Purpose
The purpose of this project is to integrate diverse methods of experiential learning throughout a baccalaureate nursing program curriculum to improve student engagement in empathic behaviors.

Background
Empathy serves as a foundational nursing principle inherent in the nurse’s ability to form those relationships from which to care for patients. To be empathic means to share the emotions and sentiments of another, to understand their perspective, and to communicate that understanding. It is a way to connect with and understand someone else’s experience (Kuhnly, 2016). The purpose of this project is to integrate diverse methods of experiential learning into the curriculum to improve student engagement in empathic behaviors.

Methodology
The proposed experimental learning experiences currently being contemplated are described in the following section.

Introduction to Professional Nursing
- Unit on empathy and Caring
- Elimination- Sitting on simulated soft stool during class
- Ostomy experience

Fundamentals of Professional Nursing
- Stroke simulation/feeding
- Adult incontinence

Psychiatric Nursing
- Hearing Voices Lab simulation

Nursing Care of the Adult and Older Adult
- Decreased sensory simulation
- Dementia unit and activity

Advanced Principles of Professional Nursing
- Interview of family member on health crisis

Nursing Care of Women and Children
- Empathy Belly

Multiple years/RN to BSN students/Interprofessional students
- Community Action Poverty Simulation

Preliminary Qualitative Results-
Excerpts from Reflective Journals on Empathy Belly

"Sitting with this extra 30 pounds, especially behind the steering wheel, was terrible! All of the water in the bladder pouch sat on top of my actual bladder and it was so uncomfortable. I felt like I had to pee all day but in reality it was just the pouch squishing my bladder . . . Now I see why women in their last trimester are in and out of the bathroom all day and how frustrating it can be".

"The way people looked at me I could tell they were probably thinking the same and it made me feel bad about myself. Although I wasn’t really pregnant I felt the shame that other young mothers possibly experience . . . I can see how the fear of being judged creates this disparity of teens telling their families early and seeking prenatal care."

Discussion
Experiential learning looks to have had a promising positive effect on student development of empathic behaviors. Preliminary data review reveals gained insight from the student who wore the empathy belly as evidenced in journal comments such as

Empathy Scale for Quantitative Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Costs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simulation supplies ostomy bags, simulated stool, Depends</td>
<td>268.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearing Voices MP3 players</td>
<td>150.00</td>
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<td>Existing feeding, immobility supplies</td>
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<td>Faculty time to develop plan</td>
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References


