

In Support of Global Health in the Nursing Curriculum: A Nurse Educator's View from the Road Less Traveled

Karen R. Breitkreuz, EdD, RN, CNS



What could be better in November? The Indian Ocean is sparkling in the distance as the warm breezes blow. I'm sitting in the cozy corner of a bookstore overlooking the beach in Plettenburg Bay, South Africa reflecting on another meaningful week with my students. I am teaching pediatric to undergraduate nursing students from the University of Connecticut here in Cape Town, South Africa, almost 8,000 miles from our campus back in Storrs, CT.

I invite you to look with me across the road less traveled, which has led me here as a nurse educator teaching American students in South Africa. My earliest exposure to international nursing began as a child around my family dinner table. My mother and father often entertained dinner guests, including physicians and nurses back in the United States on short visits from their work overseas. I would sit at the table enthralled as I listened to stories about their practice and how they worked collaboratively within the communities they

served. In 1994, I was thrilled to take my first overseas journey and see the impact that nurses can have on global health.

Earning my Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree resulted in my decision to continue my education as I began my nursing practice. I completed my Masters in Nursing degree at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), specializing in International Cross-Cultural Community Health Nursing. After completing my master's degree, I volunteered in health missions along with other medical professionals to provide short-term health care to underserved populations in Africa, South America, Central America, Eastern Europe, and India. On those trips I paid my own way, used my vacation time, and could not have been more fulfilled. In 2009, while completing my dissertation at Teachers College (TC) Columbia University, my doctoral dissertation sponsor, Dr. Keville Frederickson, encouraged my research on the work titled, *The Experience of Nursing Students from a Developing Nation Using the Internet as an Educational Resource* (Breitkreuz, 2009). After graduation from TC in May 2009, I made an important career choice, which has now brought me here to South Africa.

The University of Connecticut (UCONN), my new employer, is committed to their undergraduate students experiencing the concept of global citizenship. For the UCONN School of Nursing, this commitment means educating nursing students about global health issues across the curriculum and offering courses for students to study nursing in other countries. Senior nursing students are invited to spend a semester studying

abroad, taking their nursing courses along with a liberal arts course while immersed in the country's history and culture. In order to meet nursing accreditation requirements, the nursing courses are taught by faculty from the UCONN School of Nursing, and the liberal arts classes are offered by the University of Cape Town faculty, UCONN's educational partner in the program.

In their two nursing clinical practices here in South Africa, *Childbearing* and *Child Rearing*, students observe and provide supervised nursing care to children and pregnant mothers in several local hospitals, clinics, and orphanages. They assess and treat children with common pediatric problems and children with HIV, AIDS, and TB. The exemplary outcomes of the UCONN study abroad nursing program result from immersing students in quality nursing education experiences, increasing their awareness as global citizens, and fostering their advocacy for global health.

Cultural and Global Health Awareness As a Global Citizen

International experts encourage us to increase awareness of global health realities in nursing education. Awareness begins when you step off the airplane in a foreign country and realize you're no longer at home. Nursing has supported the concept of cultural competency for a number of years (Currier, Canady, & Saint Arnault, 2007). However, the idea of becoming a global citizen, one who

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Components of cultural proficiency are experienced by study abroad students on a daily basis. The students encounter language barriers. They have daily practice in learning about food customs and differences in concepts surrounding time. They learn about the differences in health beliefs and practices, as well as rituals surrounding birth and death. There is no part of the cultural competence continuum that goes unnoticed when you are actually in another country.

“demonstrates knowledge of world geography, conditions, and events and has an awareness of the complexity and interdependency of world issues and events” (Green & Olson, 2003) is fairly new. Qualitative research on study abroad programs in nursing demonstrates that students gain increased academic knowledge and skills and experience personal growth through their study abroad experiences (Frisch, 1990; Thompson, Boore, & Deeny, 1999). Other positive outcomes include increased intercultural sensitivity, increased communication skills, professional growth, changing perceptions of the professional nurse role, and development of culturally focused nursing practice (DeDee & Stewart, 2003; Evanson & Zust, 2004; Lee, 2004; Walsh & De Joseph, 2003; Zorn, 1996).

