

2nd International Conference on Nursing & Healthcare

November 17-19, 2014 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Chicago-North Shore Conference Center, USA

Development and psychometric testing of the 11-item English language usage scale (ELUS-11)

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Similar to a number of other English-speaking countries, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia requires nurses seeking initial registration to be proficient in all components of the English language: listening, reading, writing and speaking. English language proficiency is also vital for academic success among commencing nursing students, and a direct relationship between English language usage and academic performance has been established, as assessed by the 5-item English Language Acculturation Scale (ELAS). However, this scale does not assess the listening or writing components of English language usage. The aim of this study was to develop a brief self-report English language usage scale that included all four components of English language skills using a large cohort of first year undergraduate nursing students. Using a prospective, correlational design, 853 commencing nursing students were surveyed in 2014. Participants completed an 11-item English Language Usage Scale (ELUS-11) that contains items related to listening, reading, writing, speaking and general English language skills. Exploratory factor analysis revealed a one-component solution with component loadings ranging from 0.82-0.89. Cronbach's alpha of the ELUS-11 was 0.96. Controlling for age, hours spent in paid employment and academic learning support, the ELUS-11 was shown to be an independent and significant predictor of academic performance. The current version of the ELUS-11 that assesses all four components of English language skills demonstrates validity and reliability as an English language screening tool to identify nursing students who may require additional academic and language support in their nursing studies.

Biography

Yenna Salamonson, completed her PhD studies at the University of Western Sydney. She is committed to teaching and supporting students for whom English is an additional language, have collaborated in a number of research projects related to academic literacies, and have published a number of peer-reviewed papers in this research area. She has also jointly supervised research students focusing on this program of research. She has also been a recipient of a number of teaching awards at the university and national levels.

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