

Cultural Humility and Nursing Education for Study Abroad Nursing Students

by
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Background: Bachelor's nursing students in study abroad programs are plunged in a different society, with a different culture, language, and orientation. Universities repeatedly note the importance of transcultural nursing experiences that study abroad programs can provide including broadening perspectives and bringing cultural awareness, and sometimes, recognizing ethnocentrism and a lack of cultural humility. Ethnocentrism influences our ability to absorb and learn about cultures, and determines how we filter information ("environmental sensitivity"), why we focus on an observation, and what we think about the experience. Thus, ethnocentrism and lack of cultural humility influences our learning. Nursing clinical educators are challenged to devise methods of helping study abroad students to acclimate, learn, and function as student nurses. This project describes part of the Transcultural Nursing Course's goal to make ethnocentrism visible and enable students to become aware of and verbalize their biases – to strive for cultural humility.

Program: Norwegian nursing students come for a semester-long, study abroad program in Israel. The program has two parts: (1) theoretical learning; and (2) clinical practice. Within the theoretical course, students learn about cultural competence theories and in clinical practice they experience its application. The course stresses the need to verbalize their perspectives and recognize that these perspectives are the culmination of their life experiences and characteristics (see Figure 1. Hayes Multicultural Assessment Model below). Cultural humility is a lifelong process to conduct self-examinations and recognize the influence that our backgrounds have on our perspectives and patient care. As such, they influence cultural competence (See Figure 2). However, cultural competence reflects an ideal that is impossible to achieve in a semester-long program. This program strives to foment cultural humility and the connection between theoretical learning and clinical practice in a culturally diverse environment.

Models:

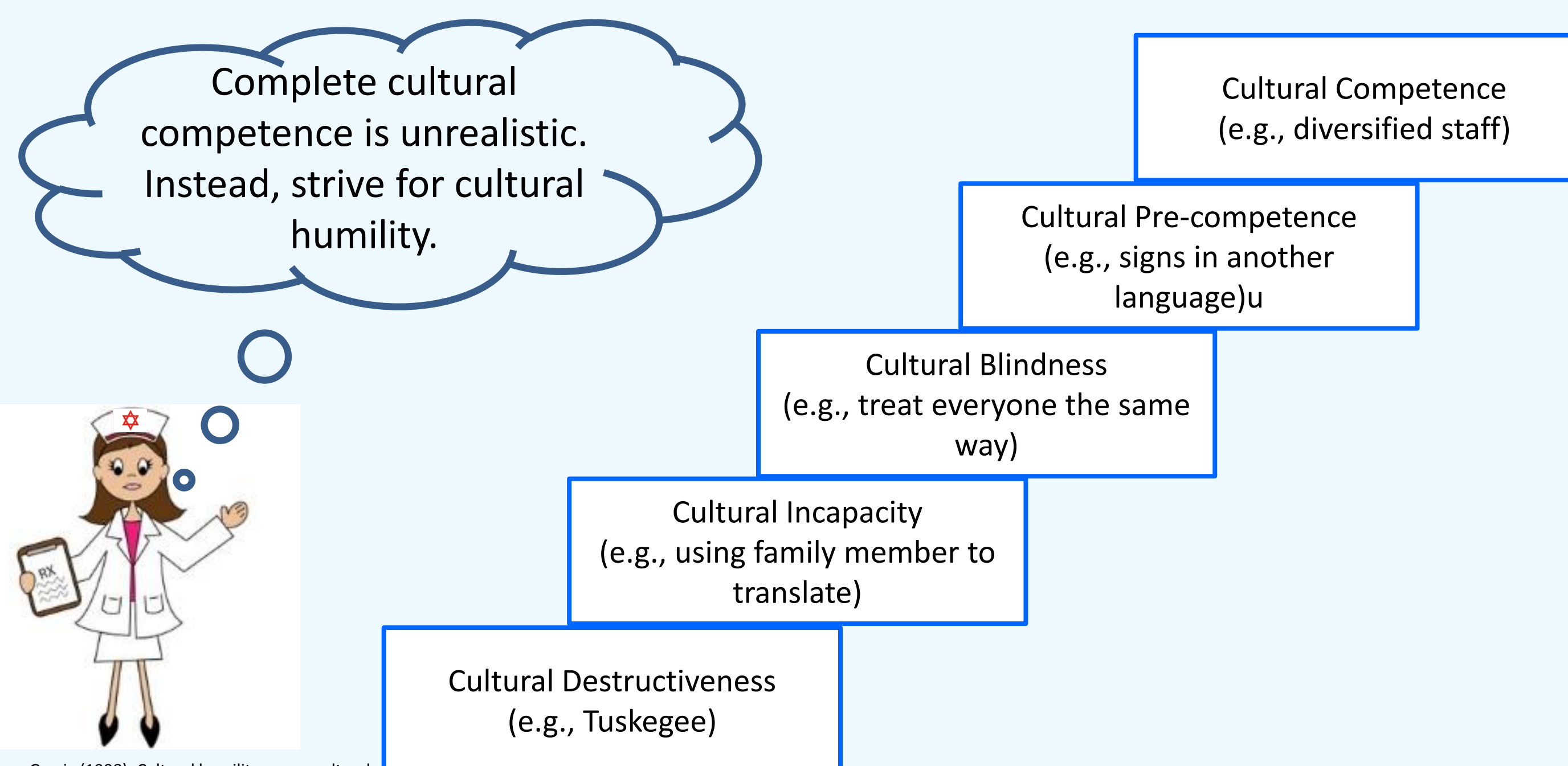
Figure 1. Hay's Multicultural Assessment Model