Components of cultural proficiency are experienced by study abroad students on a daily basis. The students encounter language barriers and must figure out how to overcome them. They have daily practice in learning about food customs and differences in concepts surrounding time. In the clinical setting, they learn about the differences in health beliefs and practices, as well as rituals surrounding birth and death. There is no part of the cultural competence continuum that goes unnoticed when you are actually in another country. Many students, for the first time, are the minority – the ones who have the *different* attitude or health-belief or practice. Sometimes students face unjust, anti-American sentiment. However, even this reality gives students the opportunity to gain insight into the world-views that others hold, and all of these experiences teach them a little more about what it means to be a global citizen.

I asked my students to comment on whether their study abroad experiences have been valuable to them. Many students shared the difference that their experiences have made in them as indi-

viduals, global citizens, and future nurse leaders. One student said, “People need to know that others provide quality nursing care, sometimes with much less than what we have in the United States; they follow the same principles, and use the same concepts” (J. Crank, personal communication, November 8, 2009).

Call for Global Health Concepts and Experiences in Undergraduate Nursing Curricula

The National Student Nurses’ Association (NSNA), Inc. (2005, 2009), the National League for Nursing and the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) (2008), and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (AACN, 2008) all support including global health perspectives and experiences within the standards and curricula for undergraduate nursing education. The NSNA supports incorporating global health in nursing curricula through resolutions adopted by the NSNA House of Delegates (NSNA, 2005, 2009). The NLNAC *Accreditation Standards* (2008) for undergraduate education state that nursing curriculum should include cultural, ethnic, and socially diverse concepts and that experiences from regional, national, and global perspectives should be included. The AACN *Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* (2008) also supports including population health promotion and disease prevention at both individual and population levels in the curriculum, including global perspectives.

So Why is the Road Less Traveled?

Why are global concepts and experiences still slow to be integrated if nursing education’s accrediting commissions and professional organizations exhort that undergraduate nursing programs should include global health education and experiences in their curricula? In a

national survey report entitled *Integration of Global Health Concepts in Nursing Curricula: A National Study*, Carlton, Ryan, Ali, and Kelsey (2007) found that only 20 of the 62 undergraduate nursing programs responding (32%) indicated that they currently include global health as an identifiable concept within the conceptual framework or student learning outcomes of their curriculum. The restraining forces that hold us back will need our continued discussion and partnership to be resolved. This question is complex and some practical considerations will be discussed further in the November/December 2010 issue of *Dean’s Notes*. I share my story and my students’ stories now to help encourage discussion and to support ongoing collaboration in the year ahead.

Conclusion

As I think about my students currently studying here in South Africa, I realize their individual journeys will be different than mine. However, I also know that what I’m doing now will impact their future and the future they give to their children. These students may eventually participate in formulating solutions to global health problems or find ways to solve global nursing shortages. My education and career choices brought me here today to South Africa to give my students the chance to learn, grow, and experience international nursing and health as a *global citizen*. Today’s undergraduate nursing students are our profession’s future leaders. We must bring them with us and teach them about the world beyond the borders and comforts of home. There is room for more international nurse educators and nursing students on this road less traveled. Won’t you join us? **DN**

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For More Information:

As programs and faculty discuss and consider strategies to integrate global health concepts within courses and across their curriculum, I recommend two journal articles in *Nursing Education Perspectives*:

Carlton, K.H., Ryan, M., Ali, N.S., & Kelsey, B. (2007). Integration of global health concepts in nursing curricula: A national study. *Nursing Education Perspectives, 28*(3), 124-129.

White, J.L. (2005). Introducing undergraduate students to global health: Challenges through web-based learning. *Nursing Education Perspectives, 26*(3), 157-162.

For more information on the UCONN School of Nursing study abroad program, please contact either Anne R. Bavier, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dean and Professor (anne.bavier@uconn.edu) or Karen R. Breitkreuz, EdD, RN, CNS, Assistant Professor-in-Residence (karen.breitkreuz@uconn.edu).

2010 NSNA Annual Convention Faculty Schedule Disney's Coronado Springs Resort and Convention Center Orlando, Florida – April 7-11, 2010

This activity has been submitted to the New York State Nurses Association for approval to award contact hours. The New York State Nurses Association is accredited as an approver of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses' Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

Tuesday, April 6, 2010

5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.



Consultants and Advisors Certificate Program (Part I)
Special Registration Required

There is no additional registration fee, but the program does require a separate pre-registration, preparation, and pre-test. Please contact carol@nsna.org for details.

