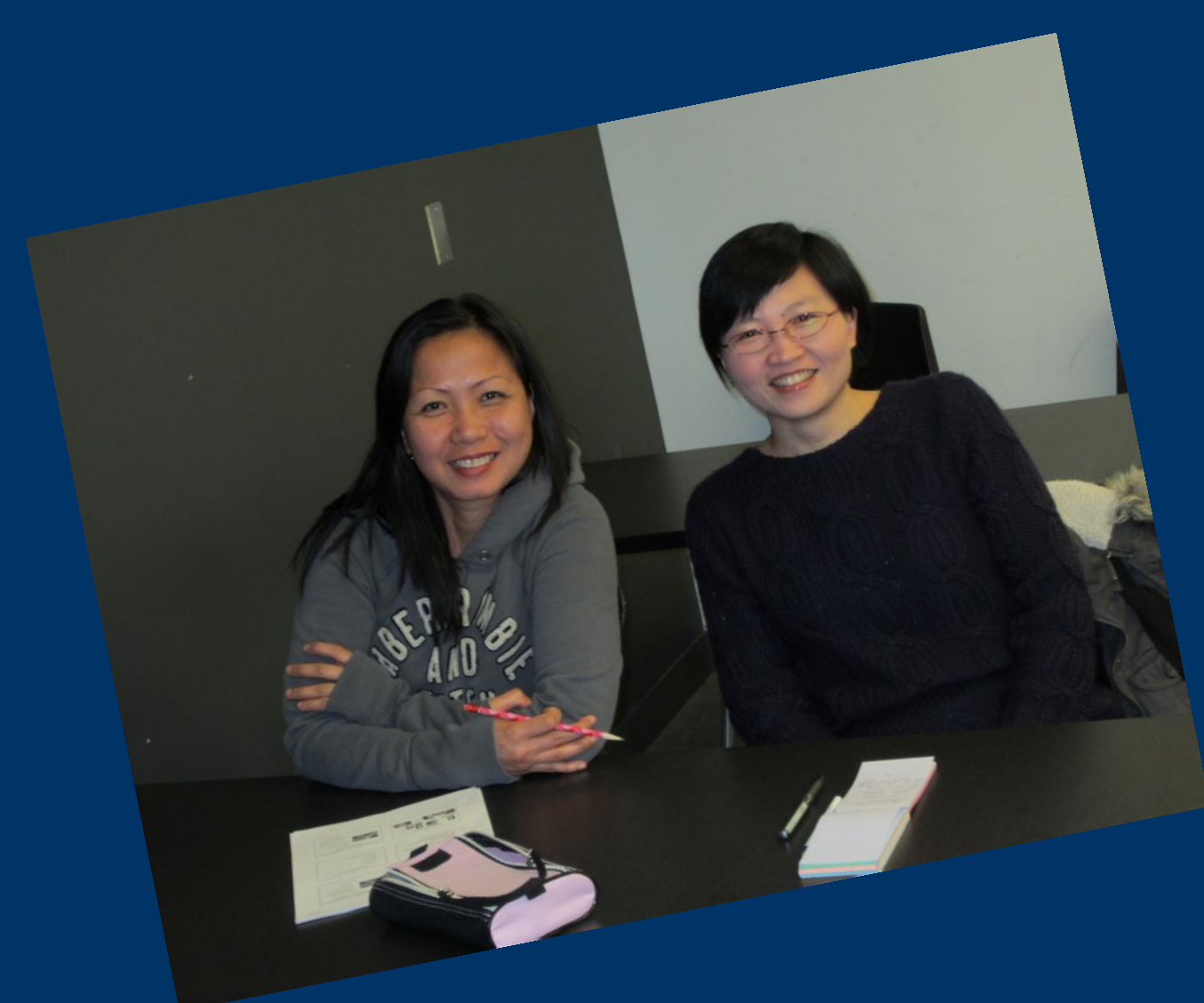


# A Proposal to Investigate the Transitioning Experiences of Internationally-Educated Nurses who Attended Academic Bridging Programs in Two Canadian Provinces

Edward Venzon Cruz, RN, BN, MScN<sup>1, 2</sup>; Gina M. A. Higginbottom, RN, PhD<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada; <sup>2</sup>Centennial College, Toronto, ON, Canada

## OBJECTIVES

- To investigate how academic bridging programs are helping internationally-educated nurses (IENs) gain registration and transition to Canadian health care context.
- To give voice to IENs' challenges and meanings surrounding their overall experience in gaining nursing registration in Canada.
- To provide a better understanding of how academic bridging programs facilitate (or not) the IENs ability to transition to Canada's health work force.



