

From needs analysis to curriculum development: Designing a course in health-care communication for immigrant students in the USA.

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Volume 21, Issue 1, 2002, Pages 59-79

From needs analysis to curriculum development: designing a course in health-care communication for immigrant students in the USA

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906\(01\)00002-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906(01)00002-3)

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Abstract

During the academic year 1997â€“1998, a needs analysis was conducted on the Minneapolis campus of the College of St. Catherine, to determine why many of the ESL students enrolled in the Associate of Science (A.S.) degree nursing program were not succeeding academically. Several procedures, primarily interviews, observations, and questionnaires, were used to gather information about the objective needs of the students, all of whom are immigrants. The course *Speaking and Listening in a Health-Care Setting* was developed to respond to what was identified as studentsâ€™ area of greatest difficulty: communicating with clients and colleagues in the clinical

setting. The content of the course is divided into four units: assertiveness skills, therapeutic communication, information-gathering techniques, and the role of culture in health-care communication. A variety of methods and materials, drawn primarily from sources for developing health-care communication skills in native speakers, is used to actively engage students in the learning process, with particular emphasis on role plays. The course has been very successful in helping students learn how to communicate more effectively in clinical settings. By helping culturally and linguistically diverse students succeed in their programs, the course is also helping to bring much needed diversity to the health-care professions in the United States.



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Keywords

ESP and medicine; Cultural differences; Immigrants; Refugees

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Cultures Education and has published articles in *JESOL Quarterly*, *Journal of Second Language Writing*, and *College ESL*.

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The authors are both ESL Specialists for Project RN, a federally funded grant at the College of St. Catherine to recruit and retain multicultural and educationally disadvantaged nursing students, including students for whom English is a second language.

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