Pulse: Language and Communication Skills for Foreign Nurses

IO4) ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR LINGUISTIC AND COMMUNICATION COMPETENCES OF NURSES

METHODOLOGY OF THE
ASSESSMENT TOOL

Lead Author: FONDO FORMACION EUSKADI

Preliminary notes

According to common European framework of reference for languages Multilingual and pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for communicative purposes and to participate in an intercultural relationship in which a person, as a social agent, he dominates -with different degrees- several languages and has experience of various cultures. This is not seen as the overlapping or juxtaposition of competences differentiated, but as the existence of a complex competition and even composed that the user can use.

The usual approach is to present the learning of a foreign language as the sum, in different compartments, of the competence to communicate in it plus the competence to communicate in the mother tongue. The concept of plurilingual and pluricultural competence tends to:

• Consider that an individual does not have a repertoire of differentiated and separated competences to communicate depending on the languages he or she knows, but a plurilingual and pluricultural competence that includes the set of those languages.

• Highlight the pluricultural dimensions of this multiple competence, but without necessarily implying links between the developments of the capacities that are exercised

The term "evaluation" is used with the concrete meaning of assessment of the degree of linguistic domain that the user has. All tests are a form of evaluation, although there are many other ways to evaluate (for example, the checklists used in continuous assessment, the teacher's daily observation) that could not be considered as "tests". Evaluating is a broader concept than measuring or assessing competence or language proficiency. Any measurement or assessment is a form of evaluation, but in a language program, aspects are evaluated, not properly linguistic domain, such as the effectiveness of concrete methods and materials, the type and quality of the discourse produced throughout the program, the satisfaction of the student and the teacher, the effectiveness of teaching, etc. This document deals specifically with the evaluation of the linguistic domain and not with the evaluation in its broadest sense.

The training of nurses will be provided in one self-paced e-learning course aimed at development of language and communication competences needed for the two most frequently occupied positions by foreign nurses – nurse in a hospital and nurse providing home care: Course Hospital and Home Care.

The trainee will have the opportunity to use the course content depending on her/his career plans and preferences for work abroad or already occupied in one of the two positions.

The training will lead to acquisition of language and communication skills at level B1+ CEFR.

The course aims at development of language and communication competences of nurses in mobility or planning mobility in French, Italian and Dutch from level A2/B1 to level B1+ (CEFR) in order to perform effectively their duties in providing care for patients in hospitals or at home:

- communicate successfully with doctors, other nurses, patients and their families;
- read and understand instructions and the standard medical documentation;
- understand and use medical and standard language for work;
- manage medical emergency situations.

1. Learning objectives

Learning objectives were defined based on identification and analysis of the main work activities performed by the nurses:

- at a hospital irrespectively of the unit;
- at patient's home irrespectively of the patient's disease.

General course objectives related to nurse's duties at hospital:

- Improve nurses' ability to understand and produce oral and written Italian/ Dutch/French for nursing as used with colleagues, superiors, patients and their families in different hospital-related situations.
- Develop an understanding of what hospital culture means, and its impact on health professionals, patients and their families.
- Develop positive attitudes toward the Italian/ Dutch/French language and the respective cultures.

Specific objectives of the course

- Improve understanding and respectively implementation of hospital rules and regulations, including quality standards and ethical principles in nursing adopted in the hospital;
- Develop understanding and respectively following administrative instructions and requirements;
- Develop language and communication skills for filling and using medical documentation;
- Improve language and communication skills, necessary for quality performance of duties in hospital-related situations – patient admission; care for the patient and daily guidance; maintaining working relationships with colleagues (doctors and other nurses); patient discharge from the hospital (support to the patient and family members with respect to treatment, diet and care at home);
- Improve language and communication skills, necessary for quality performance of care in home care-related situations - personal care and daily guidance; medical care and managing emergency situations; reporting about implementation of the care plan to the patient's doctor and to family members/relatives.

2. Structure of the course

The structure of the course corresponds to the general and specific learning objectives defined under the previous item and follows the sequence of work activities performed by a nurse in the two working environments.

The course is structured in units corresponding to separate group of working activities. For each unit communication tasks that the trainee should master are defined. The definitions integrate skills for understanding of written and spoken language, speaking, spoken interaction and at lower extent written interaction, considering the work activities specifics and identified training needs. The communication tasks are defined at level B1+. The definition and differentiation of communication tasks will be refined during development of course curricula.

The courses will be supported by a Medical Vocabulary, structured in:

- Body parts
- Organs
- Illnesses
- Medical instruments/tools/equipment
- Medical manipulations

This will ensure that nurses will be able to:

- understand the terms in medical documentation and training materials.
- know and use the terms in spoken and written interaction with the medical professionals.

