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## INTEGRATING LIFE EDUCATION INTO THE CURRICULUM OF HEALTH EDUCATION FOR NURSING STUDENTS TO INCREASE THEIR MEANING OF LIFE, POSITIVE BELIEFS, AND WELL-BEING

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### ABSTRACT

Life education is important for equipping nursing students with physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health promotion and health education. The purpose of this study was to understand the effects of a life education intervention on nursing students' meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being with the aid of simulated teaching for self-directed learning. A pre-experimental design was adopted. In total, 119 3<sup>rd</sup>-year nursing students in two classes completed a life education course and participated in the health education curriculum. Ultimately, 74 nursing students voluntarily participated in the study and filled out the questionnaire on an e-learning platform. A self-report, 19-item questionnaire on the meaning of life (1-6 items), positive beliefs (7-13 items), and well-being (14-19 items) was used to collect the data. Percentages, frequencies, pre-test mean and SD, post-test mean and SD, paired T-test, and P-values were used for the data analysis. The results of this study indicated that 74 nursing students had significant improvements in their meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being due to life education. Regarding the meaning of life, nursing students showed a mean score on the pre-test of 4.30 and a post-test mean score of 4.62 ( $P < 0.001$ ). Regarding positive beliefs, nursing students had a mean score on the pre-test of 3.97 and a post-test mean score of 4.48 ( $P < 0.001$ ). Regarding well-being, nursing students had a mean score on the pre-test of 4.15 and a post-test mean score of 4.57 ( $P < 0.001$ ). The conclusion of this study was that nursing students had significant improvements in their meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being with the aid of simulated teaching in the life

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### INTRODUCTION

Nursing students should be equipped with physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health promotion and health education by nursing teachers. Because nursing students will take care of clinical patients, they need to have a strong background in physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health promotion.

In the global society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many people have cancer, cardiovascular disease (CVD), acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), depression leading to suicide and other diseases. Specifically, nursing students have many challenges in their lives related to friends, homework, learning problems, and other challenges that cause physical, psychological, spiritual, and social problems. Nursing teachers need to train nursing students in physical, psychological,

spiritual, and social health promotion and health education. Additionally, nursing teachers should integrate a life education intervention including the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being in the health education curriculum. This is one of the best ways to equip nursing students with physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health promotion and health education to take care of clinical patients. Therefore, nursing teachers should design life education materials on the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being with the aid of simulated teaching in a self-directed learning environment for nursing students.

### Life Education

Across the world, people have a mission to have a beautiful life. People should take care of themselves to promote their physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health in their daily lives. Life education is one way to build people's holistic health. People may adopt a meaning in life, positive beliefs, and well-being to promote their own physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health. Life education is included in the relationships between a person and a person, a person and people, a person and nature, and a person and the environment. Life education can help many students understand the meaning of life, teaching them kindness and compassion. The teaching methods of life education include learning experiences, teaching through media, web-based learning, sharing teaching, role playing, and concept mapping (Shih, 2016). The teaching methods of life education include the process of life, the length of life, and the depth of life (Chan, 2016). The teaching model of life education is combined with theory and practice through a collaborative process (Wang, 2016). The meaning of life is an element that increases people's coping strategies and psychological well-being for life's difficulties and challenges (Krok, 2015). Positive beliefs are related to positive coping and personal meaning as follows: achievement, self-transcendence, self-acceptance, relationship, intimacy, religion, and fair treatment (Krok, 2015). Therefore, life education may increase nursing students' meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being to promote their physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health in their daily lives.

### Meaning of Life

Many people suffer from anxiety and depression in their daily lives. The meaning of life is concerned with reducing anxiety, depression, and the risk of suicide. Paying attention to the meaning of life and healthy experiences may help address illness (Kleiman and Beaver, 2013). There is also a positive relationship between having a meaning in life and career adaptability (Yuen and Yau 2015). Many factors contribute to the meaning of life including happiness, contentment, and responsibility (Zhang, Shan and Jiang, 2014). The meaning of life, hope, joy, and self-transcendence may predict life satisfaction and well-being (Haugan, 2013). Many people report different meanings of life, including "creating space for living", "having trust in God", and "living in connection to others" (Jonsen, Norberg and Lundman, 2014). The meaning of life, hope, and self-transcendence may also improve nurse-patient interactions and affect patient health and well-being in clinical settings. Nurse-patient interactions are significantly related to the meaning of life and are meant to improve the mental health and well-being of patients. High-quality nurse-patient interactions increase people's meaning in life and may affect the physical, psychological, and spiritual health and

