

Accepted Manuscript

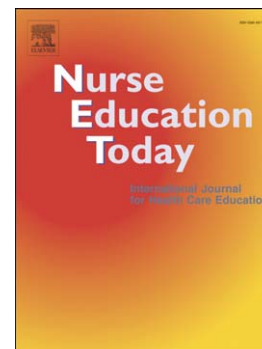
Framework for a virtual nursing faculty and student learning collaboration between Universities in Sweden and the United States: A theoretical paper

Monne Wihlborg, Elizabeth Friberg

PII: S0260-6917(16)00118-0
DOI: doi: [10.1016/j.nedt.2016.03.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2016.03.012)
Reference: YNEDT 3237

To appear in: *Nurse Education Today*

Received date: 24 June 2015
Revised date: 4 February 2016
Accepted date: 16 March 2016



Please cite this article as: Wihlborg, Monne, Friberg, Elizabeth, Framework for a virtual nursing faculty and student learning collaboration between Universities in Sweden and the United States: A theoretical paper, *Nurse Education Today* (2016), doi: [10.1016/j.nedt.2016.03.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2016.03.012)

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Introduction

Two universities from different countries (Sweden and the United States) and their nursing faculty focused on creating a credit-bearing student learning experience. Nursing education is housed in higher education in both countries. This faculty collaboration required the development of a pedagogical framework for the assignment. Faculty investigated several key concepts based on their mutual interest in internationalising their respective curriculum. These concepts are collaboration, internationalisation and modern technology. The pedagogical theoretic framework for this initiative is largely based on our integration of concepts related to collaboration and is therefore the primary focus of this discussion.

Collaboration in promoting internationalisation in higher education can take many different forms. In this paper we focus on the pedagogical framework for a team collaboration involving nursing faculty and students from Sweden and United States. The virtual learning environment and learning activities were constructed using the Web-based learning platform Moodle. The theme of the initiative was ‘internationalisation on home plan’ opening international collaborative learning for all students, including students who do not participate in study abroad (mobility opportunities). Thus, the majority of students can participate in forms of collaborative learning activities and develop an understanding of cultural awareness. The learning activity was framed as ‘nursing profession and internationalisation’ and the learning objective focused on ‘patient safety’.

The aims and purposes of the faculty and student virtual collaboration initiative were multidimensional and concerned: (1) student nurse’s deeper learning about patient safety through collaborative learning and virtual international exchanges, (2) student’s enhanced understanding in making differences and similarities visible concerning interpretations of, and approaches to, patient safety, (3) internationalisation for all ‘on home plan’ [not studying abroad], (4) construction of a collaborative learning community focused on undergraduate nursing education between two faculty units, at universities in Sweden and the United States, (5) the ambition to construct a model that promotes internationalisation in learning practices, and (6) social interaction that enhances the idea of global citizenship by fostering both faculty and student international collaboration.

Internationalisation of education policy and higher education are among the most significant forces affecting universities in the Western world today. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2014) reports that the number of students studying outside their country of citizenship has increased fivefold over the last three decades with 4.5 million students enrolled in higher education outside their home country in 2012. But internationalisation is not limited to student mobility or even the increasing importance of distance delivery across national borders. Knight (2003, pp. 2-3) has defined internationalisation as: “The process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education”. This definition suggests a deep-reaching systemic change concerning internationalisation of higher education, as well as the generation, adaptation and diffusion of knowledge. Internationalisation is then much more than student/teacher mobility.

Modern technology artifacts or social constructions such as the internet and modern media technology (Skype, Abode Connect, learning platforms such as Moodle, Its’ Learning,

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