Students' Reflections of a Global Service-Learning Experience

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Purpose of Service-Learning

- Unique, intentionally designed experiences
  - Healthcare, culture, spirituality
- Cultural immersion
  - Face-to-face with actual health problems
  - Cultural proscriptions and prescriptions
- Reflective learning
  - Personal, professional, spiritual growth
Study Purpose and Design

- Purpose
  - Explore perceptions of experience
    - Secular and faith-based medical mission
  - Assess perceptions about the culture
- Qualitative design
  - Reflective journals
  - Undergraduate nursing students
Methods: Capturing Reflections

- Grounded theory
  - Constant comparative method

- Open-ended questions
  - Promote reflection
  - Culture, spirituality, healthcare
  - Prior to, during, after experience
  - Member checking
Results: Thematic Findings

- Expectation and Anticipation
- Experiencing the Unknown
- Experiences Along the Way
- Growth
- Resiliency of the People of Peru
- Discovery
- Discomforts
- Emotional Responses
Expectation and Anticipation

- **Personal**
  - I am so excited that I get to treat people’s physical needs as well as their spiritual needs this week.

- **Spiritual**
  - I’ve always been interested in doing mission work. Nursing and Jesus – what could be better?!

- **Professional**
  - To develop a greater compassion for other people. To get more nursing skill experience.
Experiencing the Unknown

- **Personal**
  - I literally had no idea what to expect because I’d never been out of the country.

- **Spiritual**
  - I worry that I have not prepared enough, spiritually and medically, for this trip.

- **Cultural**
  - Learn, taste, and experience the Peruvian culture.
Experiences Along the Way

- **Personal**
  - There were no seats in the boat so we just sat on the edge. We were inches from the water and one wrong shift of weight would have sent us all overboard.

- **Spiritual**
  - I sat with an older woman and prayed with her. I don’t think anything was wrong. She just wanted someone to listen.

- **Cultural**
  - No one looked, sounded, or smelled like me.
Experiences Along the Way

- **Professional**
  - I’m pretty sure we saw every person in the town between yesterday and today 😊

- **Adventure**
  - I never thought I would spend a day playing with monkeys, holding an anaconda, fish for piranhas, or hike through the jungle looking at 500 year old trees.
Growth

- Personal
  - I learned a lot about myself and what I’m capable of and don’t ever want to stop pushing myself!

- Spiritual
  - I realize different people experience spirituality in different ways.

- Professional
  - I will carry all that I have experienced and seen to help me provide the best care possible.
Resiliency of the People of Peru

- **Poverty**
  - It always amazes me to see how people can live in such devastating circumstances…

- **Surroundings**
  - The buildings all looked like something that had been abandoned for 30 years that would be considered useless and a dump in the US.

- **Personal Outlook of Peruvians**
  - The people and culture of Peru is very different from American culture, in that the people of Iquitos have very little and yet they are all so happy.
Discovery

● Personal: My American Life
  ● I am gripped by the fact nothing in me is compelled to give up the privileges of my life to live the way of the people in Iquitos.

● Spiritual Unity
  ● I was amazed at how open the people were to receiving our help and listening to the message of the gospel.

● Spiritual Joy
  ● The joy in the Christians of Iquitos was so inspiring, because although they have nothing they have everything in Christ!
Discovery

- Spiritual Practices
  - I never felt like it was “inappropriate” to talk about Jesus kind of how some places in American make it such a big deal.

- Cultural
  - It is not a big deal for a woman to breastfeed in public, in the presence of a man, or a very crowded room.

- Healthcare Differences
  - I feel like their health needs are not first priority.
Discomforts

- **Personal: General**
  - It is a dirty, hot, uncomfortable place …

- **Personal: Fatigue**
  - Honestly, I am so tired it’s hard to think of anything

- **Spiritual**
  - People were constantly trying to convert me … which I found rude and uncomfortable.

- **Communication**
  - Today I had a lot of trouble with my translator.
Emotional Responses

- **General**
  - Seeing how little the people had and realizing how much I have (that I don’t even use) has left me with a sense of guilt and frustration.

- **To Leaving**
  - I was very sad that the week was over even though I was looking forward to home.
Conclusion

- Service-learning via immersion
  - Global healthcare experience
    - Can’t be duplicated in developed countries
    - Particularly the US

- Outcomes
  - New understanding of cultural competence
  - Appreciation of own life
The Wrap Up

I had no idea I’d end up having hot drinks, cold showers, holding anacondas, playing with monkeys, fishing for and holding piranhas, etc., and actually being sad about leaving.
Thank You

- Questions?

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