well-being of patients (Haugan, 2013). Caregiver interactions and patient communication can facilitate patient health and well-being (Haugan, 2013). One aspect of subjective well-being is an increase in the meaning and quality of life (Schutte, Wissing, Ellis, Jose and Vella-Brodrick, 2016). Quality of life is related to joy, hope, beauty, happiness and societal attitudes (Atwal, Spiliotopoulou, Coleman, Harding, Quirke, Smith and Osseiran, 2014). Many people believe and regard the meaning of life as goals or purpose in their daily life. People also use their relationships with others, personal growth, religion, and spirituality to increase meaning in their lives and their well-being (Hilla, Klinea, Bauman, Brenta, Breslina, Calderona, Camposa, Goncalvesa, Gossa, Hamovitz, Kuo, Robinsona and Knox, 2015). People whose feelings toward death are neutral or those who approach or view death as an escape find increased meaning in life and an improved quality of life (Boyras, Horne and Waits, 2015). Increased attention to the meaning of life may be used to treat poor psychological health and risky behavior in adolescents. An improved meaning of life can also be used to address binge drinking, unsafe sex, a lack of exercise, a poor diet, and health promotion in daily life (Brassai, Piko and Steger, 2011). In addition, suicide prevention is an important public health topic, and an increased meaning of life can reduce the risk of anxiety, depression, and suicide and promote health and quality of life (Braden, Overholser, Fisher and Ridley, 2015).

### Positive beliefs

Positive beliefs are important for nursing students to solve problems in their daily lives. In the classroom, educators should equip nursing students in their physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health. Education can be used as an intervention to build the attitudes and beliefs of nurses in caring for patients suffering from the effects of alcohol abuse (Vadlamudi, Adams, Hogan, Wu and Wahid, 2008). Positive psychology is related to rehabilitation for neurological trauma and can enhance treatment planning and the quality of life of patients (Bertischa, Ratha, Longa, Ashman and Rashid, 2014). Reinforcing language is used to identify the positive actions of students and to encourage appropriate behavior (Wood and Freeman-loftis, 2012). Therefore, we need to teach nursing students positive beliefs and behaviors that lead to positive lives in the classroom. Workforce safety is related to the physical and psychological health of employees in the workplace. Positive beliefs may create a positive, healthy workplace and are related to joy and the meaning of life. Achieving joy and meaning in the workplace allows healthcare workers to improve their care methods and provide better care to patients (Morath, Filipp and Cull, 2014). The positive psychology that increases self-help and help to others is based on positive beliefs and positive changes (Pakroonis and Cepukiene, 2015). In addition, many patients have positive and negative beliefs that are associated with their mood and health. When patients have positive beliefs, their mood and health improve in clinical settings. However, when patients exhibit negative beliefs, their mood and health do not improve in clinical settings (Ownby, Acevedo, Jacobs, Caballero, and Waldrop-Valverde, 2014). Therefore, encouraging positive beliefs in patients may reduce the functional symptoms of mental illness. Additionally, patients may acquire positive beliefs related to creativity, cognition, and growth (Forgearda, Pearla, Cheunga, Rifkina, Bearda and Bjorgvinsson, 2016).

### Well-being

There are many routes to reach well-being in daily life. They include leading a pleasant life, having positive emotions, engaging in life, and leading a meaningful life (Gongora, 2014). The meaning of life mediates subjective well-being and is related to physical functioning, social support, and optimism (Shoab, Zhangcy, Lind, Shene and Liab, 2014). Having a meaning of life promotes physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health and well-being. Well-being plays an important role in improving emotional and physical distress (Haugan, 2013). Many studies show that mindfulness is effective at addressing psychological distress and promoting well-being. Mindfulness is a significant predictor of well-being, stress, anxiety, and depression. (Hue and Lau, 2015). Creativity and diversity may increase well-being in daily life (Gordon, and O'Toole, 2015). Physical and psychological well-being can increase daily well-being and improve quality of life (Johnson, 2015). Holistic health is related to positive words including emotional and psychological well-being and promotes the well-being and emotional development of children (Liddle and Carter, 2015). Many students obtain positive well-being in classrooms, on campuses, and from community, and they learn from the beliefs and world views of others to incorporate well-being into their daily lives (Harmening and Jacob, 2015). Moreover, subjective well-being is related to life and job satisfaction, depression, happiness, positive affect, and negative affect. Positive well-being stems from the positive aspects of well-being. Negative well-being stems from the negative aspects of well-being (Ciyin and Erturan-Ilker, 2014). Additionally, having a meaning of life is associated with individual predictors of life satisfaction and the promotion of well-being (Haugan, 2013). The present study provides supporting information regarding the meaning of life following negative life events, and the meaning of life is an important resource to promote well-being and help people process adjustments and solve problems (Nikcevic and Nicolaidesbc, 2014).

