

## Strengthening Nursing Education: How Faculty Presence Enhances Student Engagement and Learning Community

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*Mr. John Silva Flores is dedicated both to nursing practice and education. He has been in the profession for 31 years now. He finished his Bachelor of Nursing degree at Caritas Family Colleges, Manila, in 1994 and passed the Philippine Nurses Licensure Examination the same year. He enhanced his craft as a Volunteer Nurse in Valenzuela General Hospital while working as a Private Duty Nurse for 3 years. Then, in 2001, he was hired as an Operating Room Nurse at the University of the East Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City, where he honed his dedication to nursing. In 2004, while pursuing his master's degree, he joined Our Lady of Fatima University, College of Nursing as a Clinical Instructor and Faculty member. In 2007, he moved to First City Providential College as a Clinical Coordinator. In the same year, he earned his Master of Arts in Nursing degree at the University of La Salette in Santiago, Isabela.*

*Furthermore, in 2011, he was appointed as Dean of the College of Nursing at First City Providential College. He was the prime mover behind the Bachelor of Science in Midwifery at the said institution when the BS Nursing program's enrollment declined. During his term as dean, the programs under his umbrella sought accreditation. Both programs in Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Midwifery were Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) Level 3 and 2, respectively. Also, the departments participate in their respective International Organization Standards pilot programs, ISO 9001:2015 certified. He further seeks higher education and enrolled at La Consolacion University Philippines, Malolos, Bulacan, in 2018 to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership and Management, Major in Curriculum Development. He passed the comprehensive examination in 2022 and is currently drafting his dissertation to complete the degree. During his journey in graduate studies, he was able to publish 2 papers entitled "NNCCS: Basis for Determining the Competencies of Newly Hired Nurses", presented in 2019 at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and as a co-author, "Incarcerated Education: A*

*Phenomenological Case Study”, published in Lambert Academic Publishing. Mr Flores is also an active member of the Association of Deans of Philippine Colleges of Nursing (ADPCN) since 2010 and the Philippine Nurses Association since 1994. In September 2022, he joined his new organization, St Bernadette of Lourdes College, and served as Dean of Higher Education. In December 2023, our panelist spoke at the conference for curriculum development in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. In May 2025, he co-authored a research presentation titled “Factors Influencing Career Preferences of Nursing Students in Selected Nursing Schools: Basis for Career Planning Program” at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in Bangkok, Thailand. Furthermore, he spearheaded the College of Nursing’s accreditation. SBLC is now EOMS 21001:2018 Certified Level 2 and ACSCU Candidate. His presence at school events and student assemblies highlights his active role in student engagement and community building within the educational institution.*

## **Introduction**

Nursing Education lays the groundwork for the development of future health. Creating a community of learners involves establishing a purposeful and supportive environment in nursing education by promoting relationships and developing networks of communication and partnership among all participants in the learning experience. Within the community, students and faculty create an atmosphere that fosters a sense of belonging among one another, increased opportunities to connect, and support to achieve shared objectives. The formation of the community promotes academic success and enhances critical-thinking and teamwork skills required for success in future employment.

The faculty members play an important role in establishing and creating a sense of community among learners. By establishing a sense of value in their connection to the learners are more likely to feel they belong and, therefore, more encouraged to engage in all aspects of their coursework. Faculty engage with students by responding to inquiries, providing additional support as needed, and fostering an environment of mutual respect and collaboration, all of which contribute to a strong sense of community among learners.

Furthermore, a supportive learning environment is an important component of learners' social and emotional well-being, enabling them to safely share their thoughts and concerns. The faculty can enhance and promote this supportive and collaborative environment by using collaborative learning techniques such as group work and peer mentoring, in addition to employing

these methods to establish and foster a supportive environment for learners. Strategies to bolster faculty presence in nursing education can be implemented by adopting innovative pedagogical techniques. Numerous teaching strategies exist that foster student interaction with their instructor and promote the development of strong connections and relationships.

An excellent example of a pedagogical strategy that enhances interaction between faculty and students is the use of flipped classroom techniques or problem-based learning models. These styles promote student participation in their learning while the instructor continues to support, facilitate, and guide the student through the process (Lewing, 2020).

