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Shelbi Gesch  
*Dordt College*

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# SPANISH/NURSING COURSE BRIDGES BARRIERS

If you or a loved one have ever needed emergency medical care, you know the feeling of disorientation and confusion that typically accompanies an unscheduled trip to the emergency room or medical clinic.

Imagine complicating that experience with a language barrier.

Knowing this situation is a reality for many in Sioux Center and beyond, Dordt offers a Spanish language course for nursing students and those studying to enter other medical fields.

Designed to be practical and fit into the already packed schedule of the busy nursing student, Spanish for Health Professionals is a one-credit conversation course built on role-playing situations. Developed by Nursing Professor Amy Van Beek and Language Studies Professor Rikki Heldt, the course includes both medical vocabulary and vocabulary that helps patients interpret insurance and legal forms and communicate vital information before a certified hospital interpreter arrives.

Instructors often use recorded conversations to help them teach, says Heldt. Some of the situations are so unusual they cause students to laugh. One such scenario, however, involving a patient who came in bleeding because he'd tried to cut off a wart, proved closer to reality than students expected. The next day, says Heldt, a student came in having observed the same scenario in the clinic.

Nursing students put their learning into practice by working alongside medical professionals at Promise Community Health Center, a Sioux Center medical clinic that serves much of the city's growing Latino population. By working with Promise, students can fulfill two program requirements at once and get



PHOTO SUBMITTED

**Senior Stephanie Haan was one of two Dordt nursing students selected to travel to Guatemala for 10 days to assist local nurses and gain clinical experience in a cross-cultural context.**

real-world skill practice—an opportunity they appreciate.

One student wrote about her experience shadowing an interpreter at the Promise Community Health Center: "I was surprised at how much Spanish I have picked up in such a short time. I was able to follow most of the conversation and understand what the patients needed and what assessment questions the CNA and translator were asking the patients. It was an awesome experience to interact with Spanish-speaking people in a medical setting and be able to understand what was going on."

SHELBI GESCH (17)

## Faculty Notes

Language Studies Professor Dr. **Leendert van Beek** recently received his Ph.D. in education, with a specialization in postsecondary and adult education. For his dissertation, van Beek interviewed 16 language teachers who had been granted excellence in teaching awards. "Most participants, both Christians and non-Christians, agreed that loving your neighbor was a necessary component of excellent teaching," says van Beek.

Education Professor Dr. **Dave Mulder** received his Ed.D. in Educational Technology from Boise State University. His dissertation was about pre-service teachers and tech integration. Mulder says administrators often look to young teachers to bring technology to the classroom, but his research suggests that this is not an effective approach. "Even though young teachers are often perceived to be tech savvy, there is a difference between being able to use social media and cell phones and being able to integrate technology into the classroom in a way that supports teaching and learning," says Mulder. Integrating technology and education requires technological adeptness, but pedagogical knowledge is "even more important."

"Learning to match the right tools to both the teaching methods they will use and the content they will teach is an essential part of becoming an effective teacher," says Mulder.

Social Work Professor Dr. **Erin Olson** completed her Ph.D. in social work from Baylor University. Her dissertation focused on the concept of calling as it relates to social work. Olson found that both religious and nonreligious students who had a stronger sense of calling tended to have higher levels of life satisfaction.

"While calling is something we talk about a lot at Dordt, within the Social Work Department we hadn't had a lot of time to consider how our majors might experience their calling a little differently, and how having a sense of calling might help them persevere when working with broken and vulnerable human beings gets difficult," says Olson.