Nursing Students Abroad: Understanding Global Health through Partnership in Australia

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Background Information

- Culture, family, & community needs are major considerations in professional practice
- Students may not recognize nursing responsibility to the society at large
- View of the world must be challenged
Goals of Australia Program

- Studies focus on healthcare needs in Australia
  - Providing care for people in the outback
  - Meeting the needs of the Aboriginal people
    - Exploring their beliefs & practices

- Goal: To examine global healthcare from another perspective
  - A new view of community
Discovering Aboriginal People

- Pre-departure cultural research papers
  - A research view of aboriginal culture & healthcare considerations
Connecting with the Issues

- Classroom discussions & presentations
  - Aboriginal encounters with early settlers
  - Aboriginal presence in Australia today
  - Providing healthcare in Australia including the healthcare system & issues with populations
Royal Flying Doctors Service

- 1st stop in Cairns
- Examining healthcare in the outback
- Special services for aboriginal people
Meeting the Cairns Community

Aboriginal live among Australians & other people who settled in Cairns from around the world.

The children wore no shoes as they played – they were friendly & seemed very happy.

The elders do not make eye contact with the nurses, yet they do within their community group.
Cairns Base Hospital

- Lectures followed by hospital tours
  - Focus on cultural healthcare concerns
Project Goals

- To assess the healthcare needs of the aboriginal population in Cairns
  – How does this change nursing care?

- To examine community coalition-building & healthcare beliefs
  – How does this guide services?
Aboriginal Healthcare Experiences

- Nursing experiences at the Base Hospital
  - designed to give students opportunities shadowing culturally sensitive nurses caring for aboriginal people
    - Model the way approach to learning
  - Worked with nurse to understand culture
  - Aboriginal nurse presentations & discussions
    - Research shared
Comparative Analysis

- Student team presentations of findings
  - Compared populations of Sydney & Cairns
  - Examined healthcare services & needs
  - Discussed expected findings versus experiences
  - Applied findings to global healthcare considerations

- Formulated questions & projects based on analysis
Discovering Differences

Students learned:

- How to assess specific healthcare needs of the people
  - Within the framework of their culture
- Differences in healthcare beliefs & practices should guide nursing practice
  - Populations differ hospital to hospital
- Nurses shared a respect for culture in their care practices
Each year a new group of students develop a project that supports the work of the nurses in Cairns, Australia

HEALTH PROMOTION PROJECTS
Taking the Experience Forward

- The global view of cultural inequities was perhaps the most important lesson
  - Their view has been challenged
  - This experience fosters an understanding of how cultural differences may influence healthcare needs.
    - These differences cannot affect quality of care.