

Igniting the Soul through a Global Service- Learning Experience

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Objectives: The participants will be able to:

- **Recognize the value of engagement in the human condition to transform and develop the soul of the nursing student.**
- **Construct an engagement activity that can contribute to the soul-making transformation of the student fostering a global identify**

I, Mary Hermann and I, Barbara Jones, the planners and presenters have no real or perceived vested interest related to this presentation.

The following presentation includes original content from the presenter and content from other sources (cited in slide).





- ***Can engagement in the human condition ignite the soul of a nursing student?***
- ***Can this engagement foster exploration of issues such as culture, gender, socio-political & economic status that underlie quality of life?***



What is soul-making?

- ***Soul-making is the interaction of the intelligence, the human heart and work. (Fong, 2014, p.28)***
- ***Role of higher education....to cultivate the humanity of the student asking them to critically examine themselves and the society that has formed them (Nussbaum, 1997)***
- **ANA Code of Ethics, ICN & nursing literature support engagement of nursing students in social justice issues.**



How is soul-making cultivated?

- Service-learning experiences have the potential to create soul-making experiences through...
 - > fostering a local/global service identity
 - > providing opportunities to merge heart, intelligence with distressing human conditions
 - > enabling the maturation of the heart & head to create a transformative impact



Qualitative Phenomenological Study

- **Paul Colaizzi – Lived – Experience**
- **Purpose: to capture the meaning and significance of this experience for 24 junior and senior nursing students.**
- **Setting of study: Dominican Republic (DR)
Gwynedd Mercy University partnered with Good Samaritan Hospital and Maranatha in the DR.**



Preparation for service -learning

- **Several weeks prior to week long service trip**
- **Educated in the history & culture of Hispaniola (Haiti & Dominican Republic)**
- **Informed about the global concerns – earth, nonviolence, women & children, racism and immigration**



Service-Learning Experience

- **Faculty & Students provided basic health assessment and care to Haitian residents of the sugar cane communities (bateyes)**



- **Journal Objectives:**
 - > to reflect on the lifestyle of a person living in the bateyes
 - > to engage in a critical concern issue
 - > to reflect on the impact of this experience on one's life



Student Journaling
Experience

***What did
you
observe?
What did
you
encounter?***

- **Students recorded their perceptions of interacting with the Haitian residents in the bateyes.**
- **Described observations and reflective comments**
- **Responded to selected prompt questions**





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Student Journaling Experience

- **Samples of selected prompt questions:**
- **As you reflect upon the day's experience**
- ***What emotions did you experience?***
- ***What does the phrase “the luck of birth” mean to you?***
- ***How can reflection on critical global concerns impact your own life?***





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Data Analysis

- **Extracting significant statements**
- **Identifying common themes**



Data Analysis

Sample significant statements:

The first day was very overwhelming for me..I really had a hard time taking it in...this experience created a hunger inside me, like I was alive and part of something amazing.

We played games, laughed, hugged- although different races, the joy spread..the hugs are universal...all deserve to be treated with love and respect. I learned so much about myself as a person.

I am so much more appreciative of my life...I am lucky to be born where I am. It made me grateful for what we have here.

My service to the residents in the bateyes enhanced my commitment to social change...I can educate myself on changes to preserve the world...I feel more inclined to advocate for those without resources...values of clean water and trash removal , I will carry with me in life.



- **Common Themes:**
 - Overwhelming emotions; gratitude, appreciation, joy, anxiety, stress
 - New understanding of advocacy & respect
 - Transformation described as increased cultural sensitivity, personal growth.
 - Desire to understand global issues
 - Commitment to social justice and making a difference







Conclusions and Implications

- Findings suggest that this experience has contributed to the soul-making of these students
- Students experienced cognitive dissonance on encountering human beings who struggle for basic survival.
- Overall, students inspired to increase knowledge of global issues and challenges.





Continuation of study: Survey & Focused group discussion

- **Purpose:**
- **To assess the long term impact of this service-learning experience.**
- **Service-learning trip- spring 2013**
- **Long –term impact - spring 2015**
 - Survey
 - Focused group discussion



Continuation of study: Sample questions

- Describe the impact that the Dominican Republic Trip has had on your personal lifestyle. Have there been any changes in your lifestyle?
- Was there a particular activity that you felt transformed you or touched your soul?
- The people of the bateyes can be described as manifesting such attributes as strength, endurance and optimism. What attributes might you have acquired?
- Please describe any service activities that you have participated in upon return from the Mission Trip that were motivated due to your experience in the Dominican Republic? If not, have you contemplated any future service activities?
- Has your understanding of a global concern been modified in the aftermath of your trip



Themes from surveys & focused –group discussion

- **Gratitude, Appreciation, Over-whelming range of emotions- enthusiasm, anxiety, stress, joy, some unsettled feelings, desire to participate in more mission trips (*because you see things you can't unsee and hear things you can't unhear*)**
- **> Importance/necessity to *experience* the mission trip yourself in order to feel and understand; hard to explain to others**
- > Aspirations to participate in more mission trips**



Conclusions from long term impact study

- All participants conveyed that the experience of the DR trip changed them as people and nurses in a positive way in particular, their attitudes in how they see the world influencing life choices and lifestyles. The change within the individual created a sphere of influence leading to increased global consciousness having a multi-generational effect.
- All would readily participate in another mission trip but recognize practical real-life responsibilities are barriers to participating in international mission trips.
- Not sure or unclear whether all participants were as sufficiently aware or knew how to seek out local service opportunities?
- Not sure if all participants understood the meaning of a global citizen?
- Not sure if all participants made the connection between importance of becoming an informed global citizen and what actions (voting, keeping up with current local/global events related to social justice issues) that they can take to support solutions to problems?



Implications & Recommendations

- **Positive impact of service-learning trip conveyed by students who participated in the follow up study to assess long term impact. However, overall poor return of surveys and small number of students who participated in the focused-group discussion, presents mixed conclusions.**
- **Recommendations:**
 - **Increase education on global issues and on the meaning of social responsibility as a nurse and global citizen.**
 - **Plan more follow- up sessions (debriefing) on return from DR Mission Trip to assist in continued processing of the experience to support potential long term impact for participants.**
 - **Plan for channeling motivation and energy to local service needs and other soul-making (merging of intelligence, heart and work) experiences.**