3. The Assessment of the e-learning course

The detailed structure of each course is presented in the two tables below.

A- Roles in the e-learning course

In addition to the students, other figures intervene, such as:

- Teacher-tutor: Design and teach the course. Guide, facilitates and evaluates the student's learning.
- Technical Coordinator: Solve computer problems and contact students who do not participate regularly.
- Pedagogical supervisor: Advises the teacher during the training, observe, evaluate and write a report on the training process.

The evaluation will allow us the collection and analysis of relevant information in which to support value judgments about the object evaluated. These will be used to redirect, if necessary, situations that can be improved and for subsequent decision making on qualification and certification.

Do not mismatch evaluation with qualification since this is only one aspect of the whole evaluation process, it is related to the evaluation or final grades and has exclusively accrediting intentions.

For the evaluation of the PULSE e-learning course we have to take it in account as a continuous and planned process divided in 5 issues that must be specified:

B- Why evaluate:

• To check whether the objectives set out in the start of courses (including student learning).

• To draw conclusions and improve certain aspects in subsequent editions of the courses.

The analysis of the data obtained in the different training processes make it possible to carry out studies and statistics and to evaluate online methodology globally.

C- What to evaluate:

• Learning and student participation

• The entire training process

D- When to evaluate (permanent process):

• Initial evaluation

• Continuous assessment

• Final evaluation

E- Who evaluate:

All the figures involved in the training process:

• Tutor teacher

• Students

• Coordinator

• Supervisor

F- How to evaluate:

With procedures and tools suitable for online training.

For each type of course, the planning of the evaluation is different already which must be adapted to the specific characteristics of each one.

G- Evaluation of student participation and learning

• It is fundamental to evaluate the participation and to check if the students have reached certain learning and therefore if the objectives of the course have been reached.

• It is essential that the student receives feedback on how the course is being used. It also serves as a motivating element.

H- When, how, what procedures and instruments do we use in the online training evaluation?

A. *Initial evaluation (diagnostic)*

The initial evaluation has a diagnostic purpose and identification of needs It allows us to assess the potential, the level of skills and prior knowledge that the learner has with respect to the objectives to be achieved in the course.

The initial assessment will be implemented before the training for nurses who do not have official certificate for the entry levels A2 and B1 and after completion the respective course at level B2.

Two instruments in the initial evaluation will be:

• Previous technical-computer knowledge

• Questionnaire to evaluate the previous knowledge, profile and expectations towards the course

B. *Continuous evaluation throughout the course. The evaluation will be developed throughout the learning process.*

In this way we will ensure that the students are achieving the objectives. It will also give us information to correct or reorient about the progress of the teaching process.

Evaluation of the learning and the participation of the students in the PULSE e-learning course

In order to evaluate the students' learning, the student must solve different kind of activities. These will be evaluated following some criteria. We will use also instruments or control tools that allow registering participation and connections automatically.

a) Activities:

- Design of activities at the end of each of the Units

b) Questionnaires:

- Open
- Closed
- Self-assessment

c) Reports

- Practical cases
- Discussion forums

d) Conversations

- The student will solve the activities and send them to the tutor.
- The tutor will correct the activities following some criteria

The continuous evaluation will allow us to know about the students, the evolution they are having during the course and in case the students do not keep the schedule we will communicate to them, as well as the term they have to repeat.

e) Automatic tools to control participation

Automatic tracking of connections and daily participation of students.

C. *Final evaluation (summative)*

We intend to certify or qualify the level of performance achieved by the learners.

Criteria or standards to use in the PULSE course:

Qualification criteria

- Evaluation codes: A = Excellent, B = Capable, C = Not capable
- Minimum number of activities to be carried out in the course or by module 80%
- Minimum number of modules that the student must pass to obtain the degree.
- Percentage of the theoretical part (75%) and of the final project (25%)

Type of certification: Diploma of participation

I- Continuous evaluation throughout the course

The evaluation must be developed throughout the learning process.

In this way it is ensured that the students are achieving the objectives posed. It also gives us information to correct or reorient about the progress of the teaching process (allows to offer help and assistance in the moments when doubts or blockages may occur).

Feedback is especially important in online teaching, since which is the student's means of being aware of the training process that is following.

