Diversity Training: The Effectiveness of Gaming in Raising Cultural Awareness Among Students of Health Professions

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Chenit Ong-Flaherty, DNP; Dellanira Garcia, PhD (in absentia)
David A. Martinez, PhD; Wanda Borges, PhD; Linda Summers, PhD

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Introduction: Cultural Issues in Healthcare

Why the need for critical cultural awareness? (AHRQ, 2013)

• Increased diversity in society: among patient populations & among healthcare professionals

• Regulatory and non-governmental calls to meet patient or person-centered care (IOM, 2001; TJC 2010)
Why Diversity

Definition of diversity:
• Beyond the traditional context of race, ethnicity, language, and religious beliefs
• Includes socio-economic status and demographic data such as education level, age, gender, geographic origin, immigration status, etc.

A Sampling of Contributory Causes:
• Globalization and migration
• Change in lifestyle choices
• Socio-economic and political factors

(AHRQ, 2013; 2014)
Increasing Cultural Incongruence

- Care needs defined by dominant culture (Bleich, et al. 2015; Christopher, et al, 2014)
- Outcomes for minority and marginalized populations has declined (AHRQ, 2013)
- Why?
  - In the U.S., twenty years of mandated cultural competency education has not moved care provision in the direction of cultural congruence (AHRQ, 2013)
  - Education has been obligatory and superficial, and undertaken by institutions to meet regulations (Long, 2012)
A Better Approach Needed

A move away from competency to awareness

- Understanding how learning about other cultures work:
  - Awareness -> Curiousity and Knowledge gathering -> Sensitivity -> Humility -> Empathy
    (Andrews, et al., 2010; Graham & Richardson, 2008; Koskinen, Abdelhamid, & Likitalo, 2008)
  - Includes experiential learning, critical analysis, and reflection
Gaming in Critical Cultural Awareness (CCA) Training

Military, multinational corporations, aviation:

• All these industries acknowledged failures are largely communication-based—”human factors”

• Importance of learning about other cultures to improve awareness and communication

• Many games available—Barnga, BaFa’ BaFa’, Albatross, NaZa NaZa, etc

(Hofstede, de Caluwé, & Peters, 2010)
Cultural Gaming and BaFa’ BaFa’ in Healthcare

Why BaFa’ BaFa’?

- It incorporates cultural dimensions introduced by socio-psychologists such as Geert Hofstede and Harry Triandis
- NaZa NaZa is similar and free (online); a lot of preparation
- Literature limited on BaFa’ BaFa’ in healthcare
The Training Toolkit

The Right Facilitator/s on Cultural Exchange

Simulation/gaming with debriefing

Class reading and reflecting: Articles

CRITICAL CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING

“Lost in translation” Videos:

Reflective journaling & program evaluations

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Purpose of Current Study

To test the effectiveness of BaFa’ BaFa’ in creating cultural awareness among graduate students in nursing and clinical psychology.
Methods

Recruitment
• Students from graduate programs in nursing and psychology

Procedure Overview
• Two groups representing two cultures
  - One individualistic, trading based with low context communication style
  - One collectivist, patriarchal and high context in communication style
• Training the students on the rules of the game and their group’s culture and visiting other culture
• Debriefing
Procedure: The Training

Prior to the training students were required to:
- Read 2 articles on cultural dimensions and the effects of culture and communication on safety
- Watch short video vignettes on culture and communication

On the day of gaming, students were asked to:
- Provide written answers to two questions
  - what they know about culture
  - how culture affects them.
An Example of SHORT Video
Procedure: How the Game Was Played

1. Students were divided into two groups and separated into two rooms.
2. Each group was taught a new culture; they learned the culture by practicing interacting.
3. Groups were encouraged to be proud of their culture and to be protective of it.
4. Members of the two tribes took turns to briefly visit the other tribe.
5. Each time they returned, they reported their observations to their own tribe members.
6. After all members have had a chance to visit, the groups re-united as one large group.
Procedure: Debriefing

1. Upon reuniting, the students were asked to describe their experiences by writing adjectives on white boards or pads:
   - how the other tribe appeared to them, and
   - how they felt visiting the other tribe.

