

## **Integrating Ignatian Principles into ABSN Concepts of Mental Health Nursing (NURS 300)**

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In the Fall of 2019, I discovered the opportunity to do the Ignatian Mentoring Program (IMP) and have enjoyed being paired with a mentor to learn more about being a Xavier University Professor. I had been working for Xavier since 2017 as an adjunct in the now College of Nursing, and had graduated from XU's MIDAS program. I felt confident in my understanding of the culture of Xavier to be able to manage my new Teaching Professor role and welcomed the professional development mentorship would allow in my formative years of teaching. I had been teaching for five years as a clinical nursing adjunct in various programs at this point, and did not yet foresee the obstacles of new professorship when I had signed up to participate in IMP.

I am one of a Course Lead and teach in the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) Program. Students enter the ABSN program having already obtained a bachelor's degree in another area of study. The program is a full-time, fast-paced, four-semester immersion into nursing. Students complete the coursework (didactic) online and their clinical (practicum) work at local hospitals and healthcare agencies throughout Ohio. Students are expected to be highly self-motivated, organized, and driven to be successful in this hybrid program. Students must be willing to accept a large amount of responsibility for their own learning and seek support as needed. ABSN students have full-time course loads that occur in two eight-week sessions over the course of a semester. The pace is as fast for faculty as it is for students; dynamism, flexibility, and resilience are requisites for surviving the year-round cycle of new students each semester entering the program.

I am the Course Lead of Foundations of Concepts of Mental Health I & II, and the connected practicum components, Foundations of Concepts of Mental Health Practicum I & II, or NURS 300, 301, 302, and 303 respectively. Course Leads in the ABSN Program function as content expert for their course, manage adjunct faculty in didactic and clinical courses, review student performance and behaviors. The role includes duties ranging from teaching students, updating and improving curriculum in the course, collaborating with colleagues, advising students, and as of Spring Semester 2020, rolling out entirely remote clinical curriculum in three days.

My focus for this project was NURS 300 and 301. NURS 300 is a second-semester theory (didactic) course in ABSN and is the student's first exposure, in many cases, to the world of mental health. After having taught in the course for a couple of semesters, I had discerned that I wanted to bring more of what makes Xavier University Nurses "us" into the curriculum. What makes Xavier University Nurses "us," you ask? It is our Jesuit Values, the Gifts of Our Ignatian Heritage, the living application of our treasured pedagogy to nursing practice. It is the development of holistic critical thinking driven by Jesuit values, which is not replicated by other institutions in our region. Mental health nurses encounter situations in their practice that is driven by Jesuit values, making this a perfect match for integrating the gifts of our Ignatian heritage. NURS301 is the students' practicum or clinical course. In NURS 301, students were asked to reflect on Jesuit Values in a project completed with clients in the clinical setting.

Through reflection and discernment with my Ignatian mentor, it was identified that students share similar learning barriers to understanding psychiatric-mental health concepts and that presentations would be a helpful tool to help students learn. Using voice-over PowerPoints to synthesize and deliver a

variety of key components to students is an efficient delivery mode and was not used in NURS 300. My mentor's knowledge about remote learning, where to find resources, who to talk to if the resources were not apparent made the implementation of this project straight forward. As a bonus, I was given the best gift of mentorship: fellowship. My mentor and I held space for processing experiences and I was provided sage guidance on the dynamics of being a teaching novice and content expert over coffee.

NURS 300 is broken out into roughly seven to ten modules covering eight weeks of time. The course focuses on the foundational understanding of psychiatric-mental health nursing: Mental health spectrum through illness, ethical and legal issues, crisis intervention, violence, therapeutic relationships, treatment modalities, and suicide. The emotional burden of the course can be tremendous for students regardless of their experience or prior understanding of mental health issues.

In development of this project, I created a PowerPoint for each module, outlining the key points, just as one would do for an in-person lecture. Within the first three slides, I would present the Gifts of Our Ignatian Heritage and its relation to the module or challenge the student to reflect on specific ideas related to the topic. Connecting the values in each presentation became a powerful reflection process for me; it was an opportunity to express my love of psychiatric-mental health nursing and demonstrate how sacred nursing is to the healing and wellbeing of our clients.

One of the unexpected opportunities in applying Jesuit Pedagogy was the ability to address stigma of mental illness and how we, as nurses, can become agents of positive change. Each session guided students through the mindful practice of reflection and discernment. Highlighting the remaining values added context and depth to engage students in the process of critically thinking about nursing using the scope of the Jesuit education they were receiving.

In NURS 301, students were tasked to use their developing nursing skills to create an activity for their clients in a long-term care facility (LTC). Students had to assess their clients and the care environment, develop an activity based on their assessment, create a plan for carrying out the group with their clients, implement their activity, and evaluate the activity's effectiveness with the clients. Students then submitted a written reflection, which asked them to identify the Jesuit principle that was most helpful in the project.

At the end of the first term using this approach, I collected comments from student who were willing to share.

- "Please keep posting the Jesuit/Ignatian values at the beginning of each power point. I personally use them to guide my learning and practicing experience. They provide proper reflection of subject matter."
- "I am not from a Jesuit background but I am glad I am able to learn and apply a different culture and value system in my nursing career to help others."
- "The Jesuit principle I kept in my mind during this process was service rooted in justice and love. Providing this opportunity for the residents hopefully brought happiness and love to a group that is not always treated the best. During the activity I showed each resident I interacted with love and justice through treating them as an individual no matter their disability."
- "I think creating an environment where the patient feels like they can express themselves allows the nurse to provide quality care based on what they are seeing about the patient is key to Cura Personalis."

- “I felt that *cura personalis* and discernment both came into play for me. Knowing the individual needs of specific clients and making sure they felt that they were being included and at the same time, overall, feeling like what we were doing was for the good of everyone involved. I think we, as students, needed that group just as much as the clients did.”
- “I think the main point I am taking away from this experience is really considering my patients when I am planning care, interventions, or activities for them. There is no one size fits all, rather I must see each patient as an individual or group them by needs for activities. Throughout my future nursing career, I hope to ask myself, “How can I best serve my patients?” We have to meet people where they are at, developmentally, physically, and emotionally, not where we feel they should be.”
- “I thought most of the Jesuit value, “service rooted in justice and love” as we led this group activity. This principle emphasizes the idea that our lives can be used to benefit others, especially those who may suffer from inequality or injustice. In this situation, some of the residents are at a disadvantage with fewer family members or visitors to enhance mood and even cognition, so I viewed our group activity as providing stimulation and companionship to those who may be missing it in their lives.”

In conclusion, combining voice-over PowerPoints, a practicum project, and reflective journaling created a cohesive learning experience. This allowed the students to use what they had learned and evaluate how Ignatian principles added value to their learning experience. One of the most fulfilling aspects was reading how the students connected Ignatian values to their projects with clients as acts of service, justice, and love, caring for each unique person, and providing a connection to each of the LTC residents. Without having woven the Jesuit values throughout NURS 300 and NURS 301, it would have been difficult to discern the effectiveness of my approach to applying Jesuit values to NURS 300 and NURS 301. Based on student feedback, the voice-over PowerPoints will continue in each module of the course and the project will be used again.