Wednesday, April 7, 2010

7:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.



Consultants and Advisors Certificate Program (Part II)
Special Registration Required

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Faculty Pre-Convention Workshop Legal Issues in Nursing Education

Special Registration Required

Linda Christensen, JD, RN

Sponsors: National League for Nursing, New York, NY and the National Student Nurses' Association, Brooklyn NY

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.



Opening Ceremony And Keynote Address
Experience the Magic of Nursing

Jennie Chin Hansen, President of AARP

7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Reception Honoring Award Winners and Sponsors

Sponsors: U.S. Army Nurse Corps and the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, Fort Knox, KY

Thursday, April 8, 2010

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Consultant/Advisor Orientation to the Convention

Cheryl Taylor, PhD, RN
Cheryl Schmidt, PhD, RN

1:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Transforming Pharmacology: Teaching Made Insanely Easy!

Loretta Manning, MSN, RN, GNP

Sponsor: Sylvia Rayfield & Associates, Inc./I CAN Publishing, Pensacola, FL

3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Consultants/Advisors Briefing

Cheryl Taylor, PhD, RN
Cheryl Schmidt, PhD, RN

Friday, April 9, 2010

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Writing to Publish

Karen H. Morin, DSN, RN, ANEF

Sponsor: Sigma Theta Tau International, Indianapolis, IN

10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Integrating Essential Environmental Health Concepts into Basic Nursing Education

Barbara Sattler, DrPH, RN, FAAN, Professor and Director, Environmental Health Education Center, University of Maryland School of Nursing

Sponsors: Connecticut Student Nurses Association and the University of Maryland School of Nursing, Baltimore, MD

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Consultant/Advisor Roundtable Discussions

Cheryl Taylor, PhD, RN
Cheryl Schmidt, PhD, RN

Saturday, April 10, 2010

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Progressive Simulation Throughout the Nursing Curriculum

Manny Ramos, MSN, RN
Linda Speranza, MSN, RN
Kim Laughman, MSN, RN

Sponsor: Valencía Community College, Orlando, FL

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Documentation Avoiding Malpractice

Lori Klingman, MSN, RN

Sponsor: Ohio Valley Hospital, McKees, PA

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.



Closing Ceremony and Endnote Address
Real Rabbits: Chasing An Authentic Life

Corey Ciocchetti, JD, Assistant Professor of Business Ethics and Legal Studies, Daniels College of Business, University of Denver, Denver, CO

Sponsor: Catholic Healthcare West, San Francisco, CA

Faculty lounge refreshments sponsored by Delmar Cengage Learning, Clifton Park, NY, and Cyber Café sponsored by Renown Health System, Reno, NV.

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An Invitation to Coach Tomorrow's Nursing Leaders in Orlando

For Faculty, Consultants, and Advisors Attending the 58th Annual NSNA Convention

Students attending the 2010 NSNA Convention are invited to participate in the 2010 Exhibit Hall Career Counseling Center during open Exhibit Hall hours. Students participating in the 2010 Career Center are encouraged to bring a print copy of their resume using the Decision Critical, Inc. e-portfolio tool that is available to NSNA members at no cost through NSNA Leadership University's Critical Portfolio™ (go to www.nsnaleadershipu.org and select *Critical Portfolio*).

Thursday, April 8, 2010

11:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Exhibit Hall and Career Counseling Center "Grand Opening"



Friday, April 9, 2010

11:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Exhibit Hall and Career Counseling Open

Saturday, April 10, 2010

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Exhibit Hall and Career Counseling Center Open

If you are willing to provide leadership coaching and lifelong learning recommendations to NSNA members attending the 2010 NSNA Convention on April 8-10, 2010, please send your name, contact information, and date and time(s) available for coaching to nsna@nsna.org and list "2010 Career Center Volunteer" in the subject line. **DN**



Register Today and Save!

**58th NSNA Annual
Convention**

**Disney's Coronado
Springs Resort
Orlando, Florida
April 7-11, 2010**

Visit <http://www.nсна.org/Meetings/AnnualConvention.aspx> for more information.

Don't Miss Out!

Important NSNA deadline dates are available online at <http://www.nсна.org/Portals/0/Skins/NSNA/pdf/nsnacalendar.pdf>