

**Title:**

Advancing Undergraduate Nursing Students' Knowledge and Sensitivity to Culture and Diversity

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**References:**

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**Abstract Summary:**

To affect cultural awareness on campus and the workplace university, faculty engaged in long range planning of differing experiential learning activities for all students in their BSN program. The vision is to change campus and workplace environments through students' improved understanding of themselves and their environment.

**Learning Activity:**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
Students will examine their personal beliefs, values, biases and prejudices.	Conscious self-examination through pre-activity assignments, small group activities, and large group debriefing.

Enhance students' self-awareness about how privilege and oppression operate in society.	Not everyone starts with an equal playing field. The rules can change at any time. The outcome may not be determined simply by how hard you work.
Increase students' awareness that others' experiences of privilege and oppression may differ from their own.	Students share personal stories of daily struggles and/or traumatic events. Diverse feelings (e.g., anger, frustration, sadness, hopelessness, guilt, compassion, altruism) emerge.

**Abstract Text:**

**Background:**

Nurses have long identified that understandings about culture and diversity are important for clinical practice. In reviewing the content of a current undergraduate nursing program, faculty at a large metropolitan university in the Dallas Fort Worth area became aware that these topics were not scaffolded in ways that provided an adequate foundation for ongoing student learning. The students represent great diversity with about a third or more of each class representing either minority or international students. An important first step involves creating cultural awareness about one's own cultural perspectives and greater sensitivity to personal bias and prejudice.

**Goal:**

The intent of this project is to broaden students' cultural knowledge and sensitivity through interactive learning experiences offered each semester during nursing students' junior and senior years of education. The goal for the first semester junior level learning is to engage all undergraduate nursing students in learning about culture and diversity. The project provides basic knowledge about diversity and opportunities to discern personal and group response to a learning activity.

**Methods:**

An interdisciplinary committee (i.e., nursing, physical therapy, student life, psychologist) was formed and through several meetings discussed ideas about ways to scaffold an ongoing cultural emphasis for students. The intent is to identify an active learning opportunity that can be offered every semester to advance students' knowledge and sensitivity about culture and diversity. Faculty volunteers were identified and all participated in a 60 minute train-the-trainer diversity activity. A pre-work assignment to view a video and complete a brief reading offered junior 1 students ways to begin thinking about their personal responses before the day of the activity.

The groups of 130 students were divided into 10 member teams and 2 teams were assigned to each classroom. Each team was given a bag of supplies with instructions that allotted 20 minutes to work together and create a paper chain. They were told that the team with the best chain would win a prize. One team received an elaborate (privileged) amount of materials while the other team (oppressed) was given only minimal supplies. The two facilitators in each room were assigned to either a *supportive* or *unsupportive* role. At the end of the experience, facilitators help students in small classroom groups debrief by asking questions to assist intersection and processing of emotions and experiences? Example questions: "What was this experience like for you?" "How did you feel?" "Did anyone wonder what was happening in the other space?" At the end of the debrief session, groups chose a member as spokesperson to share themes from the experience with the reassembled larger student group. After the sharing of group experiences, two facilitators spent about 30 minutes having students share personal stories about daily struggles with culture and diversity.

**Summary:**

At the end of the session, all student participants completed evaluations that reflected response to the learning activity. This presentation will provide an overview of the results found. Plans continue to introduce additional activities for all levels of undergraduate nursing students.