## BACKGROUND

- Registered nurse (RN) credentialing in Canada, and subsequent employment, adjustment and integration into Canada's workforce involves a complex process (Kolawale, 2009).
- As part of the credentialing process, IENs may be required to undertake academic bridging programs to demonstrate safe practice or to meet identified gaps and challenges in their previous education and practice.
- Academic bridging programs have been offered to IENs as a means to promote their rapid integration, allowing them to move quickly into Canada's nursing workforce (Lum, 2006; Lum & Turrittin, 2007).
- Bassendowski and Petrucka (2010) suggested that "these programs are relatively new and research will need to be undertaken in order to justify their existence" (p. 10).
- Higginbottom (2011) reported disillusionment related to insufficient post-arrival support to IENs recruited to work in Alberta.
- Paucity of studies addressing IEN transition in Canada.



## DESIGN

Focused ethnography (FE) will be utilized for this study. FE, as an applied research methodology, has been found to be particularly useful in describing shared experiences of a particular group of individuals with respect to specific issues or topics in our highly diverse society (Knoblauch, 2005; Richards & Morse, 2007). As noted by Higginbottom (2011), FE is valuable "for exploratory descriptive [studies] of this nature" that focus on the transitioning experiences of IENs who attended academic bridging programs (p. 3).

## DEMONSTRATION OF RIGOUR

- Triangulation
  - IEN participant interviews
  - Field visits and observations
  - Curriculum review
- Reflective team meetings
- Audit trail to demonstrate transparency in the steps taken, as well as the decisions arrived at in the development and reporting of research findings (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).
- Reflexive journal to demonstrate reflexivity



## METHOD

- Purposive and snowball sampling, 40 participants, guided by data saturation
- Participants: IENs who completed an academic bridging program in Alberta, and Ontario, had taken and passed the Canadian Registered Nurse Exam (CRNE), and registered and working as RNs in either province.
- University of Alberta Research Ethics Board (REB) approval
- Focus group or individual interviews – audiotaped and transcribed
- Curricular review of representative academic bridging programs
- ATLAS.ti (ATLAS.ti GmbH, Berlin, Germany) for data storage, management and analysis
- Data analysis for ethnographic studies according to Roper and Shapira (2000)
  - coding field notes and interviews
  - sorting to identify patterns
  - generalizing constructs and theories
  - memoing to note personal reflections and insights



## SIGNIFICANCE OF NEW KNOWLEDGE FROM THIS RESEARCH

- Provide descriptions of IENs' transitioning experiences in Canada.
- Contribute to an understanding of the training and education needs of IENs from their own point of view.
- Contribute to an understanding of the mechanisms used by IENs to experience ongoing changes in their professional and personal lives that lead to health-illness consequences, and advance knowledge that may be useful to facilitate the transition experience of IENs in Canada (Meleis, 2010).



## REFERENCES

- Bassendowski, S. & Petrucka, P. (2010). *A consideration of transition for internationally educated nurses in Saskatchewan IEN research project – Final report*. Regina, Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association. Retrieved from [http://www.srna.org/images/stories/pdfs/communications/pdf/final\\_report\\_ien\\_research\\_project\\_01\\_11\\_2011.pdf](http://www.srna.org/images/stories/pdfs/communications/pdf/final_report_ien_research_project_01_11_2011.pdf)
- Cohen, D. & Crabtree, B. (2006). Audit trail. *Qualitative research guidelines project*. Retrieved from <http://www.qualres.org/HomeAudi-3700.html>
- Higginbottom, G.M.A. (2011). The transitioning experiences of internationally-educated nurses into a Canadian health care system: A focused ethnography. *BMC Nursing*, 10, 1-13. doi:10.1186/1472-6955-10-14.
- Knoblauch, H. (2005). Focused Ethnography. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 6(3). Retrieved from <http://nbnresolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0503440>
- Kolawole, B. (2009). Understanding the barriers confronting internationally educated nurses in integrating into the Ontario healthcare system using postcolonial theory. *2009 Ethnic immigration and pluralism graduate student conference*. Retrieved from <http://www.utoronto.ca/ethnicstudies/Kolawole.pdf>
- Lum, L. (2006). Distance education – A help or hindrance to employment integration of international professionals. *The International Journal of Technology, Knowledge & Society*, 2(7), 1-10.
- Lum, L. & Turrittin, J. (2007). *CERIS project synopsis – Educating for employment integration: Ontario education projects*. Retrieved from <http://ceris.metropolis.net/Virtual%20Library/RFPReports/LumTurrittin2006.pdf>
- Meleis, A.I. (2010). *Transitions theory – Middle range and situation-specific theories in nursing research and practice*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing.
- Richards, L. & Morse, J.M. (2007). *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Roper, J.M. & Shapira, J. (2000). *Ethnography in nursing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sochan, A. & Singh, M.D. (2007). Acculturation and socialization: voices of internationally educated nurses in Ontario. *International Nursing Review*, 54(2), 130-136.

## CONTACT

**Edward Venzon Cruz**  
 Ph.D. Student  
 Faculty of Nursing  
 University of Alberta  
 Email: [evcruz@ualberta.ca](mailto:evcruz@ualberta.ca)  
 Tel. No.: (647) 778-9179