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Fundamentals of nursing practice and the culturally diverse esl nursing students: the students' perspectives for teaching and learning in nursing

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English as-a-Second Language (ESL) nursing students who enroll in the Fundamentals of Nursing Practice course have been known to experience multiple challenges in nursing programs around the country. The central challenge ESL students experience is acclimating to the American education system; a system which differs from the education system in their countries of origin. This results in a high attrition rate, particularly in the Fundamentals of Nursing Practice course which is the entry level course. This study explored the experiences and challenges of a group of culturally diverse ESL nursing students in an Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program in the Northeast United States, who passed the course. The purpose of the study was to uncover what helped the participants succeed. The goal was to utilize the participants' recommendations to improve the teaching and learning needs of ESL nursing students, and to reduce high attrition rate. A descriptive phenomenological approach, utilizing bracketing, was used to explore the challenges the participants experienced. The common challenges encountered by the participants were: language barriers, a lack of faculty support and mentorship, difficulty with teaching and learning styles, and a lack of critical thinking and application skills. Also, difficulty with concepts and applications in clinical practice, and racism and discrimination in the learning environment were contributors to their learning challenges. Findings showed that language barrier was particularly detrimental when it came to the participants' reading, comprehension, and communication. Further findings encompassed the knowledge deficit about critical thinking, concepts, and application of concepts in clinical practice. Additional findings revealed that the participants struggled to balance school, work, and the challenges of being an immigrant; all of which effected their learning.