

**Enhancing Cultural Competence  
in Undergraduate Nursing  
through Short Term  
International Immersion: A  
Content Analysis of Students'  
Reflective Journal**

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# Disclosure

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## **Learner objectives:**

- The learner will be able to understand methods of enhancing cultural competence in undergraduate nursing students.
- The learner will be able to verbalize benefits international immersion of undergraduate nursing students in a service-learning project.

There is no conflict of interest.

University of St. Thomas Carol & Odis Peavy School of Nursing

There was no sponsorship or commercial support.

# Purpose

To explore the impact of international immersion of undergraduate nursing as a means of enhancing cultural competence



# Background

- ❑ Students participated in 1 week volunteer experience in Guatemala
- ❑ Mission team at Casa Angelina Orphanage in Antigua
- ❑ Service-learning projects with personnel & local workers



# Background

Various projects included: mixing cement, carrying brick tiles, painting, cleaning, digging ditches, landscaping



# Background

Interacted with orphans daily in the morning & afternoon



# Method

- ❑ Content analysis of students' reflective journals
- ❑ Revealed themes:
  - Value of seeing cultural differences in another country
  - Value of nonverbal communication
  - Value of service-learning & selfless giving to the needy
- ❑ Most frequently used word- “amazing”

# Results

- ❑ Every student reported having a life-changing experience.
- ❑ They were all able to identify:
  - less fortunate and less privileged.
  - those living in poverty and very unlike their own lives.
- ❑ Many expressed a desire to return for another trip after completing their nursing program.
- ❑ Some spoke of pursuing professional opportunities abroad as they begin their nursing careers.



# Results

Study abroad & service-learning programs allowing this type of experience may enhance preparation of nursing students for culturally competent practice in the future.



# Conclusion

- ❑ An international immersion suggests an opportunity for enhanced cultural competence of nursing students.
- ❑ Continued investigation including study abroad courses & service-learning opportunities
- ❑ Integration of cultural safety & competence throughout the undergraduate program is necessary to determine the extent & overall value of the learning experience.
- ❑ Teaching & learning strategies as well as issues focused on curricular design may result in greater student/faculty cultural awareness & appreciation.

# Limitations

- ❑ This is pilot work completed prior to incorporating a formalized study abroad component at one small university school of nursing.
- ❑ It is not generalizable and transferability is exceedingly limited.

# Future Implications

- ❑ More detailed directions
- ❑ Obtain instrument to measure cultural awareness
- ❑ Begin journaling one month prior to travel
- ❑ Journal daily during trip

# Questions

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