Donna Taliaferro, PhD, RN has been in academia for 34 years and engaged in research for 20 years. She is currently a Consultant and Professor engaged in online teaching and program development. She and Dr. Diesel have worked with their partners in Finland to look at the changes in students over the educational period to determine if their empathy and compassion change due to the educational environment.

Holly Diesel, PhD, RN is an Associate Professor of Nursing at the Goldfarb School of Nursing at Barnes-Jewish College. Her original research examined complementary therapies in premature infants. Currently, Dr. Diesel is exploring new formats to help students gain better understanding of their role in a global health environment, including service learning research in Africa and Honduras. Dr. Diesel is also examining the relationship between compassion fatigue and baccalaureate nursing students in both the US and Finland.
Cultural Impact with Reflective Journaling
Donna Taliaferro, RN, PhD
Holly Diesel, RN, PhD

Background
- Immersion Experience in Cameroon
- 8 Undergraduate Students
- Reflective Journaling
- Review of Literature
- Complex Issues

Theoretical Context
- Jean Watson
- Christopher Johns
Johns's Four Cornerstones of developing philosophy to guide practice

1) Nature of caring
2) Significance of the practice
3) The internal environment of practice
4) Social viability

The nature of caring

"One girl immediately grabbed my hand and began asking questions. She repeated over and over that she had such a passion for caring for people, and that every great nurse should start with this passion, and if we don't have this passion, we shouldn't be nurses. The nurses that I enjoy observing the most are the ones that take the time to care for the patient as a unique person ". (Participant #2)

Significance of practice

"Today was a lot of fun, we went to a school and drew and colored with 4-5 year olds. My girls only spoke French, so I was sad we couldn't communicate, but when I drew a butterfly and they all shrieked Papillon, and then frantically drew little butterflies of their own, my face lit up because I was understood ". (Participant #1)
Environment

"The security lines were orderly, but the concept of personal space was different; the woman behind me was practically against my back pack. The program began two and a half hours late for the digitation, which showed the protocol and honor are very important to them. Family names are written first, and then their given name. I wonder this ties with the concept of family first, where in America, the individual is king. When you go to the hospital, you take a family member to provide non-medical care like cooking, laundry, bathing, and bring your own bedding and clothing; this is strange in the US".
(Participant #7)

Social Viability

"Today we talked about the basics of HIV and their perceptions on the virus. We also talked about stigmas and discrimination. One student had ideas of homosexuals and I asked him to put himself in the shoes of someone who was gay. He said he had never thought that homosexuality was nothing more than a choice. Later I was watching CNN and the conflict in Libya, and recognize how involvement changes so much in my life".
(Participant #3)

Methods

- Mixed method descriptive study to determine the impact of a cultural immersion experience on nursing students' knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and reflection.

- This is only one piece of the larger study.
Results
Four themes emerged:
1) change, conflict and chaos
2) leaving home behind
3) recognizing the effect of poverty
4) making do and making a difference

Change, conflict and chaos
"Walking off the plane was like a full-senses slap in the face. It was so hard for me to breathe, hot and humid, I was instantly soaked. Knowing that my luggage was delayed didn’t help me feel good about this place. As we drove through the city, I was shocked by the traffic, the noise of car horns, people and cattle took my breath away, and there was trash dumped everywhere." (Participant #1)

Another
"The students wanted to know if I was married or not, and shocked to find out that I was 23 years old engaged to a man who is 26. They thought my fiance was way too young to be able to care for me. Later we attended the National Women’s Day March, and I could feel the power of the women supporting one another. So it really surprised me when later the students told me that the majority of older married men have relationships with younger girls at college. They called them sugar daddies, and the wives just put up with it. I asked what would happen if a woman had an affair. They all laughed and said she would be killed!" (Participant #2)
Leaving home behind

“I left the tv on for some background noise while rearranging my suitcases and there were actually some great things I heard. One of them is that travel is not just a way to explore new places, but it’s a way to learn more about yourself. I really liked that because traveling to new destinations takes one out of the comfort zone, and people surprise themselves with the way they react in certain situations or in what they find they enjoy.” (Participant #8)

Another

“My hair is almost completely straight again, and I feel that the humidity of Cameroon affected my hair just as much as the people affected my self and my personhood. My hair and body are the same as when I left America, but I am not the same person though and I hope and pray this change will stick longer than the cut. It is so easy to get caught back into the hectic life. I don’t want to forget what I learned, experienced, and revert back to my former mental state. I need to use this new information, this expansion of myself as a new outlook on interactions, and on the care I give my patients.” (Participant #4)

Recognizing the effect of poverty

“I’ve driven through many cities including post-invasion Baghdad and I’ve never seen poverty like this. Even though I don’t really have a lot of money, I don’t spend every moment thinking about it, or when I’ll eat my next meal”. (Participant #3). 

Another

"Something keeps popping into my head, the feeling of guilt, because of the way I live and the way people live in this country. I even felt ashamed on behalf of all Americans who complain about having to wash dishes for a few days when their dishwasher is broken, or when their steak wasn’t exactly medium rare as ordered. We take clean water for granted, while here women wash their clothes and children in dirty streams, the same stream used for cooking. The life expectancy is only 55! That means my father would have passed away 10 years ago." (Participant #8)

Making do and making a difference

"Today was all I was expecting it to be! I love to teach and to be able to explain things in an identifiable and relatable way to such intelligent nursing students who are engaged in the discussion. We talked about stigma and it felt as though I made them think about different perspectives of stigma and HIV. Having him look at things in a different view, I challenged his opinions and opened his thoughts up to other possibilities." (Participant #2)

Another

"I think food is going to be an issue for me, no matter what I eat, I’m not satisfied, it just doesn’t hit the spot. No towels, no air conditioning, and no pets to be seen. George explained that people can’t afford pets, when they don’t even have enough to eat. All I could think of was two shots of insulin my cat needs back at home and what that medication would mean to someone here. Later, at the Women’s Day, I saw a sea of pink and green, a sight I won’t soon forget. So our time here is coming to an end, and I don’t feel that I’ve processed everything. I know I feel different, and I am inspired to continue my education, become an instructor and get involved in research to make a difference." (Participant #7)
Limitations

- Often difficult for students to reflect instead of writing like a diary or a travel log. More about what they did than what they felt.
- Students were not given direct questions to address or specific instructions
- Small sample size

Overall Impressions

- Students need to engage in reflection
- Provides a greater experience of how they learn
- Assists in cultural proficiency when traveling to another country
- Allows students the opportunity to change the way in which they view the world

Questions

Thank you