

Developing a VIP English Curriculum for Taiwan EFL Nursing College Students in POST-COVID Period

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Abstract

The current study developed a Post-COVID VIP English curriculum and suggested that, taking advantage of the drastic change brought about by the pandemic, EFL teachers can exploit online learning as a medium for intercultural/ pluricultural communication and qualitatively transform traditional global mobility into virtual interactive connections. The approach advocated here is to leverage Internet technology to motivate nursing-majored EFL learners in Taiwan to use English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) to interact with foreign EFL students or teachers in the Internet space (Virtual exchange), extensively use various innovative curriculum assignments (Innovation), and finally achieve competence of the target language, English for specific purposes on nursing (ESP-N), and communication on cross-cultural issues (Pluriculture). To this end, two VIP curriculum modules were developed for two groups of nurse students across two semesters. VIP1, in the first semester, aimed at senior students (N=48), who have more theoretical background in nursing practice. Consecutive oral and written learning activities lasting for 18 weeks were conducted, including (1) reading and role-playing regarding nursing workplace conversational text, (2) online platform-based oral self-monitoring exercises, (3) collaborative team-based script writing on nursing workplace conversation, (4) action drama competition on nursing workplace and with intercultural reviews, (5) group discussions via google meet on nursing workplace topics, and (6) face-to-face online live Q&A interaction. The purposes in VIP-1 are to familiarize nursing-majored EFL learners with ESP-N, and to observe how students use strategies with two nursing core task elements-knowledge and care-in their communication. VIP-2, in the second semester, aimed at junior nurse students (N=102), who have no experience in nursing workplace practice. Three intermittent oral language activities were conducted, including (1) Guided text reading of Taiwan food culture, (2) YouTube release of short films on local night market and cross-national/group comments, and (3) pluricultural online cuisine exchange. The VIP-2 intended to arouse learners' pluricultural awareness and promote their willingness to communicate in English. For the data collection, students' progress reports, pre-/post-tests and questionnaires were collected. Through qualitative analysis, the

results show that VIP-1 group effectively improved their systematic knowledge on nursing and communication skills, while VIP-1 reported that the intensive learning activities deprived their time for other subjects and causes higher academic loads. The VIP-2 group shows high intercultural understanding and enthusiasm for participation, and displays willingness to participate in inter-cultural English learning activities. Implications of these findings for further VIP curriculum design are discussed.

Keywords: EFL, intercultural communication lingua franca, synchronous computer-mediated learning, virtual exchange