

Evaluation of Student Learning Using a Framework to Guide Reflective Journaling across Study Abroad Courses

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INTRODUCTION

With the world becoming more culturally diverse, nursing professionals frequently encounter cultural differences and language barriers (Goodman, 2016). There is evidence to support the fact that nursing students would be better prepared to provide culturally sensitive health care to diverse populations if they were able to participate in study abroad experiences (Martins de Oliveira & Tuohy, 2015). Reflective journaling is a commonly used method to encourage students to critically think about their cross-cultural experiences and how these experiences will impact their professional careers.



PURPOSE

The purpose of this presentation is to examine three faculty-led study abroad experiences for nursing students enrolled in a baccalaureate nursing program. The goal is to help promote student learning across study abroad courses through the use of Intercultural Global Health Assessment and Reflection (IGHAR) framework for guided reflection.



METHOD

To evaluate learning, a reflective journal assignment was developed based on the dimensions of the IGHAR framework. Student journals from Thailand (n=11), United Kingdom (n=10), and Austria (n=17) were reviewed to find common themes within the dimensions of the framework.

Students were introduced to this reflective journaling assignment prior to the trips to Thailand and Austria. However, students going to United Kingdom did not have pre-trip preparation for the assignment.

Riner, M.E., Bai, J., & Larimer, S. (2015). Intercultural global health assessment and reflective framework for teaching study abroad courses. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 5(5), 65-72. <https://doi.org/10/jnep.vnp>.



RESULTS

To evaluate student learning, reflective journals for students studying in Thailand (n=11), United Kingdom (n=10), and Austria (n=17) were reviewed for common themes within the dimensions of the IGHAR framework.

- Educational
- Technical
- Religious and Philosophical
- Kinship and Social
- Cultural Values, Beliefs and Lifeways
- Political and Legal
- Economic

Summary:

- Strong sense of family and community in everyday life and health care in all countries
- Most reflections from Thailand focused on integration of Buddhism into everyday life and health care
- Most reflections from Austria and United Kingdom were on health promotion behaviors: healthy nutrition and fitness vs. prevalence of smoking and alcohol consumption
- All groups reflected on pros and cons of universal health care systems

DISCUSSION

There were inconsistencies in the focus and quality of student journals, particularly in the attention to the details of each dimension. A wide variation in critical reflection was noted within and between groups. With pre-trip preparation for reflective journaling students developed greater insight into the study abroad experience. By reflecting on the dimensions of the IGHAR framework faculty were able to track transformational learning.



“I think it was evident that a strong family and community support system allow for better patient outcomes.”

CONCLUSIONS

Study abroad provides students and faculty a powerful and transformational encounter for learning. Providing a structured process for reflection empowers students to increase the depth of their study abroad experience.