The Experience of Undergraduate Nursing Students in South Africa: Promoting Cultural Awareness with Reflective Writing

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Definitions

- **Culture**: a system of symbols that are shared, learned, and passed on through generations of a social group.

- **Cultural Competence**: complex combination of knowledge, attitudes and skills related to culture, race, gender, social class, sexual orientation and economic status.

- **Cultural Congruence**: nursing care which incorporates awareness and competence with the ability to intervene appropriately and effectively.

Reflective Journaling Objectives

- To provide students with sufficient direction so entries are not simply an inventory of events
- Promote critical thinking
- Promote self-awareness of bias/prejudice
- Challenge students to re-examine their world views... become global citizens
- Connect to objectives of service-learning and course objectives
Types of Reflection for Service Learning

- Journaling
- Experiential Research Papers
- Ethical Case Studies
- Directed Readings
- Class Presentations
- Electronic Reflection
Theoretical Underpinnings of Reflective Journaling

- John Dewey (1916) introduced theory of reflection as a bridge between theory and experience in education.
- Promotes spirit of inquiry.
- Promotes moral and educational growth.
- Needs considerable time span to foster development.
- Enhances deep connection and dialogue among participants.
Capetown, South Africa; January 2017
WCU Global Health Experience: South Africa

- Three week study abroad course
- Maternal-Child Nursing
- Service learning
- Clinical Experiences in South Africa: Cape Town and Mpumalanga (vulnerable populations)
  - Public/State-funded Hospital
  - Township Clinics
  - HIV orphanage
- Required readings
- Reflective Journaling
Preparations for Global Nursing Care

- **Readings:**
  - *Half the Sky; Turning oppression into opportunity for women worldwide* by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl Wudunn
  - Links posted in course shell on reflective writing and culturally congruent nursing care
  - Referenced at the end of this presentation

- **View:**
  - The movie *Mandela*
Some Types of Reflective Journaling

- **Key Phrase Journal**
  - Students integrate an identified list of terms/phrases into their journal as they describe their experience.

- **Double-entry journal**
  - Divide journal in pages in half (or one side each) on the left side, service learning experience, thoughts, reactions; on the right, connect to key concepts and course readings.

- **Critical Incident**
  - Reflect on an incident that occurred during service; i.e. ethical dilemma, description of similarities of host culture, differences?
Some Types of Reflective Journaling (continued)

- **Three part**
  - Students respond to three parts: a) describe in detail what happened, b) make connections to course content, and c) relate the experience to personal values, beliefs, attitudes and philosophy

- **Different Perspectives**
  - Students record a situation that involved a conflict. They must write from the opposing viewpoint

- **Fly on the Wall**
  - Students reflect on where they’ve been, what they’ve done, those with whom they’ve worked and write from perspective of “fly on the wall”

DO NOT DRINK ANY ALCOHOL DURING PREGNANCY
Critical Incident Journaling

- Describe an incident or experience which created a dilemma for you because you did not know how to act or what to say:
  - Why was it such a confusing event?
  - How did you feel about it?
  - How did those around you feel about it?
  - What did you do?
  - What did you consider doing but did not do?
  - How did your own bias or prejudice shape your actions?
  - What course of action would be advisable for future?
Some of Our Stories and Experiences

Township Clinics

“providing care for the women in the clinic has made me reflect on our abundance of supplies in the US, and how much waste we produce. The waste here is so minimal. They practice a more sustainable and environmentally conscious lifestyle.”

“The laboring women have very little support, as their support person is not permitted in the room with her until she is pushing….I felt so rewarded to be able to provide some kind of labor support for her….I connected it to my readings of half the Sky where the women are supported by others of the village and not the husband/father of baby…”

Federally funded Hospitals

“I cared for three women today in the state-funded hospital who had postpartum IUDs placed. The procedure seemed to be so painful for the patient but no pain medication is offered or used for the placement procedure. I feel such an ethical conflict with providing them with reproductive choice at such a painful cost.”

