

Editorial

Cultural Competence

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RESUMEN

En esta editorial la autora describe la naturaleza esencial y las características de la competencia cultural.

Palabras clave: enfermería, competencia cultural, enfermería transcultural.

ABSTRACT

In this editorial the author describes the essential nature and characteristics of cultural competence.

Keywords: nursing, competence cultural, transcultural nursing.

RESUMO

Neste editorial, o autor descreve a natureza e as características da competência cultural essencial.

Palavras chave: enfermagem, competência cultural, enfermagem transcultural.

It is a global mandate that nurses be “culturally and linguistically competent.” The purpose of this article is to present an overview of the course I taught in the University of Alicante School of Nursing to graduate nursing students. The course included both theory and process. The theoretical content covered in the classes included a wide range of topics such as Spector’s HEALTH¹ Traditions Model and described the steps to CULTURALCOMPETENCY and CULTURALCARE. The process included “actually climbing the steps to CULTURALCOMPETENCY” and a community tour to observe every-day factors related to HEALTH. One outcome is the collage SALUD that concludes this paper. Cultural and linguistic competence suggests an ability of health care providers and health care organizations to understand and respond effectively to the cultural and linguistic needs brought to the health care experience. The term CULTURALCARE expresses all that is inherent in the development of health care delivery to meet the man-

dates of cultural and linguistic competence. CULTURALCARE is holistic care. Given the present global situation of countless refugees and migrants, the development of CULTURALCOMPETENCY and the delivery of CULTURALCARE are now major challenges for all nurses and providers of health care. The development of CULTURALCOMPETENCE is an ongoing, life-long endeavor.

Spector’s major research focus was and is to seek answers to the question: “*what do people really do to maintain, protect, and restore their physical, mental, and spiritual HEALTH?*” HEALTH, when written in small capital letters, connotes the balance of a person, both within one’s being—physical, mental, and spiritual—and in the outside world—natural, familial and communal, and metaphysical. ILLNESS is the imbalance of the person, both within one’s being—physical, mental, and spiritual—and in the outside world—natural, familial and communal, and metaphysical. HEALING is the restoration of a person’s balance, both within one’s being—physical, mental, and spiritual—and in the outside world—natural, familial and communal, and metaphysical. The relationship of the person to the outside world is reciprocal. The understanding of HEALTH traditions - our own and those of others - does not usually happen spontaneously. It grows over time. Each of us posses an intangible cultural heritage that includes traditions or living expressions inherited from ancestors such as oral traditions and *traditional HEALTH beliefs and practices*.

Theoretical

- The theoretical component of the class consisted of an overview of the concepts of:

heritage - culture, ethnicity, religion, and socialization

- Diversity- demography, immigration, poverty
- Health and illness, health and HEALTH traditions, family, modern and traditional health/HEALTH care, HEALING
- Global perspective of HEALTH beliefs and practices of peoples from different parts of the world.

The HEALTH Traditions Model

The HEALTH Traditions Model is a method for describing traditional culturally based HEALTH beliefs and practices used to

- Maintain through daily HEALTH practices, such as diet, activities, and clothing
- Protect through special HEALTH practices, such as food taboos, seasonal activities, and protective items worn, carried, or hung in the home or workplace and/or
- Restore through special HEALTH practices, such as diet changes, rest, special clothing or objects, prayer or meditation

Physical, mental, and/or spiritual HEALTH. The following figures, 1, 2, and 3 illustrate the HEALTH Traditions Model:

	Physical	Mental	Spiritual
Maintain HEALTH	Dietary	Senses	Rituals
Protect HEALTH	Amulets	Traditions	Talisman
Restore HEALTH	Herbals	Massage	Prayer & Meditation

Figure 1- The HEALTH Traditions Model

The model has six discrete categories of ways to examine HEALTH in the dimensions

¹Terms written in capital letters, such as HEALTH indicate that they are used in a holistic sense.

mentioned above. It examines the three parts of HEALTH physical, mental, and spiritual and the ways HEALTH may be maintained, protected, and restored.

