

**Context**

University College of Northern  
Denmark

**Key Words**

Education, Nursing, Curriculum,  
Pre-registration, Baccalaureate

# INTEGRATING FUNDAMENTALS OF CARE IN BACCALAUREATE, PRE-REGISTRATION NURSING EDUCATION

**This Case Study provides:**

- A description of how the Fundamentals of Care Framework can be integrated in nursing education
- A description of opportunities and challenges in integrating the Fundamentals of Care Framework in an educational context
- Reflections on how the Fundamentals of Care Framework is expected to strengthen the nursing students' critical thinking and evidence-based practice
- Examples of resources to support integration and evaluation of the Framework in nursing education

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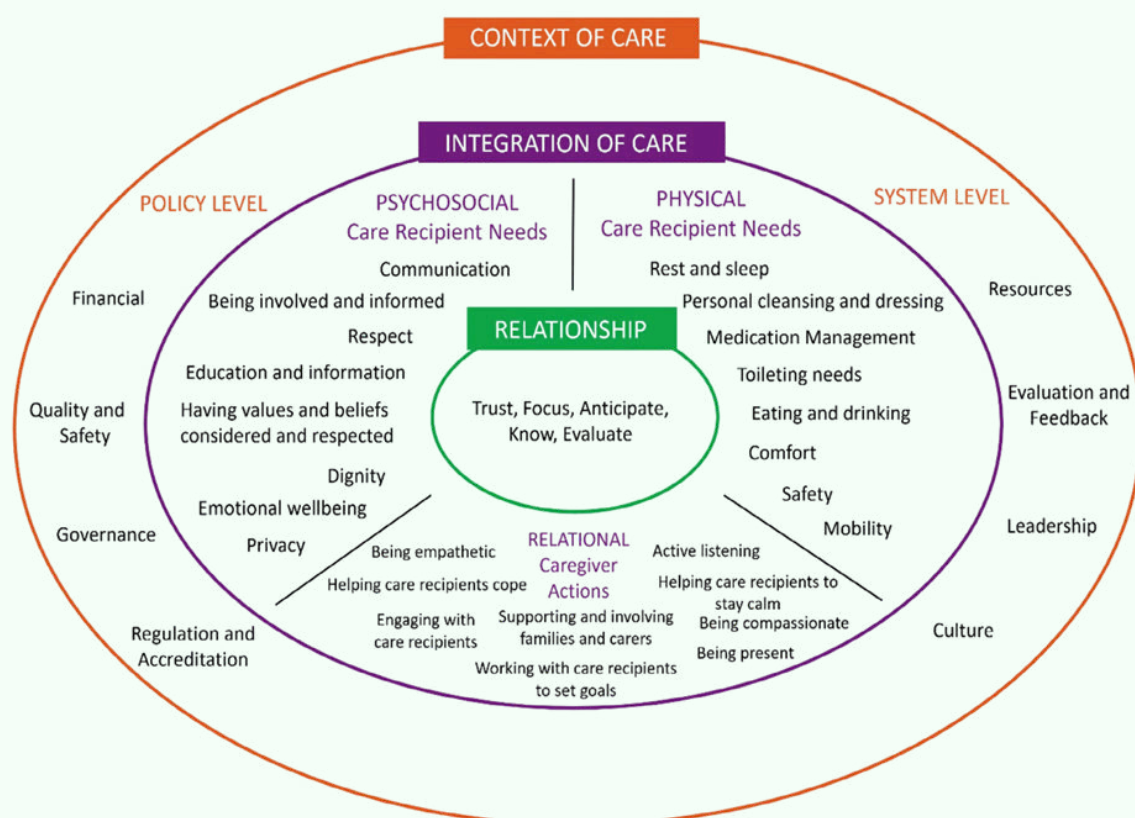
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# Case Study - Integrating Fundamentals of Care in Baccalaureate, Pre-Registration Nursing Education

## Overview of Case Study

This case study focuses on how the Fundamentals of Care (FoC) Framework can be integrated in curriculum in nursing education. This case study presents the rationale for integrating the FoC Framework in curriculum across entire nursing program, how it can be integrated, and the authors' reflections on the integration.



**FIGURE 1** The Fundamentals of Care Framework. Image obtained, with permission, from <https://ilccare.org/the-fundamentals-of-care-frame-work/> and content within image derived from (Feo, Conroy, et al. 2018; Kitson et al. 2013).

## The Rationale for The Activity

Nursing students and newly graduated nurses often lack the knowledge, skills, and competencies to balance competing demands and meet the challenges of delivering fundamental care in clinical practice. Nursing education plays a vital role in educating and preparing future nurses to work within highly specialised and complex healthcare systems in constant change, and to provide person-centred care, ensuring they meet patients' fundamental care needs.

