Expanding Nursing Students' Sense of Professionalism Through an International Clinical Experience

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Disclosure & Learning Objectives

Drs. Nancy Wilk and Kylene Abraham of St. John Fisher College, Wegmans School of Nursing have no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to this presentation and have no financial relationships to disclose.

Learning Objectives: The participant will:

1. Describe cultural immersion opportunities for senior nursing students at St. John Fisher College
2. Identify personal and professional changes students identified as “life changing”
3. Discuss learning that took place for students who traveled abroad
4. Develop an appreciation for cultural immersion experiences
Background

- Students have 3 week preceptorship global option for senior capstone clinical experience
- Students had option to choose Kenya, Peru or Ireland
- Preparation for travel
- Faculty observed significant changes in student worldview, personal and professional growth
Longitudinal Qualitative Study

• Purpose

• Gain insight into student’s cultural awareness and personal feeling toward another culture

• Evaluate personal change and professional changes

• To determine if changes were sustainable over time
Method

• Sample
  • 29 students who traveled internationally to Peru, Kenya or Ireland

• Procedure
  • Recruited at pre-trip seminars
  • Signed informed consent
  • Interviewed at convenient place and time before travel, within 1 month of returning and 1-3 years later
Interview Questions

• Pre-trip
  • Motivations, experiences with other cultures, expectations

• 1 month Post-trip
  • What they had learned, benefits of the trip, how would nursing practice change

• 1-3 years Post-trip
  • Personal and professional changes, were they sustained?
Data Analysis

- 64 interviews uploaded into Atlas Ti
- Read and coded by question and common threads
- Common codes collapsed into assertions/themes
- Assertions/themes tested by analytic induction
- Confirmability and validity
  - sent to $\frac{1}{2}$ of participants who completed 3rd interview
Results

• 29 pre-trip interviews
  • Conducted by primary researcher (100% response) (20-60 minutes)

• 23 completed 1 month post-trip interview (79% response)
  • Conducted with members of global committee

• 12 competed 1-3 year post-trip interview (41% response)
  • Conducted by primary researcher

• Participants: Age: 21-49, 6 men, all graduating seniors

• Destinations: Kenya – 15, Peru – 10, Ireland - 4
Main Themes

Being challenged as a person and a professional
- Cultural understanding
- Appreciating the differences
- Change in practice
- Getting out of my comfort zone
- Openness
- Learning

Discovering who I am as a person
- Appreciating the differences
- Change in practice
- Expanded worldview
- Being open to new experiences
- Appreciate what I have
- Non-judgmental

Making a difference
- Want to go back
- Cultural understanding
- Appreciate the differences (system)
- Wanting to help someone

Experiences On Trip

Expectations & Motivations

Feelings & emotions
- Cultural understanding
- Anticipatory anxiety
- Culture shock
- Excite

Reasons to Go
- Cultural understanding
- Learning skills/communication
- Once in a lifetime experiences

Reasons to Go
- Help someone
- Appreciate what we have
“Being Challenged”

“I want to go over there and obviously help people but I’m expecting to be like profoundly changed by this and I ‘m going to see things that I haven’t seen before and I’m expecting to learn a lot about myself, as well as, what goes on over there. It’s just a win-win situation. I’ve got to do it.”
“Being Challenged”

“I think having that piece of international travel and being able to say I experienced health care in a different setting, different culture, and different continent, let alone country - that was absolutely huge. I used it in my interviews. I still talk about it to this day, a year and half later. ... I feel like it has been a huge piece of my job today.”
“Being Challenged”

- “I learned so much it’s hard to describe all of it”
- “I just feel like it’s the best learning experience ever”
- “It jumped me ahead quite a bit”
“Discovering Self”

“I think we would have a totally different perspective with people, the world, how we live in this shell of the United States...I do attribute that trip along with my upbringing as a whole to the nurse I am today. I think it reflects in my work ethic and I think it reflects in how my nurse manager views me and appraisal I get in that area and how my co-workers perceive me and how my patients perceive me... I gained a better understanding of the world around us...It’s an enriching experience.”
“Discovering Self”

“From a leadership standpoint, I think it helps, because I’ve seen – I’ve had a little bit more worldly view, and I’ve seen a little bit more, and I can add a little bit more insight into different things...It’s been a while but I still think about it more than I [thought] that I would. It runs through your mind more often than you would expect...”
“Making a Difference”

• “I am absolutely tenfold more understanding and better approaching people from other cultures”
• “I am so much more open to anyone, anyone’s beliefs and feelings”
• “I guess I learned no matter where you are the effect of caring and just the simple act of holding someone’s hand can be so much more powerful than any other medical intervention”
“Making a Difference”

• “I would like to go back and do something else or help more people”

• “I joined the Ebola response team at work”
Conclusions

• Global trips have a life changing impact
• Personal & professional changes were sustained
• More culturally competent
• Worldview broadened
• Becoming global citizen
• Development of professional role & leadership
Global Travel Makes a Difference!

“It’s life changing... it’s kind of hard to really think about how other people live even though you read it, you see it, but when you are right there in it, it definitely gives you, it’s a game changer, it really is a game changer to be in it. I never realized how big the world is but how small it can be.”
Questions?