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Expertise Areas:

Transcultural Topics

- International Service-Learning
- International Health in Low-Income Countries
- Cultural Competence with Nursing Students

Cultural Groups

- Latino
- Guatemalan (Ladino and Maya)
- African Americans

Clinical Topics

- Community Health
- Health Promotion with Promotoras
- Homelessness
- Intimate Partner Violence

Research Methodology

- Qualitative
- Reflexive Photography
- Case Study Research

Other

- Nursing Education
- Educational Theory

Languages spoken, read/write*

- English (spoken, read/write)
- Spanish (read, basic conversation skills)

Select Publications

Journal Articles

Amerson, R. (2010). Impact of service-learning on cultural competence, *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 31(1), 18-22.

Amerson, R. (2012). The influence of international service-learning on transcultural self-efficacy in baccalaureate nursing graduates. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 24(1), 6-15.

Amerson, R. (2013). Submitting for Dollars: Playing the Funding Game to Promote Transcultural Nursing, *Online Journal of Cultural Competence in Nursing and Healthcare*, 3(3), 16-23.

Amerson, R. & Livingston, W. (2014). Reflexive Photography: An alternative method for documenting the learning process of cultural competence. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 25(2), 202-210.

Amerson, R. (2014). Research-based recommendations for implementing international service-learning. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 30(2), 175-179.

1. What Sparked my Interest in Transcultural Nursing

I was introduced to transcultural nursing during the senior year of my BSN-completion program. Later that year I moved to the Republic of Panama. Suddenly everything I had learned in that nursing course became very real to me as I experienced living and working in a new culture. I began to see life through a completely different lens! I have grown up in a small, rural town in northern Louisiana with very little exposure to people who were different from me. Now, I was living in a foreign country and I was the minority. Dr. Leininger's Theory of Culture Care Diversity and Universality applied not only to my work, but to my personal life as well. I was surrounded by people who spoke another language, had different lifestyles, participated in different family routines, and practiced health in different ways. These cultural encounters sparked my interest and desire to learn more about culture and to help others experience these cultural encounters. Since moving into an academic role, I have steadily sought opportunities to expose my students to cultural encounters while improving the health of vulnerable populations. Much of my research has involved increasing cultural competence in baccalaureate nursing students through international service-learning. The bulk of my work has been in Guatemala, although I have worked in Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Mexico.

2. Present/Future Directions

I recently completed an NIH-funded research project in Guatemala using *promotoras* (community health workers) to educate families about oral rehydration therapy. I have spent the last decade building a body of scholarly work related to international service-learning. Now, I would like to use my expertise to mentor other faculty who are interested in implementing study abroad or immersion programs within their own institutions.

3. Favorite Transcultural Story

During one of my service-learning trips to Guatemala, my students and I had planned to teach women in a rural village about vital signs, specifically how to count the pulse and respirations. We anticipated that women would not have a watch, so we brought watches along for everyone. To our surprise, some of the women had never seen a watch before! My students were momentarily stunned, but they rose to the occasion and found a large wall clock with a second hand. The students dug through their suitcases until they found a battery that would fit the clock. Of course, the battery had died long ago since no one really used clocks in their culture. The students proceeded to use this to teach the women how to count the pulse and respirations for one full rotation (1 minute) using the second hand of this clock. While I had lectured many times about understanding the patient's view of time orientation, this concept was now forever imprinted in those students' memories. They would never forget how important it is to understand time from the patient's point of view.