	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	SPIRITUAL
MAINTAIN HEALTH	Proper clothing Proper diet Exercise/Rest	Concentration Social and Family support systems Hobbies	Religious worship Prayer Meditation
PROTECT HEALTH	Special foods and food combination Symbolic clothing	Avoid certain people who can cause illness Family activities	Religious customs Superstitions Wearing amulets and other symbolic objects to prevent the "Evil Eye" or defray other sources of harm
RESTORE HEALTH	Homeopathic remedies liniments Herbal teas Special foods Massage Acupuncture/moxibustion	Relaxation Exorcism Curanderos and other traditional healers Nerve teas	Religious rituals—special prayers Meditation Traditional healings Exorcism

Figure 2. HEALTH Traditions from a personal perspective

Figure 2, HEALTH Traditions from a personal perspective, provides examples of what can be expected in each of the categories. For

	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	SPIRITUAL
MAINTAIN HEALTH	Availability of Proper shelter, clothing, and food Safe air, water, soil	Availability of traditional sources of entertainment, concentration, and "rules" of the culture	Availability and promulgation of rules of ritual and religious worship Meditation
PROTECT HEALTH	Provision of the knowledge of necessary special foods and food combinations, the wearing of symbolic clothing, and avoidance of excessive heat or cold	Provision of the knowledge of what people and situations to avoid, family activities; Family activities	The teaching of: Religious customs Superstitions Wearing amulets and other symbolic objects to prevent the "Evil Eye" or how to defray other sources of harm
RESTORE HEALTH	Resources that provide Homeopathic remedies, liniments, Herbal teas, Special foods, Massage, and other ways to restore the body's balance of hot and cold	Traditional healers with the knowledge to use such modalities as: relaxation exorcism, storytelling, and/or Nerve teas	The availability of healers who use magical and supernatural ways to restore health: including religious rituals, special prayers, meditation, traditional healings, and/or Exorcism

Figure 3. Health Traditions from a community perspective

example, are certain types of clothing necessary? Are certain foods encouraged or prohibited? What amulets may the person use?

Figure 3, HEALTH Traditions from a community perspective, provides examples of what can be expected in each of the categories. For example, where are certain types of clothing obtained? Where are certain foods available and what foods are prohibited? What amulets may the person use? Where are they obtained?

Process

The process component of the course focused on several steps:

1. The first step explores **personal heritage**—Who are you? What is your heritage? What are your health/HEALTH beliefs?

There are 4 questions that can be asked in doing a "Heritage Assessment" to help determine the degree to which a person identifies with a traditional heritage:

1. Do you mostly participate in social activities with members of your family?
2. Do you mostly have friends from a similar heritage (cultural background) as you?
3. Do you mostly eat the foods of your family's traditional heritage?
4. Do you mostly participate in the religious and ethnic traditions of your family?

If the 3 or 4 of these questions are answered "yes," the person most likely identifies with his or her traditional family and heritage. The chances of this person following traditional HEALTH beliefs and practices are high.

2. **Heritage of others**—demographics—Who is the other person? Family? Community? The same four questions as above may be asked with similar expectations.

3. **Health/HEALTH beliefs and practices**—What are the HEALTH beliefs and practices that this person/family/community is bringing to the health care setting? Are there competing philosophies? For example, if the given person practices the principles of HEALTH care from their tradition the practices may be incompatible with modern technological medical care. When this is the situation, there may be countless issues of non-adherence to modern medicine and ethical conflicts.

4. **Modern Health Care** - culture and system—What is the situation within the dominant culture’s health care system? What are the prevailing issues and problems in the nurses’ practice settings?

5. **Traditional HEALTH Care** culture and systems—the way HEALTH care was for most and the way HEALTH care still is for many. What are the HEALTH beliefs and practices that are found in the intangible cultural heritage of a given person/family/community?

6. **Ongoing process** for developing CULTURALCOMPETENCY, and you are ready to open the door to CULTURALCARE. CULTURALCARE is holistic care. The need to provide CULTURALCARE is essential, and nurses must be able to assess and interpret a patient’s HEALTH beliefs and practices, cultural and linguistic needs. CULTURALCARE alters the perspective of health care delivery as it enables nurses to understand, from a cultural perspective, the manifestations of the patient’s cultural heritage and life trajectory. The nurse must serve as a bridge in the health care setting between the given institution, the patient, and the people who are from different cultural backgrounds.

In addition to seeking answers for the above questions an “urban hike” was held in Alicante to observe selected community resour-

ces. The students visited sites, including *Santa Faz*, a sacred shrine where people go seeking HEALING, the central market, and an herbal store to observe various community resources available to meet the parameters of the HEALTH Traditions Model.

SALUD

The image and collage that follow represent an answer, in part, to the enduring question, “*what do people really do to maintain, protect, and restore their physical, mental, and spiritual HEALTH?*” The collage was “built” with the technical assistance of Bradley Olsen, Graphics Designer, Boston College Audiovisual Department, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts.

