

Enhancing Spanish Proficiency and Cultural Competency in Nursing Students to Improve Patient Outcomes and Reduce Health Disparities through Simulation and Tech-Based Learning

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BACKGROUND

- Effective communication and cultural competency are essential for improving patient outcomes and reducing health disparities.
- Simulation education has emerged as a valuable tool for enhancing cultural competence in healthcare.
- Simulation provides nursing students with an opportunity to practice communication in a controlled environment, bridging the gap between language learning and practical application.
- An innovative elective course was designed using scaffolding simulations, cultural competency concepts, and technology-based Spanish-language learning tools.
 - The scaffolding simulations offer step-by-step guidance, allowing students to build their skills progressively.
 - Cultural competency concepts are woven throughout the curriculum to ensure students understand the importance of culturally sensitive care.
 - Technology-based tools, such as language learning apps and virtual patient interactions, provide immersive and interactive learning experiences.
- Participants completed a demographic survey and pre-post test.
- Results indicate this innovative approach contributes to increased student Spanish proficiency level, confidence, and engagement with Spanish-speaking patients.
- Scaffolding simulations and cultural competency concepts could improve patient outcomes while addressing the ethical considerations associated with caring for LEP patients.



OBJECTIVES

- Integrate core values and knowledge from the sciences and humanities to provide holistic nursing care of Spanish-speaking and Limited-English Proficiency clients
- Develop essential skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to function as a professional nurse caring for the Spanish-speaking and Limited-English Proficiency clients
- Apply knowledge of resources available for interpretation and effective communication in order to provide high-quality healthcare to Spanish-speaking and Limited-English Proficiency clients
- Demonstrate foundational Spanish-language skills which supports future nursing advocacy regarding legal, ethical, and technology issues related to the care of Spanish-speaking and Limited-English Proficiency clients

MATERIALS & METHODS

The course is delivered in a hybrid format, combining in-class activities, guest speakers, and simulations with asynchronous components, such as the use of the mobile language learning application and online modules, writing assignments, and discussion boards that focus on improving cultural competency.

Simulation

- Occurs bi-weekly using high-fidelity patient simulator or standardized patient (SP) fluent in Spanish
- Prefaced with prebriefing, including expectations and statement of confidentiality
- Focuses on common primary patient complaints, i.e., abdominal pain, shortness of breath, and chest pain
- Emphasizes improving language proficiency and vocabulary
- Conducting by students performing a head-to-toe assessment as primary nurse
- Scaffolded to increase difficulty level for each student throughout the semester, motivating students to increase proficiency and vocabulary to meet patient's needs
- Conclude with debriefing, including self-reflections and peer, instructor, and, if applicable, SP feedback

Mobile Language Learning Application: Duolingo

- Required daily practice or six hours of cumulative learning for duration of course
- Accommodates various proficiency levels and ensures accessibility for all students

Cultural Competency

- Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Nursing e-learning program sponsored by Department of Health and Human Services "Think Cultural Health" initiative
 - Provides resources and tools, including training modules and case studies, to enhance cultural competence among healthcare professionals and address cultural and linguistic disparities in healthcare
 - Based on National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care
- Cultural Sensibility in Healthcare: A Personal & Professional Guidebook* (Fletcher, 2015)
 - Readings serve as basis for discussion board topics
- Learn Medical Spanish in 100 Days* (Touri Language Learning, 2020)
 - Terminology and patient/provider scripts used for improving healthcare-specific vocabulary



Assessment

- Formative reflection assignments post-bi-weekly simulations
 - Reflect on debriefing feedback, strengths, and opportunities for improvement
 - Provide documentation of the students' presenting proficiency and opportunity for students to create individual action plans to improve their performance and confidence
- Summative reflection assignment post-final simulation
 - Reflect on individual progress over the course of the semester by summarizing their progression

Data Collection

- Demographic tool
- Pre-post survey
- Spanish Proficiency Survey

Pre-Survey Questions

1. What is your level of Spanish proficiency prior to NURS 4120: Beginning Spanish for Nurses?

- a. None
- b. Basic
- c. Fair
- d. Advanced
- e. Proficient

2. How confident are you in your ability to speak Spanish?

- a. No confidence
- b. A little confidence
- c. Some confidence
- d. Confidence
- e. High confidence

3. What was your exposure to Spanish prior to NURS 4120: Beginning Spanish for Nurses?

- a. None
- b. Minimal
- c. Moderate
- d. Extensive

4. What was your source of exposure to Spanish prior to NURS 4120: Beginning Spanish for Nurses?

- a. Music
- b. Television
- c. Family
- d. Friends
- e. Movies
- f. Travel
- g. Study abroad
- h. Self-study
- i. Formal education
- j. Simulation
- k. Computer/games

Pre-Survey Questions (cont.)

5. Had you been exposed to medical Spanish terminology prior to NURS 4120: Beginning Spanish for Nurses?

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. What was your source of exposure to medical Spanish terminology?