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to understand the effects of a life education intervention on nursing students' meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being with the aid of simulated teaching.

### Design

This study adopted a pre-experimental design.

### Methods

To answer the research question, the study was conducted with one group of nursing students who completed the health education curriculum. It was not possible to secure another group to serve as the control group to achieve experimental conditions. Therefore, a pre-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test was used in this study.

### Framework

The nursing students' baseline data included the subject, school system, class, student ID, gender, and age. This study framework was to show that nursing students completing the life education intervention with the aid of simulated teaching increased their meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being (Figure 1).

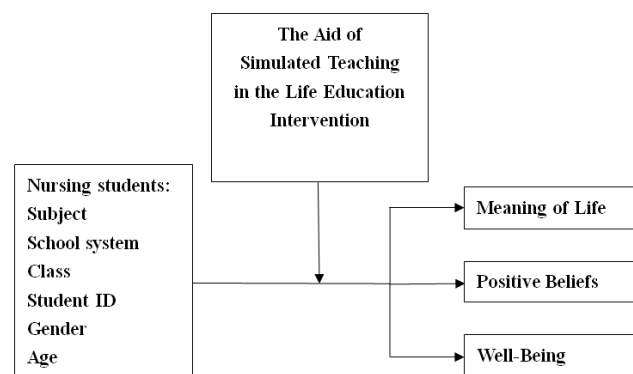


Figure 1. The Study Framework

### Participants

In total, 119 3rd-year nursing students in five school systems and two separate classes participated in the elective life education course on the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being. A purposive sample was used in this study. Ultimately, 74 participants voluntarily completed the questionnaire on the study's e-learning platform during the course of their health education.

### Ethical considerations

Nursing students voluntarily participated in the health education curriculum. In addition, recruited nursing students provided their informed consent to the researcher. A description of the study was provided to minimize the participants' risks or discomfort. Furthermore, participants were informed that anonymity and confidentiality would be maintained. All participants voluntarily completed the pre-test and post-test questionnaires on the e-learning platform.

### Teaching Strategies

A nursing teacher designed a self-directed course on PowerPoint to present all the information that was related to the life education material including the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being. Then, the nursing teacher put the life education material on the e-learning platform. Using hyperlinks to YouTube or information on the internet on life education in the PowerPoint presentation, each nursing student learned about the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being. Nursing students could download the PowerPoint presentation from the e-learning platform and complete the life education on the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being through self-directed and collaborative learning.

The nursing teacher designed several learning objectives as follows: 1. Understand life's beauty, happiness, and gratitude; 2. Learn how to respect, care, value, and touch life; 3. Understand how to love, be optimistic, be transcendent, and have positive beliefs; 4. Learn the fullness of joy, fine, meaning, values, and life attitudes; 5. Understand how to demand satisfaction, enjoyment, life contentment, and self-actualization; 6. Learn how to have life satisfaction and a happy life, how to live well, and how to have happiness in life; 7. Know how to solve problems during life's difficulties, frustrations, stress, and helplessness and evaluate the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being.

After a nursing teacher directed students through the PowerPoint presentation to learn about people with life difficulties, frustrations, stress, and helplessness on YouTube or the internet, nursing students used self-directed and collaborative learning. Then, nursing students in each group selected a person and shared the contents of the group's discussion and self-directed learning experiences with everyone in the class. All nursing students were able to learn from others' learning experiences. Finally, the nursing teacher summarized the contents of the life education on the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being on the PowerPoint presentation and shared it with all the nursing students. It was anticipated that the nursing students would be able to obtain their learning objectives on the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being and increase their health promotion. Additionally, nursing students could download and learn from the life education material from this PowerPoint presentation on the e-learning platform in the future. The nursing teacher provided a two-hour lecture to increase nursing students' health promotion and health education on the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being and to equip them with physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health.