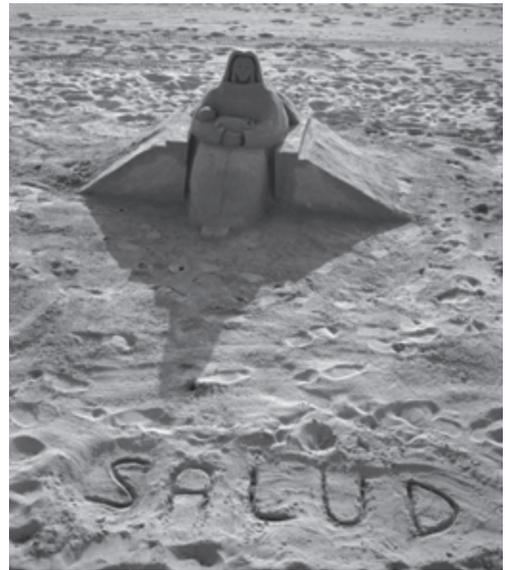


Figure 4 - SALUD

The centerpiece image, *salud*, is a metaphor for HEALTH in countless ways. Here, it is whole and emerging from the shadows of early morning. Just as the sand sculpture is fragile, disappearing overnight, so, too, is HEALTH. It brings to mind the reality that HEALTH is finite, and each of us has the in-

ternal responsibility to maintain, protect, and restore our HEALTH; the reciprocal holds true for the external familial, environmental, and societal forces—they, too, must look after and safeguard our HEALTH. Thus, this collage is a “mirror” that reflects countless ways by which people in Spain are able to maintain, protect, and/or restore their HEALTH. Just as there is interplay between a sand sculpture and the natural forces that can create and harm and destroy it, so, too, it is with HEALTH and the forces of the outside world.

Spector took the images selected for this collage during several visits to Spain in Alicante, Avila, Barcelona, Caravaca, Frailles, Granada, Jaen, and Vitoria. They take you through a day – sunrise to sunset and through the life span – birth to death – in examples of what can be observed in regards to health/HEALTH. Follow the collage from left to right and top to bottom and see ways that a person may maintain, protect, and/or restore their physical, mental, and/or spiritual HEALTH and selected community resources that provide the necessary elements. The collage is mere example of the infinite number of objects, substances, and places that can be used to maintain, protect and/or restore HEALTH. Your imagination and knowledge are the guides in understanding this symbolic journey.

- It begins with sunrise in Granada – a new day dawns

- The ways that a person can begin their life in Spain are either through birth or immigration. This is seen with an image from the delivery room in the general hospital in Alicante, and immigrants waiting for processing in Alicante

- The Baptismal font and the confessional are in a church Avila. The ritual of Baptism is a way to welcome the newborn and for spiritual purification. Confession is useful for the clean-

ing of the spirit and mind

- Paper figures for the *Fuegos de San Juan*, in Alicante are an example of the release and cleansing that fire brings

- *Festivale, Corrida de Toros*, Alicante – It is said that the matador “plays with death.” By doing this, he or she, believes that in some ways death can be overcome and immortality achieved. The fierce bull is seen as a “deity” and the *Corrida*, a religious experience for the matador and perhaps the spectator as well

- Clothing for special events such as the first communion dresses – the first ritual of coming of age for a child and an elaborate mantilla, or head covering, associated with a pious religious practice among Roman Catholic women.

- A street decoration for *Carnival in Alicante*. This is a time to celebrate life and prepare for the days of Lent.

- Herbal remedies are an ongoing traditional way of treating many illnesses. There are several ways to obtain the herbs - an herbal garden in Granada, and a store in Alicante that sells fresh packaged herbal remedies, and “*Herbolarto Ramon*” – an herbal medicine store in Vitoria. A *Farmacia* in Alicante – the pharmacy sells medications and a prescription is not necessary. Both modern and homeopathic medications may be purchased in the *farmacia*.

- There is an ongoing emphasis on the procurement of fresh foods and water. They are found in abundance in the market in Barcelona, fresh meat and fish – *gliando pescado*, being prepared, and fresh water being drawn from a spring near Granada.

- Olive harvest near Jaen. Olives are essential for good health

- Traditional HEALERS such as Fra Leopoldo, a famous HEALER, whose statue stands in a square in Granada. People carry