- a. Music
- b. Television
- c. Family
- d. Friends
- e. Movies
- f. Travel
- g. Study abroad
- h. Self-study
- i. Formal education
- j. Simulation
- k. Computer/games

7. What is your current level of engagement with Spanish-speaking patients?

- a. None
- b. Some of the time
- c. Most of the time
- d. All of the time

8. Where do you currently engage with Spanish-speaking patients the most?

- a. Non-clinical experiences
- b. Clinical experiences

Post-Survey Questions

1. What is your level of Spanish proficiency following NURS 4120: Beginning Spanish for Nurses?

- a. None
- b. Basic
- c. Fair
- d. Advanced
- e. Proficient

2. How confident are you in your ability to speak Spanish?

- a. No confidence
- b. A little confidence
- c. Some confidence
- d. Confidence
- e. High confidence

3. What is your current level of engagement with Spanish-speaking patients?

- a. None
- b. Some of the time
- c. Most of the time
- d. All of the time

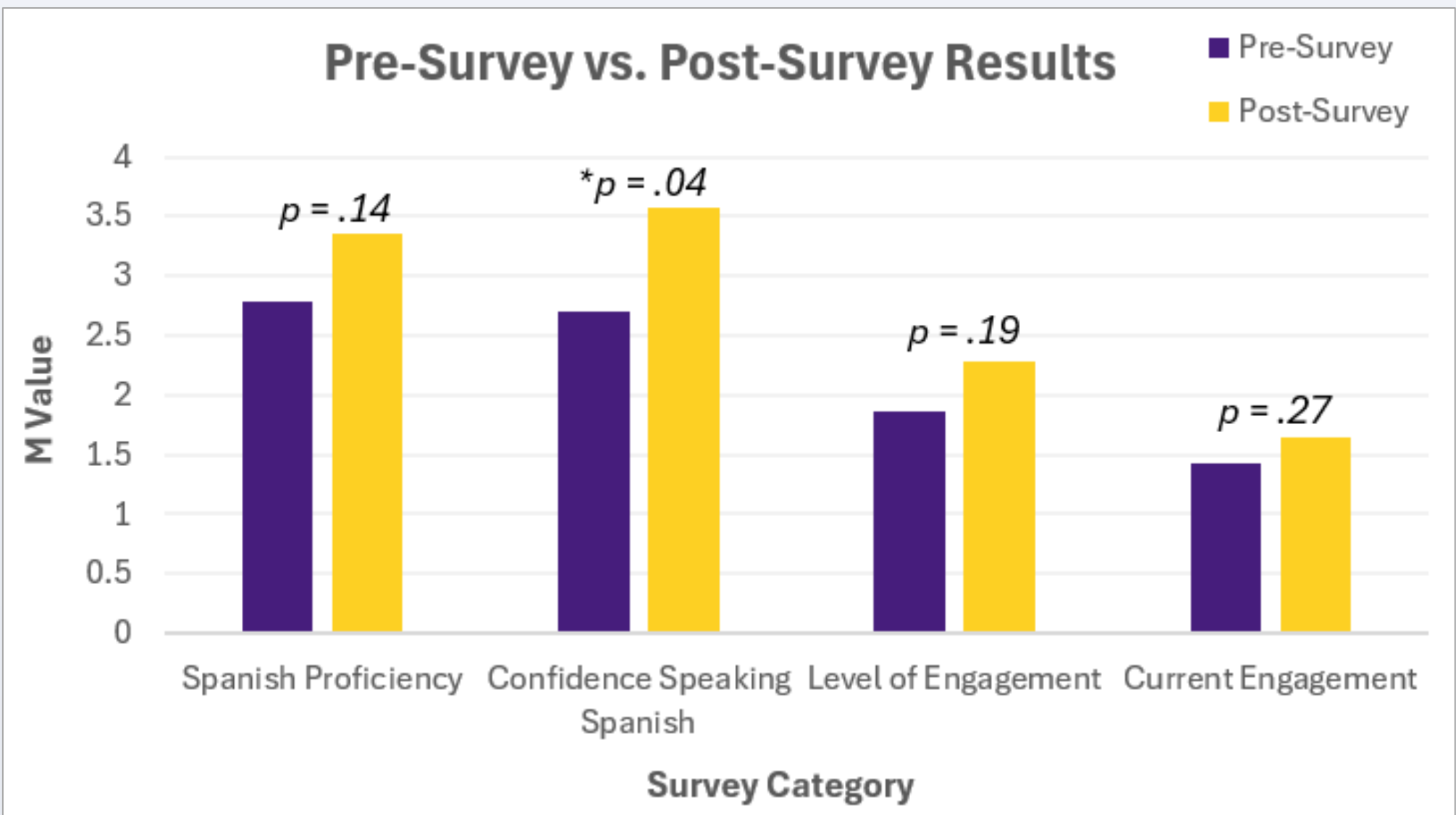
4. Where do you currently engage with Spanish-speaking patients the most?

- a. Non-clinical experiences
- b. Clinical experiences



RESULTS

Most participants (n=14) were female (72%), white (31%), non-Hispanic (57%), and aged 26 years on average.



CONCLUSIONS

- Course evaluation consistently reflects high student satisfaction with learning and course outcomes, averaging 3.9 out of 4.0.
- Students report high satisfaction with the simulation practice, integrating foundational nursing practices and Spanish language, and increased confidence in using language skills and advanced communication techniques in the clinical setting.
- Evaluations reveal the students' perceived importance of bilingual and advanced communication techniques in the hospital care environment, as well as the desire for more opportunities to explore culturally competent nursing in relation to patient care and comfort.
- Long-term outcomes focus on improving patient care, fostering cultural and linguistic competence, and advocating for appropriate healthcare resources for Spanish-speaking patients.



REFERENCES

By Request

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