual=s ways of knowing and for the Inuit culture including its health beliefs, traditional practices, and language needs. At the andragogical root of every suggested activity related to the teaching and learning outcomes in this program is an overt recognition of and an appreciation for the value of a culturally relevant education.

Background:

In March 2002, at the request of the Labrador Inuit Association and the Labrador Inuit Health Commission, representatives from these two organizations and other key stakeholders including the College of the North Atlantic (CNA) and Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) met to discuss the possible development and delivery of a nursing access program for the Labrador Inuit. This request occurred in response to the current shortage of Inuit nurse in Labrador (at any given time, about one-half of the public health nursing positions are vacant in Labrador Inuit communities), a perceived worsening situation in the not too distant future and a recognition that Labrador Inuit who wish to pursue careers in nursing face significant challenges. One major obstacle is a lack of preparation in science (chemistry in particular) and mathematics. As well, the prospect of leaving family and friends in the community is intimidating for many residents of northern coastal communities and those who leave to attend university often find the transition difficult.

Development:

The Integrated Nursing Access Program was developed between January and October 2003 by a program team with representatives from CNA, MUN and WRON. Nineteen interested Inuit individuals were also personally interviewed to determine their learning needs and problem solving strategies, and to identify any negative and/or positive aspects of learning they might have experienced in the past.

It is well recognized that multiple factors may interfere with the learning process. All potential participants were assessed for any physiological health problems that might interfere with their learning abilities before the program began. This allowed sufficient time for any interventions required to be incorporated.

In addition to assessing potential health problems, quantitative and qualitative tools were used to identify how potential INAP participants learn.

Interested participants for the program completed two tools:

1. Guglielmino's Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale for Adults with Low Reading Levels or Non-native English Speakers
2. Buczynski's Paper-and-Pencil Measure of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberge and Tarule's (1986) Conceptual Model of Women's Ways-of-Knowing Instrument

Both tools were assessed for content validity by asking Labrador Inuit Association members to review wording for its appropriateness. Revisions to the tools were made based on expert suggestions. The tools were completed by interviewing each potential participant and completing the instruments. Interviews were conducted by one of the Access Program Developers. In addition each of the interested Inuit was interviewed to determine how they prefer to learn something new and about their past experience in a formal learning situation. As an outcome, key themes emerged that helped to shape the Access Program. These themes related to how individuals learn now and what barriers previous learning might pose to their success.

The National Task Force on Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Aboriginal Nurses stressed the need for innovative curricular programming that recognizes the unique challenges facing Aboriginals who wish to pursue a career in nursing. To this end, the Integrated Nursing Access Program was developed using a humanistic, phenomenological

approach in which teachers suspend their mindsets and allow students to define their learning within the context of their own experiences.

From a content perspective, the development process combined the adult basic education content with the first year BN (Collaborative) content, thereby blending high school and university level material, eliminating duplication and enabling learners to begin developing university skills from the outset of the program.

Once the necessary content was clearly identified, developers then related this content to the world the learners live in, thus providing clear applicability of what they are learning to real-life situations with which they are familiar. This approach was further enriched by the stories provided by learners during the interview process. The educators used these stories to shape the learning in each of the eight modules that form INAP.

At the same time, the development process focussed on the acquisition of learning skills specific to a university environment. The skills identified were: (1) asking questions in class, (2) participating in discussion group, (3) presentation of materials, (4) development of arguments around topics, (5) doing literature reviews, (6) referencing literature in papers, and (7) writing scholarly papers. Developers recognized that these skills would be developed over time and three distinct levels were identified.

The content was subsumed within the learning skill acquisition and the end result was a series of eight modules. They are (1) The person that I am: The nurse I want to become, (2) Beginning knowledge of our bodies, (3) Body tissues and internal systems: How the body works, (4) More about the profession of nursing and its practices, (5) Beginning the practice of nursing, (6) Complex interactions within the body, (7) Becoming a professional: Conceptualizing and integrating concepts, and (8) Applying and integrating theory through the practice of nursing.

Program Supports

As a condition for receiving approval for delivery and in an effort to optimize success in this innovative program, the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland & Labrador requested a detailed plan for supporting these future nurses during their education. A Mentoring and Support Plan was prepared to meet this requirement and it incorporates several best practices which were identified in "Against the Odds: Aboriginal Nursing". Some of these best practices are specific to support, mentoring and nurturing aboriginal nurses while they are completing their education. The identified best practices include; 1) daycare support that includes the extended hours of clinical placements, 2) housing support and assistance, 3) budgeting advice and support, 4) personal counselling and mentoring, and 5) academic support.

Evidence:

Of the nineteen students who initially started the program, 12 remain. Academically, the science-heavy curriculum has challenged a number of students. As ages of students range from early 20s to mid 40s, others have been challenged by personal and/or family issues. However, program administrators are hopeful that those that remain have developed the skills and attitudes to see the program to their programs to a successful conclusion.

Adaptability:

The development process and partnerships have significant potential for replication. It is anticipated that other occupations such as social work can benefit from an integrated program approach.

Further information:

Further information about the Integrated Nursing Access Program is available by contacting Campus Administration at the College of the North Atlantic, Happy Valley-Goose Bay campus.