Squatters Orphanages

“I felt so moved that I cried today as one little girl kept singing and dancing and praying over me. It was such a deeply touching experience…. I was caught off guard”
Some of Our Stories and Experiences

- **Robben island**
  - “Seeing the cell that Nelson Mandela slept for over 20 years was humbling…. Had I not viewed the movie and read about the civil unrest in south Africa, it would not have been as moving of an experience, I think”

- **Safari**
  - “The culture at the campsite on safari remains segregated. Each day we were waited on by only the black staff members. All the wait staff and hospitality workers are of color…. The guides and camp owners are white. It made me uncomfortable….I relate the segregation to US history before the civil rights movement”

- **Other: Food/Societal Norms/Daily Life**
  - “I’m glad I tried some local food because I usually am picky with my food choices. I enjoyed the traditional South African family style dinner and traditional dancing and drumming…..you can see how proud they are of their traditions and culture”
  - “The traditional dance and music performed at dinner relates back to various festivals I’ve attended at home celebrating different cultural histories”
Assessing Levels of Reflection for Grading

- **Level One:**
  - Gives examples of daily experiences but provides no insight into reasons behind the observation
  - Tends to focus on one aspect of the clinical experience
    - “I saw 3 C/S today, the Operating Theatre is so small”
  - Uses unsupported personal beliefs as evidence
    - “The laboring woman was not allowed to have her husband with her. I think that is wrong”
  - Acknowledges differences in cultural perspective but does not effectively discriminate among them
    - “The woman I took care of today would not look me in the eye”
Assessing Levels of Reflection for Grading

- **Level Two**
  - Observations are fairly thorough and nuanced, but not in broader context
  - Provides a critique from one perspective but fails to see broader aspects of cultural systems and aspects of personal bias
  - Uses unsupported personal belief and evidence but beginning to be able to differentiate between them
    - “the laboring woman I cared for today had a stillborn. She seemed so stoic. I think I would be screaming and sobbing. I think it is cultural.”
  - Demonstrates a beginning ability to interpret evidence of cultural competence
  - Perceives legitimate differences of viewpoints but not well-supported
Assessing Levels of Reflection for Grading

Level Three

- Able to view events from multiple perspectives
- Perceives conflicting goals within and among individuals in situations and recognizes and evaluates cultural differences
- Recognizes choices and actions as situationally dependent and evaluates them using evidence-based practice
- Makes appropriate judgements based on EBP and cultural congruency of nursing care
  - “the midwife was so stern with my patient, I recognized that this is common for their culture, as women see the nurse midwife and healthcare providers with high respect, similar to other cultures I’ve worked with like the Hispanic population in the US”
- Examines own decision-making and able to analyze differences from theirs and various cultures
  - “I wish I had done more to support the mom today who had a poor outcome….even though she appeared so strong, she was probably falling apart inside….I’ve learned that I cannot judge someone’s pain from their emotions….we all emote differently due to our cultural differences”
Lessons Learned

- Students verbalized the need for a debriefing session with students and faculty approximately one month after integration back into normal educational routine to reflect on global experiences.
- Promotes global citizenship
- Students present poster or power point to share reflections of experience to other faculty at academic institution.
- Promotes global ideas for student-led research projects and presentations.
- Student involvement should be limited to those who have had Maternal-Child Nursing course as a pre-requisite.
Helpful Reflective Learning Links

- **Campus Compact**
  - Site contains descriptions of reflection activities for SL

- **Massachusetts Institute of Technology Service Learning Program**
  - Provides a guide for using reflective activities in SL courses. “The 4 C’s of Reflection”

- **National Youth Leadership Council**
  - http://www.nylc.org/discover.cfm?oid=3158

- **Saint Louis University Service-Learning Department**
  - http://servicelearning.slu.edu/reflection.html
  - Importance of service learning, details on structured reflection, tips to facilitate reflection