**Instruments**

A self-report, 19-item questionnaire included items on the meaning of life (1-6 items), positive beliefs (7-13 items), and well-being (14-19 items). Items on the questionnaire also included subject, school system, class, student ID, gender, age, meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being. A five-point Likert scale ranging from completely disagree to completely agree was used in this research. The study questionnaire had established content validity according to three expert scholars. The reliability of three measures (n=74) including meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being was calculated (Table 1). Regarding the meaning of life (1-6 items), the questions on the pre-test had a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of 0.96, and on the post-test, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.97 (Table 1).

**Table 1. Reliability of Three-Part Measures**

n=74	Pre-test Cronbach's $\alpha$	Post-test Cronbach's $\alpha$
Meaning of life (1-6 items)	0.96	0.97
Positive beliefs (7-13 items)	0.97	0.97
Well-being (14-19 items)	0.98	0.97

Regarding positive beliefs (7-13 items), the questions on the pre-test had a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of 0.97, and on the post-test, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.97 (Table 1). Regarding well-being (14-19 items), the questions on the pre-test had a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of 0.98, and on the post-test, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.97 (Table 1).

**Data collection**

A nursing teacher explained the integration of the life education in the health education curriculum and assessed the effects of the life education on nursing students' meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being. The researcher administered a questionnaire to each nursing student to collect pre-test and post-test data on the e-learning platform. The researcher explained the questionnaire to understand the nursing students' meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being with the aid of simulated teaching in the life education intervention. Additionally, the researcher informed the nursing

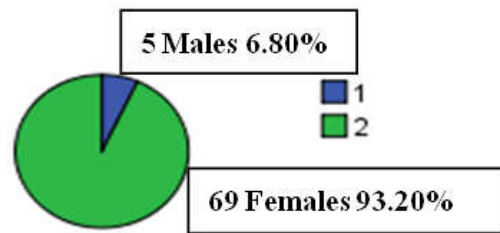
students that they could completely or incompletely fill out the questionnaire on the e-learning platform. The questionnaires were completed by the nursing students as a self-report on 19 items. Finally, the researcher collected all completed questionnaires on the e-learning platform. The data were collected from November 29, 2016 to December 20, 2016.

**Data analysis**

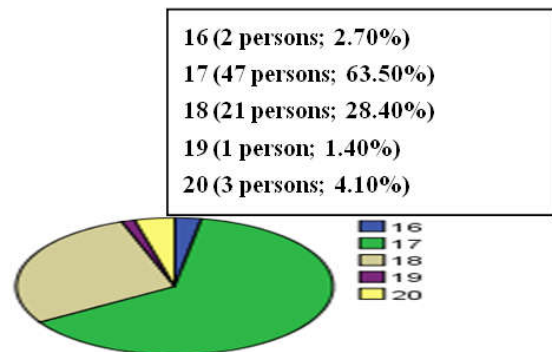
The statistical package SPSS 21.0 was used to analyze all data in the study. Percentages, frequencies, pre-test mean and SD, post-test mean and SD, paired T-test, and P-values were used for the data analysis.

**RESULTS**

All 3rd-year nursing students from five school systems selected a health education subject in two separate classes. The student ID numbers of the nursing students ranged from 001 to 999. The nursing students consisted of 5 (6.80%) males and 69 (93.20%) females (Figure 2). The ages of 74 nursing students were 16 (2 persons; 2.70%), 17 (47 persons; 63.50%), 18 (21 persons; 28.40%), 19 (1 person; 1.40%), and 20 (3 persons; 4.10%) years old (Figure 3).



**Figure 2. Gender Distribution**



**Figure 3. Age Distribution**

The nursing students (n=74) showed significant improvements in the effects of the life education course on their meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being (Table 2). Regarding the meaning of life, the nursing students had a mean score on the pre-test of 4.30 (SD 0.70) and a post-test mean score of 4.62 (SD 0.58) (P<0.001). Regarding positive beliefs, the nursing students had a mean score on the pre-test of 3.97 (SD 0.85) and a post-test mean score of 4.48 (SD 0.65) (P<0.001). Regarding well-being, the nursing students had a mean score on the pre-test of 4.15 (SD 0.82) and a post-test mean score of 4.57 (SD 0.54) (P<0.001).

