Globalization and Nursing Education

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Nursing education is ever evolving and encompasses a wide range of educational elements including physical, social, emotional, cultural, and psychological issues in nursing. While nursing curriculums provide a well versed education for their students, many programs have yet to effectively integrate the concept of international globalization into their specific curriculum. It is crucial that international globalization and its effect on the nursing profession is understood and taught in undergraduate universities. The importance of nursing globalization education has become increasingly relevant at Temple University; both nursing students and faculty have already begun to explore nursing on an international level and have returned to Temple University with a different outlook on nursing care.

Globalization Impact on Nursing

Globalization is a recognized and well developed concept in many industries within our society. Over the years, advances in technology and travel have allowed the sharing of information, goods, and people across the world (Seloilwe, 2005). These factors have changed social, political, and economic activity internationally (Seloilwe, 2005). The role of the nursing profession has changed and many nurses are now working for hospitals and clinics, as educators, or in the corporate world (Seloilwe, 2005). With globalization, and advances in technology and communication, nurses now have opportunities to relocate internationally. There is an increasing number of nurses who are taking advantage of these opportunities, with a growing exchange of nurses between countries. While globalization has started to impact the nursing profession, it has not directly effected change on undergraduate nursing education in many universities. “In a
globalized world, our educational programmes must become more universal, catering not only for more diverse student groups, but also to address more directly the increasingly transcultural nature of health care itself” (Seloilwe, 2005, p. 571). It is increasingly important that globalization begins within nursing education programs.

**Nursing Education**

Education about globalization provides nursing students with culturally competent knowledge when they graduate and enter the healthcare profession; it also allows greater understanding and continuity among the field of nursing across the globe. Globalization education provides educators with the resources to enable nursing students to practice competencies in “increasingly ethnic diverse communities” (Gerrish, 2004, p. 65). Some nursing curriculums have begun to institute student exchange programs between schools in different countries. These exchange programs allow students to see and learn first hand about different healthcare systems. Additionally, nursing students gain valuable experience learning in cultures different then their own with students who have different beliefs. One recurring theme throughout the concept of instituting globalized nursing education in universities is that nursing curriculums could develop shared programs and educational foundations (Gerrish, 2004). Using these shared foundations, nursing education would be more efficiently accessed among students across the world. Furthermore, if there are defined standards within the nursing practice it would be feasible for all nurses to maintain specific competencies. This would increase the ease of nursing practice across the world (Baumann, 2008). Baumann (2008) explains the necessity of global standards: “Mechanisms are needed to compare the education and qualifications of applicants against global standards. Because nations have specific
requirements related to technology and disease prevalence, as well as cultural, social, and environmental differences, it is unlikely that education will ever be uniform. However, it should be possible to determine common competencies and skills upon which assessment could be based” (p. 11). Developing competencies for all nations to follow in their nursing curriculum would allow for easy global transition among nurses.

Temple University Nursing Curriculum

The necessity of early nursing education concerning global issues is pinpointed in this statement, “it is a disservice to future nurses to fail to expose them to the impact of changing conditions on the various populations around the world” (Ali, Carlton, Kelsey & Ryan, 2007, p. 129). Because of the need for increased global education to create globally aware nurses, the nursing program at Temple University has begun to take steps toward incorporating globalization into their curriculum. Specifically, there are two courses that are new to Temple’s BSN program as of Fall 2010. Perspectives on Health I: Thinking Globally, is the first part of the course that educates students how “social, political, physical, and health care environments influence the health of societies around the world.” This course also uses epidemiological theories to evaluate the differences in health between developed and developing countries. It further explains how nurses maintain, promote, and restore health in individuals and protect their human rights. Perspectives on Health II: Acting Locally, is the second portion of the course that takes the knowledge learned in the first half of the course and applies it locally during a field work experience in a community (Temple University, 2013). Dr. Maneval, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Nursing Education at Temple University explains that the purpose of the new curriculum is to initiate and expand students’ comprehension of
“cultural diversity, culturally appropriate care, and health disparities at both local and global levels.” Dr. Maneval, and the Undergraduate Nursing faculty at Temple University, are aiming to “develop, in students, a global mindset in providing health care to at-risk populations and becoming advocates for improved health care services internationally.” The new BSN curriculum at Temple University, with the support and hard work of the Undergraduate Nursing Faculty is a pivotal role in reaching these goals of globalization within nursing education.

**Temple University Students**

Two senior nursing students have already decided that global affairs are an important part of their nursing education and have gone to Kenya to volunteer in clinics. Emma Bracken and Laurel Dertouzos spent six weeks in Kenya during the summer of 2012. They were very involved in the clinics in the community. Emma and Laurel explained that for the first two weeks they were working at a maternity clinic doing prenatal check ups. For the remainder of the trip, the students drove to the surrounding villages and provided vaccines to babies and prenatal checkups to pregnant women (see photo of Emma giving a vaccine to a baby). Emma and Laurel explained that often, the van would be unable to reach villages because of poor road conditions and the people living in the village would walk for miles to get where the van was stopped. Laurel explained it as an “eye opening” and “extraordinary” experience. After they had recounted the events of their trip, Emma said, “it was definitely an amazing experience. I’m so thankful that I had the opportunity to go to Kenya and see how other cultures live and how healthcare is different.” Laurel continued by saying that, “I think it is extremely important for all students to have some sort of international experience; it really shows
you how different life is for some people and makes you thankful for the healthcare and resources that we have here.” Emma and Laurel both agree that Temple’s addition of global education in their nursing program is an important step.

**Temple University Faculty**

Similarly to Emma and Laurel, a Temple nursing faculty member, Eleana Shipman, went to Cameroon during summer 2012 for two weeks. Professor Shipman explained that the purpose of her trip to Cameroon was to begin to establish an exchange program for nursing faculty. During her trip she visited the Bafoussam School of Nursing, located a short distance from Cameroon, and had the opportunity to teach a few classes. After visiting the school, she explained that she was part of medical outreaches to villages (see photo of Eleana Shipman with local women). She helped educate the people of the village about obesity, HIV prevention, diabetes, obesity, and sexual abuse. While in Cameroon, Professor Shipman also helped to dispense medication to manage hypertension, asthma, and antibiotics. Professor Shipman said that “while it would be a valuable experience for nursing students to go to Cameroon, it would be difficult to make it possible for a large number of students.” She continued to explain that it would be interesting to “create a faculty exchange program so that different teaching, cultural, and educational ideas can be shared.” While it is important for global courses to be incorporated into nursing curriculums, it is equally important that the faculties are educated amongst each other in order to effectively teach students. “In looking to the future, it is important for nurse educators to network internationally in meeting the challenge of educating nurses for a global workforce” (Gerrish, 2004, p. 66). Fellowship
and relationships between nurse educators in a global sense is equally as important as instilling globalization in nursing courses and among students.

Conclusion

Globalization has become a large part of our society and its everyday function. It is necessary for nursing to begin to incorporate globalization into the profession, starting with undergraduate nursing education. Undergraduate nursing education is the beginning for a new generation of nurses. The ideas of globalization and its effect on nursing locally and internationally need to be researched further and introduced in the initial phase of nursing education. The Nursing Department at Temple University is taking the initiative and first step by instilling these globalization courses into their curriculum in order to educate new nurses.
References


