

NURSING

Cura Personalis: The Gift of the MIDAS Student (Nursing 565 - Art and Science of Nursing Practicum)

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I joined the Xavier faculty family in the fall of 2005. This year marked a new venture for the Nursing program at Xavier. The nursing department launched their new nursing program called MIDAS. The program allows students who have an undergraduate degree in a non-nursing discipline to seek a graduate degree in nursing. I was assigned to teach the fundamentals nursing lab practicum, the second semester medical-surgical clinical, and to facilitate preceptor experiences in both the psychiatric and complex care clinical areas.

The MIDAS students come with a wide variety of backgrounds including but not limited to theology, social work, journalism, Spanish, physical education, early childhood education, social work, and geology. Both my concern and my challenge was to teach nursing fundamentals to students who had no background in nursing and to lay the foundation that would prepare them to fully accept the role of a professional nurse. A person might ask how is this program different from the traditional nursing program? The traditional program takes four years to complete. The MIDAS student is a full-time student for only nineteen months, terminating with a master's degree in nursing science and developing the knowledge base that will allow them to sit for board licensure as a registered nurse.

In 2005, I was invited to participate in the faculty Manresa retreat. It was here that I began to understand the impact of Ignatian values and principles on my role as a professional educator and as a member of the Xavier community. During the discussion of cura personalis, my thoughts immediately jumped to the MIDAS students. It was at this time I made a conscious decision to focus on the gifts the MIDAS students brought from their initial degree discipline, and not on their lack of nursing knowledge.

In collaboration with my mentor, a discernment process took place. We met and discussed my observations of the class and how I thought Ignatian principles were being integrated. I thought back to the discussion of the gift of the person. As novice nursing students, the students tend to focus on what they do not know and forget what talents and knowledge they actually possess. My goal was to design a project that gave the students an opportunity to reflect on their gifts and not their deficits. My Ignatian project was incorporated into NURS 565.

One of the course assignments is a group project that promotes collaboration of the student nurse team with the manager of the hospital clinical unit. The students in collaboration with the manager identify a quality improvement issue. The students and manager with faculty approval, decide on the project focus. Within the assignment the students identify the purpose of their project, provide research to support their actions, present a plan to implement their intervention, and describe a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of their project.

To incorporate the *cura personalis* principle, the students were to submit a self reflection identifying what knowledge, talent, or gift they contributed to the project that was reflective of their initial degree or life experience. They are also asked to identify how this knowledge or talent would be complimentary with nursing process and/or the professional development of nursing.

The reflections were amazing and at times unexpected. The following are some of the personal reflections that I would like to share:

- I really enjoyed working on this part of the project. It was terrific hearing what things my fellow classmates had done. I learned a lot about them as a person.
- I liked working with other professionals. I am amazed at the talent in nursing.
- I did not think anything I had done before had anything to do with nursing, now I know that is not true.
- I am amazed that something I learned in geology could actually be applied to nursing process.
- Nursing process is very similar to scientific process. I like that there is a logical way to solve problems.
- My degree in journalism really helped with condensing information for the poster.
- A background in education really helped with this. I was able to share that at the meeting with the manger when we talked about learning styles.
- I was able to utilize my Spanish language education and develop a hand-out in Spanish.
- I really enjoyed working with the second year MIDAS student. I can appreciate the program and it was good to speak with someone who went through the program and survived. I think I found a new friend.
- This really made me stop and think. It was nice to think of something positive I did.
- We all worked very well as a team and we all had something very positive to give. It was fun to see everyone step up and take charge of their part.
- I learned a lot about my fellow classmates.

- My research came in handy when teaching others about infection control.
- I have presented to large groups, so I think that really helped me to present the staff education part of the project. I was very confident.

Overall evaluations of the self-reflection component were very positive, and I feel that the goal to recognize personal gifts as well as the gifts of others was met. This component will become a permanent part of the project assignment.

In conclusion, I would like to share my analogy of a gift box. The discipline of nursing provides the framework and knowledge base that forms the foundation of nursing practice. The Jesuit principles represented by the ribbon connect us to our students, our peers, our clients, and to the world in which we live. The students are represented by the multiple loops of the bow. Just as the loops go in multiple directions, represent different sizes, and appear at different levels, so do our students. However, the loop is continuous, leading back to the Jesuit principles that guide our interactions with others, and to our nursing heritage that provides direction for excellence in practice, making us nurses and nurse educators serving others for the greater glory of God, while recognizing the gifts each person adds to this package we call nursing education.