Purpose
To examine to what extent the concept of caring has been incorporated into an associate degree nursing (ADN) program at one community college.

Research Questions
How is the concept of caring incorporated in an associate degree nursing program at one community college?
Q1 How is caring defined?
Q2 What terminology is used related to caring?
Q3 How is caring represented in program documents?
Q4 How is caring taught?
Q5 How is caring assessed?

Background
In 1979, Dr. Jean Watson introduced nursing to the concept of balancing science and humanism. She called for a transformation in nursing education—medical model → Caring Science. NLN identified caring as a central theme in nursing education. How well caring is incorporated into nursing education continues to be unclear.

Methodology
A holistic single-case study was conducted consisting of program documents, informal interviews with nursing instructors, and formal group interviews with nursing students.

The data was analyzed using descriptive coding.

Preliminary Findings
Q1 Key concept in the ADN program. Themes generated: an ethical treatment, a physical treatment, providing for safety, communication, respecting individual’s background, an interpersonal relationship, and self-care.
Q2 Term “caring” in documents referred to behavior and actions. Students verbalized numerous terms r/t caring.
Q3 Term “caring” located in program documents, program and course learning outcomes, and syllabi.
Q4 Assignments, weekly topics, simulation scenarios, family, clinicals, from instructors and nurses.
Q5 All courses with a clinical component included an outcome r/t caring. All clinical evaluation tools included an assessment of caring.

Discussion & Conclusions
While caring was identified as a value and a key concept, it was not visible in all aspects of the curriculum. It was primarily a hidden concept.

Students enter nursing school with an understanding of caring, however, in each nursing course they learn how to care under different circumstances thus increasing knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

The program that was studied is in the process of moving to a concept-based curriculum and using QSEN for student learning outcomes. The literature for both do not identify caring as a central concept which may result in the concept being less present in the curriculum.

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