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However, studies demonstrate<sup>(1, 2, 3)</sup> that newly graduated nurses experience several challenges when transitioning into clinical practice, including:



Given these challenges, in the planning of a new curriculum in 2016 at a School of Nursing at a University College in Denmark, it was considered crucial to:

- Enhance nursing students' competencies in identifying and assessing patients' fundamental care needs
- Increase nursing students' competencies in engaging patients in their care
- Increase nursing students' competencies in drawing on theories and evidence in clinical decision-making within in clinical practice
- Reduce the education-to-clinical practice gap

To achieve the above objectives, faculty and academic and executive management at the School of Nursing decided to integrate the conceptual FoC Framework in curricula throughout all seven semesters of the baccalaureate, pre-registration nursing program.

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## The Activity

**Aim of activity:** To integrate the FoC Framework in baccalaureate, pre-registration nursing education at a School of Nursing in Denmark.

**Why this activity:** Integrating the framework across the entire baccalaureate curriculum was designed to develop nursing students' understanding of the complexities of person-centred fundamental nursing care.

**Who the activity was for:** Nurse education managers and faculty at a school of nursing.

**Where the activity took place:** Baccalaureate, pre-registration nursing education, University College, Denmark. The baccalaureate nursing education programme in Denmark consists of a three-and-a-half years bachelor's degree based on 120 theoretical credits and 90 clinical credits divided into seven semesters.

**What the activity involved:** The process of integrating the Framework was undertaken at three levels: 1) an organisational level, 2) a faculty level, and 3) a student level.

### Box 1

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#### **Facilitator**

*Facilitation is a core construct in the process of integration and implementation of new initiatives (Harvey & Kitson, 2015). The facilitators' role is to be knowledgeable around FoC and engage in dialogue and reflection with colleagues around how FoC can be integrated and taught in nursing education. Furthermore, the facilitators' role is to engage in pilot-studies and research projects concerning the integration of FoC.*

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## ***Integration at the organisational level:***

- Academic and executive management engaged in and acquired knowledge on the FoC Framework, such as taking part in ILC conferences and reading seminal pieces on FoC
- Management committed to integrating the FoC Framework in curriculum
- Management engaged in a cross-institutional partnership on Fundamentals of Care involving six health-care institutions across Northern Denmark
- Fundamentals of Care was written into curricular documents
- Management allocated time for faculty members to attend seminars and workshops on FoC
- Five faculty members with a special interest in the teaching and development of FoC were appointed and allocated time as facilitators (please see Box 1 below) to support the process of integration
- Management allocated time to a faculty member for a joint position between clinical and educational practice to ensure knowledge transfer of FoC and collaboration between partners
- Time was allocated to evaluate the integration of the FoC Framework among faculty and nursing students
- The institution became a founding member of the ILC

## ***Integration at the Faculty level:***

- All faculty members were introduced to FoC and continuously updated on work concerning FoC and the FoC Framework.
- All faculty members were invited by leadership to attend workshops on how to integrate FoC in teaching and supervision every half year.
- Faculty members were given access to FoC literature. For easy accessibility to relevant and up-to-date knowledge on FoC, a folder containing continuously updated articles and teaching materials on FoC was uploaded on a shared electronic platform.
- Faculty members had continuous access to FoC facilitators for reflection, supervision, and feedback on their FoC initiatives in teaching and supervision.
- Faculty members were advised and expected to integrate the FoC Framework in their teaching where they thought relevant

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## *Integration at the student level:*

- A focus on fundamental care was integrated into different aspects of the curriculum throughout all six semesters, including:
  - Introductory lectures on FoC (Semesters 1, 2 and 3)
  - Lectures where the FoC Framework is integrated into the topic taught
  - Case-based work
  - Simulation laboratories
  - Requirements for exams
  - Semester descriptions
- Integration of FoC in joint educational interventions (e.g. in reflective exercises and case-based work) across university and clinical practice
- A dedicated FoC-space developed on students' digital learning platform
- Document on how nursing theories relate to FoC
- Podcast on FoC

## **Implementing the activity**

The process of implementing the activity was based on the i-PARIHS framework (Integrated Promoting Action on Research Implementation in Health Services) (4).

Examples of implementation initiatives included:

- Management engagement and support at the organisational level (e.g., allocating resources such as time and staff to engage in integrating the framework in nursing education)
- Establishing a team of FoC facilitators
- FoC educational activities for faculty members (e.g., workshops and symposium on FoC)
- FoC written into curricula (e.g. written into case-studies, requirements for exams, and lectures on FoC throughout all semesters, and integrated into students' digital learning platform)
- Continuous evaluation among faculty members of the integration of FoC (e.g., oral and written evaluations following workshops and symposiums)
- Adjustment of implementation initiatives based on faculty and student evaluations



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## Evaluating the activity

### Method of evaluation:

The evaluation of the activity is an ongoing activity, where the aim is to adjust implementation initiatives concurrently.