Technology can also improve faculty's ability to connect with students and support their learning experience (Lewing, 2020). The use of technology, such as video conferencing, online discussion groups, and online interactive platforms, allows instructors to communicate with their students virtually. If multimedia resources are integrated into an online learning environment, instructors can foster student engagement through meaningful interactions and provide for a variety of student learning styles.

To provide a strong foundation for the continued success of positive faculty-student interactions, professional development is essential for faculty who will be teaching in nursing programs. As noted in several recent research reports, continued faculty training will help them prepare to work more effectively within their teaching methods to support their students as they learn to excel and meet their educational goals (Wang et al., 2024). The current ongoing development not only enhances teaching skills but also helps to develop a sense of community within the faculty share ideas and innovative projects.

As we seek the best practices for enhancing faculty engagement with learners, research indicates that these engagement strategies improve student academic performance and the quality of the educational experience. These results also provide a basis for discussing the relationship between nursing education and the changing pedagogy in nursing education.

## Conclusion

Finally, strengthening faculty presence in nursing education is critical for encouraging meaningful student interaction and establishing a dynamic learning environment. This reflection demonstrated how active and purposeful faculty involvement in teaching, mentoring, and academic leadership improves both student academic success and professional growth. Nursing education institutions can improve student achievement, promote professional values, and better prepare future nurses for the challenges of healthcare practice by fostering supportive learning environments and encouraging faculty collaboration.

Looking towards the future, nursing programs should make faculty engagement a primary focus of their curriculum and develop additional resources to train faculty to use different methods of teaching that will be effective to meet the needs of students with varying learning styles. This strategy will increase the level of engagement from our students as well as prepare them to work in an acceptable manner as healthcare providers in a changing environment.

Nursing education will evolve to provide greater support for the newest generations of nursing professionals and better prepare them to care for patients within a complex and changing healthcare system.

## Reflection-In-Action

As I think back on my more than thirty years in nursing practice and education, I realize that my journey has been defined not only by the jobs I have had and the degrees I have acquired, but also by the fact that I have always been around students, colleagues, and the academic community. As a volunteer nurse, private-duty nurse, operating-room nurse, clinical instructor, dean, and higher-education leader, I have discovered that “being there” or “being present” is a strong way to improve nursing education. This means you are not just being in charge of administrative or teaching tasks; it entails actively participating in clinical settings, classrooms, assemblies, and other



events. When I started teaching nursing while still working on my master's degree, I learned that students learn best when they regard their teachers as active partners in their learning process. My regular engagement in clinical education helped me connect theory and practice, *strengthening professional values such as discipline, accountability, and compassion—qualities important in nursing practice.*

When I became a leader, especially as dean, I had more responsibilities. I became very conscious that students get motivation and confidence from seeing faculty leaders who are available, visible, and care about their success. Attending student assemblies, school events, and academic activities helped me create a learning environment where students felt valued, heard, and seen. This presence helps create a culture of trust, involvement, and shared purpose at the college.

My participation in accreditation processes, curriculum creation, and quality assurance programs underscored the significance of faculty presence in fostering academic achievement. Accreditation is not just a way to follow the rules; it is a group endeavor that works best when faculty leaders actively advise, coach, and encourage both teachers and students. From these experiences, I saw how active faculty leadership can help build an institution's identity and make students proud of their school and profession.

Attending international conferences and giving research presentations has also changed how I think about things when I am doing them. When I represented my school abroad, it reminded me that faculty members are not just present on campus. I want to show students that nursing is not just a job but a global field grounded in research, leadership, and service. To do this, I demonstrate scholarly engagement and lifelong learning. In my current job, I intentionally practice reflection-in-action by considering how my everyday interactions affect students' engagement and learning. I wonder if being there helps students get involved, think critically, and grow as professionals. I have found that the best way for nursing educators to lead is to be visible, establish relationships with their students, and share experiences with them. I treat my students as colleagues by sharing my work experiences so they can learn from

them. I am happy to share my accomplishments and be a role model in research, extension, and volunteer work.

I think that the best way to improve nursing education is to choose to be there, not just as teachers and administrators, but also as mentors, role models, and learning partners. My journey confirms that when faculty presence is deliberate and genuine, it fosters a dynamic learning community that equips future nurses to lead with proficiency, empathy, and dedication.

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