Hays, P. (2001). *Addressing Cultural Complexities in Practice: A Framework for Clinicians and Counselors*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 3-16.

A	Age related factors. Actual age and age cohort (generation)
D	Disability/Development – acquired, visible and invisible developmental disabilities
R	Religion and spirituality
E	Ethnic identity – race, culture (includes people of color as well as Caucasian, white ethnic)
S	Socioeconomic Status – current and former especially in childhood
S	Sexual and affectional orientation – gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, asexual, kinky; and mono – or polygamous
I	Indigenous heritage – First nation's peoples
N	National identity – immigrants, refugees, temporary residents, and their children
G	Gender – biological sex, transgender, gender roles and stereotypes

Figure 2. Five stages toward cultural competence

Hanley, Jerome. (1999). *Beyond the tip of the iceberg: Five stages toward cultural competence. Reaching today's youth.* Vol.3 No.2 pp. 9-12



M. Tervalon, J. Murray-Garcia (1998). Cultural humility versus cultural competence: a critical distinction in defining physician training outcomes in multicultural education, *Journal of health care for the poor and underserved*, Vol. 9, No. 2. (May 1998), pp. 117-125

Process: Translation of Model Frameworks into Practice, Aiming for Cultural Humility

As part of the Transcultural Nursing Course,

- Step 1. Making one's own biases visible. Students are instructed to list all the structures, events, activities and exchanges that would NOT be seen in Norway.
- Step 2. Using Hay's Multicultural Assess Model to analyze an interaction specifying biases that arise from their characteristics in ADDRESSING.
- Step 3. Describe an experience in clinical practice in which you strove for cultural humility.

Educational Outcomes: Reflections from Norwegian undergraduate students in clinical practice settings in Israel using the above educational processes. Quote #1 – Comparison of home culture to host culture. Quote #2 – Perspective of past mentors (values impact ability to teach). Quote #3 – Ability to "zoom-out" and consider the full picture, and then to "zoom-in" and appreciate the benefits of both cultures.

1. Seeing that we're in Israel, and they don't have the same hygiene principles that I've been taught, it's imaginable that the patients wouldn't even react in one bit (to not having a shower-chair washed before sitting down on it). Norwegian patients would not believe his or her own eyes, and simply refuse to use the chair.



2. In general I find that Norwegian nurses who I have met, find it difficult to enter discussions that could potentially lead to disagreement. Why this is, I of course do not fully understand, but I suspect it might be because in Norway we tend to view disagreement as a source of conflict, and not as constructive debate, which can lead to learning and growth.



3. It seems as if in Israel, mentor and student build trust through a professional type of friendship, based on kindness, openness and honesty. On the other hand, in Norway trust between mentor and student is rather based on how well the student can prove through hard work that they can independently master the nurse's role, and via effectiveness when executing different tasks throughout the shift. Both tactics can work, but are certainly very different. I am glad I decided to study a semester abroad – I had never before reflected of how cultures can impact the education of an international profession so differently.



Conclusions: Students start their semester looking through their "home-culture" lens – they can only see their own culture. Through the course and its exercises (see steps #1, #2 and #3), we see students' lens undergoing a transformation in which they include the host culture's lens in a non-judgmental manner, moving towards cultural awareness and humility.