Evaluations have been in the form of:



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### Results:

At the **organisational** level, the results of the continuous evaluation show that:

- Being part of a formalised cross-institutional partnership around FoC and introducing FoC as a conceptual framework for nursing across educational and clinical contexts supports the establishment of a shared language across on what fundamental care is and what it requires from nurses and nursing students(7). The partnership contributed to a mutual obligation on integrating and using the FoC Framework in educational activities.
- To sustain a dedicated attention on FoC it is imperative that FoC facilitators ensure a continuous engagement in the implementation work to embed the FoC Framework in educational activities.

At the **faculty** level, the results of the continuous evaluation show that:

- Because the decision to integrate the FoC Framework did not originate from faculty members, the decision resulted in reluctance and scepticism among some faculty as to why and how FoC should be integrated. It was therefore important that, through continuous evaluation, faculty members had the opportunity to express and discuss their thoughts and reflections on integrating FoC. Based on these evaluations, workshops and seminars were offered to meet faculty's need for support.
- Faculty members expressed that using the FoC Framework in educational activities provides a consistent focus and guidance on what nursing care is and requires.

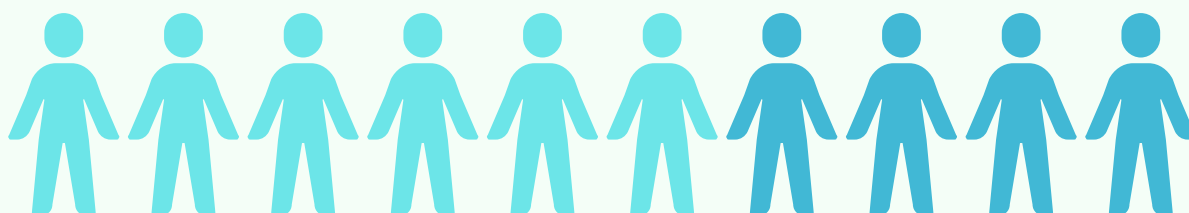


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## Results:

At the **student** level, the results of the continuous evaluation show that:

- Nursing students draw on the FoC Framework when describing what nursing is. Their descriptions of the complexities of nursing care, including how the context influences meeting patients' needs, have increased in depth.(5)
- Working with the FoC Framework across educational and clinical settings has increased students' awareness of the necessity and relevance of theories and evidence in explaining, guiding, and delivering nursing care. Furthermore, integrating the FoC Framework in case-based work seems to draw attention to aspects of fundamental care that are otherwise overshadowed by technical procedures or task-oriented care, particularly psychosocial and relational elements of care.
- From students' and clinical supervisors' perspective, integrating FoC as a conceptual framework for nursing in case-based work supports critical reflection and evidence-based practice skills. The nursing students have a more rational approach to questioning practice, through critical thinking and reflection, supporting a holistic approach to integrating relational, physical, and psychosocial aspects of patient care.
- Nursing students report that they use the FoC Framework in their written and oral examinations to illustrate, explain, and discuss the complexities of how nurses deliver fundamental care.



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## Summary

The process of integrating the FoC Framework relies on a supportive context and management, a well-informed and engaged faculty, and continuous reflections and evaluations on where and how the conceptual framework can best be integrated in nursing education. In our context, the integration has stimulated and supported critical thinking, increased focus on the psychosocial and relational aspects of care, highlighted the relevance of evidence and theories, and underlined the importance of involving patients in clinical decision-making. Creating a shared language across educational and clinical settings through use of the FoC Framework has the potential to address some of the challenges related to the education-to-clinical practice gap.

## Tips

- Acknowledge that integrating new initiatives demands a change of thinking and behaviour
- Ensure academic and executive leadership support, engagement and commitment to the integration of FoC
- Establish a supportive culture through FoC facilitators and allocated time for FoC activities
- Conduct continuous evaluation of faculty and students' perspectives on working with FoC
- Establish a close collaboration with allied health care institutions on integrating FoC
- Consider conducting a structured pre-post evaluation of integrating the FoC Framework in nursing education to further establish the impact of FoC educational activities.

## For more information

Please see published paper: Voldbjerg, S., Laugesen, B., Bahnsen, I. B., Jørgensen, L., Sørensen, I. M., Grønkjaer, M., & Sørensen, E. E. (2018). Integrating the fundamentals of care framework in baccalaureate nursing education: An example from a Nursing School in Denmark. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 27(11-12), 2506-2515. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.14354>

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