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The Barry University/ Port-de-Paix, Haiti Nursing and Education International Learning Partnership (NEILP), provided opportunities for interdisciplinary faculty scholarship and professional development, while contributing to the education of pre-professional Haitian nurses and teachers. Faculty/staff exploratory trips to Port-de-Paix, Haiti lead to the development of (1) faculty/student research and publication opportunities; (2) international service-learning courses and other academic engaged learning opportunities; and (3) co-curricular intercultural and community service programs. Through this collaboration, the partners have worked to integrate best practices of collective impact and international engaged scholarship to create a coordinated, unified collaboration between Miami and the poorest region of the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, the N.W Territories of Haiti.

Barry University is a Catholic institution of higher learning located in Miami, Florida. The university is located between two of the largest Haitian-American communities in the United States. Founded in 1940 by the Adrian Dominican Sisters, the Barry education and university experience is rooted in the university’s four core commitments: Knowledge and Truth, Inclusive Community, Social Justice, and Collaborative Service.

It is in the fulfillment of these core commitments that members from Barry University’s Center for Community Service Initiatives (CCSI), instigated a proposal for a travel collaboration between its center, the College of Nursing & Health Sciences (CNHS), and the Adrian Dominican School of Education (ADSOE). This collaborative partnership began between these three program disciplines in 2015 and culminated into the successful joint venture of an Alternative and Nursing Travel Abroad experience in March 2016 and 2017, to the N.W territories of Port-de-Paix, Jean Rabel, Gros-Morne, and La Tortue, Haiti.

Students were selected from a variety of disciplines including, nursing, social work, political science, and veterinary studies. Inclusive criteria for participation and travel included being in their senior year of studies, participating in an interview selection process, having updated international travel documents, and if selected, agreeing to partake in several two-hour pre-travel workshops. Chosen participants, including all faculty participants, were asked to consider the challenges faced by the host country, and to reflect on their own experiences in building cross-cultural, and university-community partnerships. These workshops are essential to the efforts of team building, shared space and cultural preparation for travel.

The field of Engaged Scholarship has been heralded as a key educational practice that is inclusive, promotes community voice, and disrupts traditional notions of knowledge within the academy (Butin, 2010). Yet, when engaging in local, but especially, international partnerships, it is common for university-community relationships to become unbalanced, if not vulnerable to neocolonial tendencies (Stoeker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009; Cruz & Giles, 2000). Therefore, how do institutes of higher education avoid traditional community service and international exchange models that focus on imparting knowledge rather than emphasizing authentic collaboration? When forming cross-cultural, international, university-community partnerships, how can schools instead, develop relationships of mutuality that value multiple ways of knowing?
This NIELP endeavor utilized Hartman, Morris Paris, and Blache-Cohen’s (2013) Fair Trade Learning global educational exchange model, and applied this community partnership framework to our nursing and education travel partnership in Haiti’s remote Northwest Territories. The Fair Trade Learning model utilized focuses on reciprocal, cross-cultural, and international educational partnerships that (1) are community-driven, (2) protect vulnerable populations, (3) consider economic disparities and seek financial transparency, and (4) strive to advance global justice beyond volunteer experiences.

In engaging in reciprocal student and faculty hands-on clinical and educational experiences in these remote regions, the visiting team was able to see first-hand the health care and academic/clinical nursing challenges that are faced by the region. This immersion experience brought authenticity in the form of experiential learning.

Experiential learning is a process in which students acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and values in a relevant setting. The process involves linking theory to practice through student engagement and critical reflection (CCSI Barry University, 2014). The expectant goals of the collaborative student and faculty travel abroad venture was to identify both nursing and educational needs in the NW regions of Haiti, to build faculty and student relationships through trans-formative learning, and to foster community and scholastic opportunities for future collaborations.

During both collaborative excursions, the travel participants visited many local health clinics and hospitals, several grade schools and higher-education institutions, as well as met with many local leaders to discuss and address both the health and education issues faced by the region. These leaders also facilitated activities in the regions of Nan Palan and Menvyel, affording memorable opportunities to actively engage with the village children. Nursing students were afforded the opportunity to interact and engage with nurses and other healthcare providers in the region, while having an immersion experience using their knowledge and skills to perform health screenings for blood pressure, weight, glucose screenings, and breast health and nutrition education. The collective group was also presented with an additional opportunity to meet with local coffee farmers to hear first-hand, the social and financial challenges that are faced by the regions populous. The diverse and intimate encounters that the group was afforded to experience during these travel abroad trips, allowed for deep personal enrichment, cultural growth, and enhanced experiential learning in an alternative classroom environment.

By establishing NEILP and engaging nursing students in the process, we were able to:

1. engage in relationship development with nursing schools, clinics, and training centers in the Port-de-Paix Diocese

2. participate in an active listening-process that focused on specific needs identified by the Haitian partners

3. identify and document cultural considerations for current and future engagement for the continued partnership

4. establish a framework and focus for a qualitative nursing and educational research projects

5. identify future opportunities for continued partnerships that will lead to community impact in Haiti, faculty research opportunities, continued student-learning outcomes, and culture immersion opportunities.

This collaborative, interdisciplinary travel abroad experience was mutually beneficial to both Barry University and the various N.W regions visited on the island nation of Haiti. The experience allowed for
bonding, not only among our faculty and students from a variety of academic backgrounds, but also from community partnerships with agencies in the South Florida community, and in a variety of areas in Haiti. These combined collaborative efforts laid a great foundation for future collaborations to build on these experiences of March 2016 and 2017 international study travels. Additionally, this enriching experience allowed for the opportunity of faculty and students from diverse disciplines, to meet, interact, and bond with each other through the shared experience of traveling and embracing global fluency.

Title:
Improving Student Learning Outcomes Through a Collaborative, Experiential Learning, Interdisciplinary, Nursing and Education International Partnership

Keywords:
Inter-professional Collaboration, Student and Faculty Engagement and Enrichment and Study/Travel Abroad

References:


Abstract Summary:
The collaborative Barry University/ Port-de-Paix, Haiti Nursing and Education International Learning Partnership (NEILP), provided opportunities for interdisciplinary learning-development among pre-professional and professional Haitian nurses and teachers during exploratory/immersive trips to Haiti in 2016 and 2017, leading to the development of faculty/student research opportunities, enhanced service-learning courses, academic engaged learning opportunities.
Content Outline:
Project overview and the goals and objectives of the Nursing and Education International Learning Partnership (NEILP). Explaining the history of NEILP and what NEILP partnership does.

Section One:
Brief insight into Barry University's History, Mission and Core Commitments.
Brief background on the NW Territories of Haiti.

Section Two:
Discuss the meaning and importance of Engaged Scholarship
Discuss the concept of the Fair Trade Learning Model used for this study abroad immersion experience, and its focus on reciprocal, cross-culture, and international educational partnerships
Discuss Experiential Learning and its importance in linking theory to practice through student engagement and critical reflection

Section Three:
Discussion of NEILP project outcomes including:
Haiti nursing school curriculum review
Interdisciplinary and international collaboration among faculty and students
Social Determinants of Health
Clinical and academic outcomes
Student learning outcomes

Conclusion:
Future plans for NEILP and Haiti/Barry University Interdisciplinary Partnership

First Primary Presenting Author

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both nationally in the United States, and internationally with Sigma Theta Tau's International Research Congress in Puerto Rico. Her area of interests includes global scholarship and experiential learning with study abroad immersion experiences. She enjoys interdisciplinary collaboration and is pleased to share her most recent international travel and research scholarship work here at the 30th International Research Congress.

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