International Capstone Experience: Bridging Transcultural Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Among Prelicensure Nursing Students

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Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of international capstone experience in transcultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes of pre-licensure nursing students.

Methods:
Spearheaded by a nursing faculty with professional relationship and an alumna of the clinical partner, an international capstone experience was developed based on one of the Value Rubrics of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) which is the Global Learning Value Rubric (GLVR) https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics. According to AAC&U (2019), through global learning, students should 1) become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences, 2) seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities, and 3) address the world’s most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably.

Collaboration with the international clinical partner includes discussions related to the course objectives and clinical outcomes. In order to include the transcultural concepts, four 2-hour classes were developed which focused on cultural beliefs and traditions, nursing practice, and healthcare delivery of the host country. Select senior nursing students who signed up and were qualified attended the course prior to the scheduled trip. Each class offered didactic, group activities focused on shared cultural values, collaboration and group cohesiveness, and travel safety. Students participated in hands-on clinical experience and community programs under the supervision of the local nursing preceptors. Measurement of cultural knowledge and attitudes were used to determine the impact of international capstone program. Attitudes were assessed before and immediately following the 17- days transcultural nursing capstone experience.

Results:
One hundred three students participated in the international clinical experience over a period of six years. During the last two years, thirty-five students participated in the international capstone experience and completed the pre- and post-survey utilizing the GLVR (AAC&U) tool. In addition, students completed a final reflection paper about the experience and common themes were collected. Findings suggest that cultural immersion through international capstone experience grounded in Benedictine values at a liberal arts college resulted in increased attitudes toward other cultures and improved knowledge of own cultural awareness and positionality in providing culturally sensitive care. The responses showed that all values in the rubric improved significantly. The attitudes related to perspective taking was most improved followed by personal and
social responsibility, cultural diversity, global self-awareness, knowledge application, and understanding global systems. Course evaluations and student reflections exemplify the importance of cultural awareness. Due to student feedback, enthusiasm and interest in continuing this course grew as it became the most sought capstone experience.

**Conclusion:**
Cultural awareness and respectful collaboration is the future of healthcare. Developing a sustainable international capstone experience allows both students and faculty the opportunity to examine own cultural bias and reflect on positionality in a diverse healthcare setting. International capstone experience can be limiting for educators interested in developing programs to help future healthcare professionals provide culturally sensitive care in any context. This unique transcultural experience will add to the literature and may inform future capstone curriculum development who are challenged by clinical partnership locally and or globally.

**Title:**
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**Keywords:**
international capstone experience, prelicensure nursing education and transcultural nursing

**Abstract Summary:**
The development of an international capstone experience for prelicensure nursing students is described. Students discover cultural awareness, positionality, and professional values that transcend international borders which enhance knowledge, skills, and attitudes to practice culturally sensitive care.

**References:**


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Author Summary: Dr. Diaz is motivated by her rich intercultural immersion experience in clinical practice and as a student and educator from a diverse background. Her active involvement and lifelong connection with Mary Johnston College of Nursing where she is an alumna allows her to collaborate and establish the international faculty exchange program. She is currently an Associate Professor and Interim Program Coordinator in the Traditional Undergraduate Nursing at The College of Saint Scholastica, Duluth, Minnesota.