2. Students then reflected on the words used
Examples of Words Used from Visiting a New Culture

- Scared
- isolated
- uncomfortable
- No space bubble
- Awkward
- robbed
- ignored
- discriminated
- persecuted
- shunned
- stupid
- unwelcome
- used
- unwanted
- poor
- lost
- pressured
- confused
- attacked
- threatened
Procedure: Debriefing 2

1. The facilitator guided the discussion using the guide provided with the game to provide the students an opportunity to reflect on what they had learned.

1. After debriefing, the students wrote a reflection using the following prompts:
   - “What have you learned about culture?” and
   - “How does what you have learned make you feel?”
Qualitative data analysis of written reflections

- Team of five interdisciplinary faculty members
- NVivo software
- Thematic analysis
- Narratives coded by teams of two
- Coding discrepancies were analyzed by a third coder
- Process spanned 18 months
- Used web-based conferencing technology promoting collaborative work at a distance
Results

Four themes emerged:

1. Importance of culture
2. Insider-outsider
3. Awareness of cultural differences
   with a sub-theme of self-awareness
4. Cultural humility
   with a sub-theme of empathy
Importance of Culture

Definition – Awareness that culture has a strong influence on what we believe, think and how we behave.

Examples:

“Culture can easily influence how you feel, act and respond to situations and people that are not in your comfort zone. The exercise really revealed to me how easily I can get influenced by “my” culture and make sure that those who are part of my culture are safe and prepared to face the “other”.” (703-036)

“This taught me to not project judgment when someone acts a certain way because for them it is probably normal.” (652-006)
Insider-Outsider

Definition - An understanding that an inclusion/exclusion dichotomy exists of group membership

Examples:

“I was amazed how some of my classmates abused their power when they were the patriarchs of the dominant society. Not only did they ignore the plight of those without power, when they made contact with another culture an attempt at aggression and forced compliance of those deemed inferior occurred.” (703-037)

“I noticed how one group negatively critiqued the other. I feel confident it was not because they truly felt the other was bad, but rather because they were different. One might say, “If what they are doing is right, then what we are doing is wrong. Therefore, I must deem them wrong so that we can be right.” That type of black and white thinking is often what separates us and promotes unnecessary dislike of others.” (703-042)
Awareness of Cultural Differences

Definition - Basic understanding and acknowledgement that cultural differences exist.

Example:

“A big takeaway I got from this experiment was how values in each culture may differ, which then affects their reactions to other cultures.” (703 041)

Self-awareness (subtheme) – Knowing one's own feelings and actions.

Example:

“I noticed all of our tendency to become immediately ethnocentric, and this observation made me immensely uncomfortable. This experience emphasized the importance of self-awareness for me. As clinicians, if we are unaware of our worldviews, values, and perspectives, we cannot even begin to comprehend or identify with a foreign culture.” (703-043)
Cultural Humility

Definition – Awareness and self reflection of the relative importance of culture and having a sense that one’s cultural knowledge is limited

Example:

“No matter how much you observe a culture you cannot fully understand it without asking and learning.” (652-026)

Empathy (subtheme) – The ability to share the feelings of another person; the ability to understand another’s lived experience and emotions

Example:

“We must practice patience and understanding for the multitude of people we encounter and should put ourselves in their shoes to get an understanding of their feelings.” (652-009)
Discussion

- Low fidelity simulation simulates real life: gaming experience reflects stages of culture shock

- Positive/educational aspects of culture shock can follow negative reactions (Pederson, 1995)

- Student narratives support findings of earlier studies that awareness is awoken
Thematic analysis of the students’ reflections show the students developed an awareness and understanding that:

- culture is important;
- there is a dynamic of being an insider or outsider;
- there are cultural differences, and that students became aware of their own culture/self;
- in the existence of cultural relativity, the students learned cultural humility and empathy.
Implications for Healthcare Education

There is urgent need:

- Growing migration and globalization
- Increased diversity
- Increased challenges in communication—"human factors"
- Decreased cultural congruence and sensitivity in healthcare
- Continued poor outcomes for minority and marginalized populations
“Cultural competency” training must move away from didactic and superficial testing that promotes stereotyping.
Implications, continued

- Must incorporate experiential learning critical analysis; debriefing and guided reflection.

- Create awareness of cultural differences, leading towards awakening curiosity, knowledge acquisition, and developing sensitivity to others.

- Commitment by healthcare leaders and educators to adopt techniques that work.

- The true meaning “patient-centered” or “person-centered” care.
Selected Bibliography