Structure of Course 1. Hospital Care

Units	Communication tasks
	Level B1+
1. First day at work	Understanding and describing the hospital structure, functions and regulations to a patient/ family member. Understanding the administrative requirements related to his/her work in the hospital and communication with doctors and other nurses.
2. Patient admission	Understanding information about the patient - patient's complains and the doctor's instructions. Filling in the documentation based on doctor's instructions. Understanding emergency admission procedure in the hospital.
3. Care for the patient and daily guidance	Understanding patient's requests and complains. Asking and understanding information about symptoms and pains. Giving and understanding instructions for the patient. Maintaining conversation with patient on everyday topics.
4. Diet and medicines	Giving oral instructions about diet. Giving oral instructions about treatment. Understanding and responding to patient's questions related to diet and treatment. Providing advices for healthy life style.
5. Maintaining relations with colleagues	Giving and understanding instruction of colleagues. Reporting on patient's condition.
6. Patient discharge	Filling discharge document. Explaining treatment to the patient. Providing information to patient's family about treatment and the necessary care at home.

METHODOLOGY OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL

The PULSE e-learning course has been designed to assess your ability to competently apply your professional nursing skills and knowledge in France, The Netherlands and Italy. It is set at the level expected of nurses as they enter the profession (at the point of registration). This means you must show that you are capable of applying knowledge to the care of patients at the level expected of a newly registered nurse.

The examination tests your ability to apply knowledge to the care of patients rather than how well you can remember and recite facts. All of the test scenarios and any questions relate to current best practice and you should answer them in relation to published evidence and according to local arrangements.

If the user of PULSE e-learning course needs to take a language skill to work in healthcare in The Netherlands, France or/and Italy he/she can check the improvements gained after the course realizing the Assessment.

PULSE e-learning course uses healthcare real scenarios in order to feel more confident in the first working day abroad.

PULSE e-learning course is an international English language test that assesses the language proficiency of healthcare professionals who seek to register and practice in an English-speaking environment. It provides a valid and reliable assessment of all four language skills – listening, reading, and writing– with an emphasis on communication in healthcare professional settings.

There are 3 parts in to be assessed in the final test of Self-assessment:

LISTENING (20 minutes)
• Recorded, simulated professional/patient consultation with note-taking questions.

READING (20 minutes)
• Skim and scan short health-related texts and complete a summary paragraph by filling in missing words.

WRITTING (20 minutes)
•The task is to write a letter, usually a referral letter. Specially for some professions, a different type of letter is required: e.g. a letter of transfer or discharge, or a letter to advise or inform a patient, carer, or group

How is the test scored?

You will receive a Statement of Results which shows your grade for each of the three sub-tests, from A (highest) to E (lowest). Each of the four sub-tests is assessed in a specific way.

GRADE	Description of the ability
A (90-100%)	Very high level of performance
B (70-90%)	Very good level of performance; adequate for appropriate visa categories, healthcare courses and workplaces
C (50-70%)	Good level of performance; adequate for appropriate visa categories, some healthcare courses and workplaces
D (50-30%)	Moderate level of performance: requires improvement
E (>30%)	Low level of performance: requires considerable improvement

LISTENING:

How is listening ability assessed in PULSE e-learning course?

A wide range of task types are included so that a good sample of each candidate's listening ability is tested. This includes tasks assessing comprehension, such as:

- 'multiple- choice' questions
- 'short-answer response' questions
- tasks that assess the ability to listen for specific information – for example, completing tables or lecture notes, 'sentence-completion' tasks or ticking/circling boxes or lists, etc.

How is the listening test scored?

The answers of the learners will be automatically corrected by the software of the e-learning course. This way the conflicts will be avoid.

According to the answers corrected the learners will get a score that will give to the learner a grade.

The learners MUST pass with a minimum of C grade all the 3 parts to get a MINIMUM grade.

READING:

With this test we will assess the ability to source information from multiple texts, to synthesize information in a meaningful way and to 'skim' and 'scan' material to retrieve information quickly. It is required to read 3-4 short texts (a total of approximately 350 words) related to a single topic, and complete a summary paragraph by filling in the missing words (15-20 gaps in total).

Reading (the summary task) tests the ability to skim and scan quickly across different texts on a given topic in order to identify and synthesize selected information. For that purpose, is strictly timed and it must be completed all the items within 20 minutes. To complete the task successfully, it will be also needed the ability to understand the conventions of different medical text types, differentiate main ideas from supporting information, and understand the presentation of numerical and textual data.

WRITING:

The task is to write a letter, usually a referral letter. Sometimes a different type of letter is required: e.g. a letter of transfer or discharge, or a letter to advise or inform a patient, career, or group.

Along with the task instructions, the learner will receive stimulus material (case notes and/or other related documentation) which includes information to use in your response.

Your performance is scored against five criteria and receives a band score for each criterion:

- Overall Task Fulfillment
- Appropriateness of Language
- Comprehension of Stimulus
- Linguistic Features (grammar and cohesion)
- Presentation Features (spelling, punctuation, layout)