**DISCUSSION**

In Taiwanese society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many people have different kinds of diseases such as cancer, CVD, AIDS, and depression leading to suicide. People may promote self-

directed learning in health promotion and health education regarding physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health, which are very important issues for daily self-care. Specifically, nursing students should be equipped with self-directed learning in physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health promotion and health education to serve patients in a clinical setting.

**Table 2. The Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores**

n=74	Pre-test		Post-test		Paired T-test	P-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Meaning of life	4.30	0.70	4.62	0.58	-4.99	<0.001
Positive belief	3.97	0.85	4.48	0.65	-7.21	<0.001
Well-being	4.15	0.82	4.57	0.54	-5.80	<0.001

Compared to other papers, this study's results did not differ in increasing participants' meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being to promote their physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health. Having a meaning of life may improve depressive symptoms and decrease many factors leading to suicide (Kleiman and Beaver, 2013). Positive beliefs can be related to a decrease in depressive symptoms (Roelofs, Huibers, Peeters, Arntz and Os, 2010). Positive self-beliefs may promote personal roles in positive affective states to increase self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-regulation and to connect emotions, optimism, self-esteem, and life satisfaction to promote health and daily well-being (Alessandri, Zuffiano, Fabes, Vecchione and Martin, 2014). The nursing teacher was responsible for teaching nursing students to promote their physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health using the simulated teaching of life education on the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being. When nursing students encountered unhappy situations, frustration, and helplessness, they needed to build their health education via self-directed learning on the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being. Most nursing students did not know how to increase their health education on the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being. Therefore, the nursing teacher needed to lead nursing students on how to promote their health by the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being in their daily lives. After a two-hour lecture, nursing students were able to learn from many people's life experiences and difficulties, such as Nick Vujicic, Lena Maria Klingvall, Abraham Lincoln, and the life stories of other people in Taiwanese society.

Additionally, nursing students were able to learn from several films, including "Water Knows the Answers", "One Liter of Tears", "Grave of the Fireflies", "Gabai Granny", "The Way Home", "Taare Zameen Par", "I Am David", "The Secret", and "What Dreams May Come". In addition, nursing students were able to learn from many books, including "I Still Have One Leg", "Life without Limits: Inspiration for a Ridiculously Good Life", and other books that increase individuals' meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being. Furthermore, nursing students were able to collaborate with classmates within the same group to discuss the life experiences described in the teaching materials on the PowerPoint presentation on the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being. Nursing students downloaded the PowerPoint presentation and used the hyperlink to YouTube or the internet to review several teaching materials and learn about the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being. Therefore, this study of a life education intervention indicated that nursing students could self-direct their learning using a PowerPoint presentation with a hyperlink to YouTube or the internet. Nursing students could

achieve the goal of understanding the meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being through the life education intervention. In the future, nursing teachers can prepare the teaching materials included in the PowerPoint presentation to lead nursing students as they link to YouTube or the internet to self-direct their learning on the e-learning platform.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, 74 nursing students had significant improvements in their meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being with the aid of simulated teaching in the life education intervention. Regarding the meaning of life, nursing students showed a mean score on the pre-test of 4.30 (SD 0.70) and a post-test mean score of 4.62 (SD 0.58) ( $P < 0.001$ ). Regarding positive beliefs, nursing students had a mean score on the pre-test of 3.97 (SD 0.85) and a post-test mean score of 4.48 (SD 0.65) ( $P < 0.001$ ). Regarding well-being, nursing students had a mean score on the pre-test of 4.15 (SD 0.82) and a post-test mean score of 4.57 (SD 0.54) ( $P < 0.001$ ).

## Recommendation

It is suggested that future studies include two groups, the experimental and control groups. Additionally, it is recommended that different school systems be surveyed to collect large amounts of data and understand nursing students' meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being. Therefore, the ideal aim is to understand nursing students' meaning of life, positive beliefs, and well-being to equip them with physical, psychological, spiritual, and social health promotion to take care of clinical patients.

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