Transformative learning encourages critical reflection and experience in discourse that requires adult learners to either objectively or subjectively reframe perspectives and assumptions. This type of learning is fostered in higher education through various activities such as learning contracts, role play, group projects, and high-impact practices. Transformative learning assists students to become unbiased to different world views that will influence their professional practice. In order to prepare a workforce ready to face such differing world views, nurse educators must cultivate transformative learning that will assist students to become aware of their own and others’ assumptions. Thus, nurse educators are the cornerstone to building a foundation of transformation. Utilizing Mezirow’s Transformative Learning Theory as a framework, the purpose of this project was to determine if transformational learning was achieved in a local alternative clinical experience for pre-licensure students.

After institutional review board approval, a retrospective design was used to analyze students’ journals after participation in a public transportation bus ride learning activity in a Community and Public Health Nursing clinical course. The assignment required students to utilize the public transportation system, buses, to access various health related locations for simulated appointments and interdisciplinary needs. Students were grouped in clusters of three to five students per location. All students were required to begin at the bus terminal, ride to a home base (housing complex), and complete the necessary routes and transfers to appointments and auxiliary locations. Guidelines and specific instructions were provided as students mapped their ride using the public transportation route map at the terminal. Students contacted their clinical instructor upon completion of the learning activity, completed surveys, and journaled.

Students’ journals were uploaded electronically, de-identified, assigned a number, and randomized. There were 20 randomized journals selected for qualitative analysis. Data was analyzed using Nvivo 11. Major and minor patterns (nodes) emerged through analysis with references collected and distributed under the appropriate node. An iterative review process revealed three differentiated nodes and subnodes; public transportation system, appointments, and lessons learned.

The public transportation clinical learning activity was an effective transformative learning exercise that promoted understanding among nursing students related to challenges with access to healthcare for individuals dependent on the public transportation system. Students’ assumptions and awareness were questioned during the assignment as results revealed that the transit system has unique idiosyncrasies, unequal routes, disparities, communities within each bus route, individual lack of control, and overall inconvenience of the system. Students also reported an increase in knowledge and understanding of the social issues observed. Limitations of this project were the retrospective design, implementation of the activity with one cohort, and guidelines that may have biased the students prior to the experience. Nevertheless, analysis of students’ journals demonstrated transformational learning. Future recommendations include quantitative data in addition to qualitative data, adding concepts such as food security and access to the project, and utilization of the theoretical framework in other clinical activities. This project demonstrates that transformational learning can occur in one day learning activity and can provide the foundation for student transformation.
Title:
Building a Foundation of Transformation

Keywords:
Clinical experiences, Nursing education and Transformational Learning Theory

References:


Abstract Summary:
Transformative learning encourages critical reflection and experience in discourse that requires adult learners to reframe perspectives and assumptions. Nurse educators are the cornerstone to building a foundation of transformation. The purpose of this project was to determine if transformational learning was achieved in a local alternative clinical experience.

Content Outline:
I. Introduction
   A. Transformational Learning Theory
      1. Background
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   B. Purpose
II. Methods
   A. Design and sample
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IV. Discussion  
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V. Conclusions  
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First Secondary Presenting Author  

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author  

Brandy E. Strahan, PhD, RN  
University of West Florida  
School of Nursing  
Interim Associate Dean, Assistant Professor  
Pensacola FL  
USA  

Professional Experience: 2015-Present Director of Undergraduate Nursing, University of West Florida, School of Nursing 2011-Present Assistant Professor, University of West Florida, School of Nursing 2010-2011 Instructor, Pensacola State College, Department of Nursing 2009-2011 Circulating Nurse, Sacred Heart Hospital, Main OR  

Author Summary: Brandy is the Interim Associate Dean of the College of Health at the University of West Florida. Her research interests include obesity in adolescents with autism spectrum disorders and baccalaureate and graduate nursing education. She has procured funding for clinical technology enhancements for undergraduate nursing students and implementation of alternative clinical practices.  

Second Secondary Presenting Author  

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author  

Meredith Johnson, MSN, RN  
University of West Florida  
School of Nursing  
Adjunct Faculty  
Pensacola FL  
USA  

Professional Experience: 1986-BSN Cedarville University 2016-MSN Cedarville University, Global Public Health Ministries Adjunct faculty at the University of West Florida Faith Community Nurse Coordinator of Cedar Cliff Parish Nursing Adjunct faculty at Cedarville University
Author Summary: Mrs. Johnson is an adjunct professor at the University of West Florida. She teaches students foundational nursing and community and public health nursing. She received her MSN from Cedarville University with a focus on global health ministries and her BSN from Cedarville University. She has completed the Westberg Institute's and Kettering College of Medical Arts Faith Community Nursing courses.

Third Secondary Presenting Author

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author

Crystal G. Bennett, PhD, RN
University of West Florida
School of Nursing
Lecturer
Pensacola FL
USA

Professional Experience: 2006-Present, Lecturer, University of West Florida, Department of Nursing
Responsible for development and implementation of the Argo Shield Project Co-author on grant submission to Florida Department of Health Division of Community Health Promotion

Author Summary: Dr. Bennett has been a nurse educator for 12 years in the academic setting and during that time has worked with students on health promotion projects in the community setting.

Fourth Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

Cynthia Smith-Peters, DNP
University of West Florida
School of Nursing
Assistant Professor
Pensacola FL
USA

Professional Experience: During her 23 years as a professional nurse, she has practiced in medical-surgical nursing, public health nursing, geriatrics, pediatrics, and maternal care. In addition, as a parish or faith community nurse, she is routinely invited to give presentations at community churches and centers where she encourages individuals to focus on preventative health care and the management of chronic diseases. She has also worked as a public health nurse and nursing consultant providing education to health care professionals and families regarding perinatal HIV transmission, HIV prevention and treatment options, and has assisted in clinical trials for HIV-exposed infants.

Author Summary: She received a bachelor's in nursing and master's in nursing with focus on public health from the University of South Alabama, master's in health education and management from UWF, and doctorate of nursing practice from Duquesne University.

Fifth Author

Melanie Sutton, PhD
University of West Florida
Department of Public Health
Professor
Pensacola FL
USA
**Professional Experience:** University of South Florida: Bachelor's degree in computer engineering, Master's in computer science, Doctorate in computer science and engineering with a focus on computer vision and robotics

**Author Summary:** Dr. Melanie Sutton, professor, teaches bioinformatics, health information systems, medical informatics, medical terminology, and computer and geographic information systems applications in public health at the University of West Florida. She received a bachelor's degree in computer engineering, master's in computer science, and doctorate in computer science and engineering with a focus on computer vision and robotics, all from the University of South Florida.