

45th Biennial Convention (16-20 November 2019)

The Role of International Connections in Leadership Development

K. Sue Haddock, PhD, MSN, BSN, RN

Research, WJB Dorn VAMC, Columbia, SC, USA

Purpose: To describe a process for connecting nurses through international opportunities that develop leadership, clinical and cultural skills.

Background: Sigma Theta Tau International has a long history of bringing nursing organizations together to promote leadership and scholarship for nursing practice. An intended outcome is to promote patient safety and quality care (Rosser EA, Scammell J, Bevan A, & Hundley VA, 2017). One method they have used is to attend meetings with nursing organizations around the world at the International Congress for Nursing.

During those meetings, nurses in countries that did not have STTI chapters expressed interest in joining STTI but needed a mechanism for this to happen. In 1998 STTI asked chapters to consider connecting with nurses who had indicated interest and perhaps inducting them as members. Our chapter stepped up to the challenge by adding "exploring connections with international nurses" to the strategic plan. Having previously lived in Germany, our chapter president reached out to a number of nurses in Europe and eventually connected with a nurse in the Netherlands. Within the year she was inducted into the chapter. There were visits back and forth between the two and the new member attended the Chapter's Annual Meeting to become a full-fledged member.

The value of our global connection became apparent when our new member asked to partner with the chapter president to submit an international application to the Sigma Chiron Mentor Program. They were accepted and were the only "international" pair in the program that year. The program helped the two Chiron participants organize a project focused around a more global perspective of health and health priorities (Browne CA, Fetherson DM, & Medigovich K, 2015). Besides working on the project of creating a "virtual" research department at a hospital in Amsterdam, they also brainstormed ways for nurses from their respective countries to learn from and share clinical, educational, and research experiences with each other. This led to the chapter's leadership developing a program that provided a mechanism for members to connect with nurses in the Netherlands. The program that has now been in existence for 13 years.

To make this program a reality, the nurse in the Netherlands had to connect with her colleagues at the nursing school. The faculty were open to the suggestion and the University leadership incorporated the experience into the curriculum and provided funding for students and faculty to participate. Students submitted a letter of interest and a resume. These were reviewed by faculty and eight students were selected.

In the meantime, chapter members had to develop an agenda for the 10 days in South Carolina as well as identifying hosts for the Nurse Practitioner students. Students were paired with host families based on similar interests and clinical specialties if possible. Cultural events were planned to include a day in Charleston, SC, showcasing some of our historical heritage. Clinical shadowing was arranged with Nurse Practitioners at four of the hospitals in Columbia, SC. Attendance at a chapter workshop was planned and

several social functions planned to give students time to experience southern hospitality. In subsequent years a day with the College of Nursing at the University of South Carolina (USC) has been added to the program and students enjoy time in the Simulation Center. Students are paired with professionals in the clinical area that correspond to their specialty. They have an opportunity to visit a variety of practice sites and observe American NPs in action. During the past several years we have asked each NP student to present an evidence-based project connecting their work with their American counterparts.

Findings: The program has been successful beyond the early dreams of the two Chiron participants. An interprofessional aspect has been added and an exchange program for nurses in the US to visit the Netherlands is now in its third year. Connecting the worlds of nurses in the Netherlands with nurses in the US has developed an appreciation for the best practices of each system, better understanding of the challenges encountered by each, and friendships that have continued long after the visits. These outcomes exemplify the true value of leadership programs that promote partnership development and global collaborations.

Title:

The Role of International Connections in Leadership Development

Keywords:

Connections, Leadership and Partnering

References:

- [Rosser EA, Scammell J, Bevan A, Hundley VA](#). Strong leadership: the case for global connections. [J Clin Nurs](#). 2017 Apr;26(7-8):946-955. doi: 10.1111/jocn.13562. Epub 2017 Jan 31.
- [Browne CA, Fetherston CM, & Medigovich K](#). International clinical placements for Australian undergraduate nursing students: A systematic thematic synthesis of the literature. [Nurse Educ Today](#). 2015 Oct;35(10):1028-36. doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2015.05.012. Epub 2015 May 28.

Abstract Summary:

This presentation will describe one chapter's experience in connecting with nurses in other countries and bolstered by a leadership mentoring program that eventually led to an ongoing international experience. The resultant international program has evolved from simple shadowing to sharing of evidence-based practice projects.

Content Outline:

- 1.
2. Introduction
1. Background for Initiative
2. Chapter Planning
3. Body
1. Global Connections Value

1. Developing a global perspective on health (Brown, 2015)
2. Comparing health priorities
2. Developing the Dream
 1. STTI Programs
 2. Leadership skills
 3. Operationalizing the Dream
 1. Funding
 2. Developing the experience
 1. Cultural events
 2. Clinical observations
 4. Conclusion
 1. Reflections for Evolution
 2. Staying Connected

First Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

K. Sue Haddock, PhD, MSN, BSN, RN
WJB Dorn VAMC
Research
Director- Research
Columbia SC
USA

Author Summary: Dr. Haddock is Director of Research at the Dorn VA Medical Center, Columbia, SC. She is a health services researcher and serves on the VA Steering Committee for Staffing Methodology. She uses her evaluation expertise for national program reviews. Dr. Haddock holds adjunct faculty appointments at University of South Carolina School of Public Health and at Clarkson College, College of Nursing. She is Council Chair for the Association for Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs.