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TITLE: Reflections on Teaching Sociology to First-Year Nursing Students

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Abstract:

There has been a long debate on whether sociology is useful for nursing students (for example, see Allen 2003; Mulholland 1987; Pinikahana 2003; Williamson 1999). This reflects the divergent views on what sociology means to nursing practice and identity. Therefore, while accreditation standards from the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC, 2012) specify that nursing curriculum must include “subject matter that gives students an appreciation of the diversity of Australian culture, develops their knowledge of cultural respect, and engenders the appropriate attitudes” (Program content 4.5), and encourages “the application of critical thinking frameworks” (Curriculum Structural Framework; 2.4d), these requirements can be broadly interpreted to include or exclude sociology. It is therefore not surprising that the incorporation of sociology into Australian nursing curriculums and the acceptance of nursing students towards studying sociology, are mixed. In this presentation, I will explore some of the dilemmas of teaching sociology to nursing students drawing upon existing research and my personal experiences. This reveal, as noted by Parer et al. (2013), this presents both opportunities and (significant) challenges.