Retention of Minority Students in Higher Education Using a Student Peer Support Model

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The United States is becoming more diverse, with ethnic and racial minorities totaling 107.2 million people (or 35% of total US population). The white population remained flat in 2010 census, making up roughly 199.9 million, or 65%, of the country.
Unequal Treatment

• Racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare exist and are unacceptable BECAUSE they are associated with worse outcomes in many cases.

• Racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare occur in the context of broader historic and contemporary social and economic inequality; there is evidence of persistent racial and ethnic discrimination in many sectors of American life.
Unequal Treatment

• Many sources—health systems, healthcare providers, utilization managers, and even patients themselves—may contribute to racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare.

• Bias, stereotyping, prejudice, and clinical uncertainty on the part of healthcare providers may contribute to racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare.
Unequal Treatment

• Patient and provider relationships can be strengthened by greater racial and ethnic diversity in the health professions.

• Racial concordance of patient and provider is associated with greater patient participation in care processes, higher patient satisfaction, and greater adherence to treatment.
Unequal Treatment

Racial and ethnic minority providers are more likely than their non-minority providers to serve in minority and medically underserved communities.

Racial and ethnic minority providers bring enhancement to all health care providers. They increase cultural awareness and sensitivity; and broaden the understanding of disease representations and prevalence across minority groups.
Nursing Profession

The nursing profession lacks representation of diverse cultural groups. There are 2,694,540 licensed registered nurses in the United States; only 12.3% of these identify themselves as being a racial or ethnic minority.
Nursing Profession

• SO the recruitment of minorities into the profession is critical……BUT an emerging and significant area of concern is the retention of minority students once they are accepted into a nursing program.

• The National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice (2000) noted that the attrition rates for minority students in nursing programs are very high, ranging from 15 – 85%.

This qualitative study explored minority nursing students’ experiences while enrolled in a predominantly white nursing program. Encourages reflection beyond what we “think” are the keys to success for minority students (e.g. financial aid, tutoring, professional/leadership development) to discover the personal perspectives.

Eight themes emerged:
• Loneliness and isolation
• Differentness
• Absence of acknowledgment of individuality from teachers
• Desiring support from teachers
• Coping with insensitivity and discrimination
• Determination to build a better future
• Overcoming obstacles
http://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/recruit/litreview.htm

Diversifying higher education and the workforce is no longer a philanthropic act, but a necessity in the US
• Minorities make up approximately 6% of the STEM workforce and only 4.6% of minorities in the STEM workforce hold doctoral degrees.
• Only 5% of the membership of the APA reflect persons from racial/ethnic minority groups; 12% of clinical psychology doctorates awarded to minority students.

• Agriculture and Natural Resources, although a high tech science with multiple specialties, carries a “stigma” among minorities—very low numbers pursue agricultural-related studies.
• Only 12-14% of teachers are minorities
• Only 11.4% of journalists are minorities

**Identified Barriers:**
- Financial Difficulty
- Academic under-preparedness
- Racial climate
- Absence of mentors and role models
- Lack of adequate social support
- Absence of culturally inclusive instruction
- Racially hostile campus climate
- Lack of professional networking opportunities
- Absence of an appreciation for diversity

Retention Strategies
• Must be able to meet needs for safety, sense of belonging, self-esteem, self-actualization
• Counseling
• Academic support (tutoring career planning, placement services)
• Improved cultural competency skills of advisors, faculty, and others in the university environment
Dual socialization: the institution shares responsibility with minority students in the successful cultural and social integration of students into college

Retention Strategies
• Honor the cultural capital that minority students bring
• Foster a positive attitude about academics, commitment to college, and sense of belonging and social connectedness
• Sense of importance to the academic community
• Faculty and staff support
Tinto’s Student Integration Model, theorizes that the social integration of students increases their institutional commitment, reducing the likelihood of student attrition.

- Academic preparedness
- Campus climate
- Institutional commitment
- Social integration with the establishment of peer relations, role models and mentors
- Financial aid
A Model for the Retention of Minority Nursing Students

For this project, the following themes were the focus:
• Loneliness and isolation
• Differentness
• Coping with insensitivity and discrimination
• Needing a sense of belonging
• Improved cultural competency skills
A Model for the Retention of Minority Nursing Students

This pilot study focused on developing and piloting a student peer support model. It was believed if non-minority students have an increased awareness, understanding, and depth of empathy for the experience of being a minority in the pursuit of the nursing degree, this could have a significant impact on the educational experience for the minority student.
Methodology and Design

Ten faculty participating from five schools of nursing, developed a student peer support model facilitated by: 1) review of evidence-based literature; and 2) a workshop led by a cross-cultural communication expert.

These activities led to the development of the model which included simulated experiences and conversations with minority students.
Interventions

There were three primary interventions:

1. Bafa Bafa Simulation Game: a cross-cultural simulation activity involving two groups given different sets of cultural rules to role play. Required working out ways to communicate and solve tasks using their different cultural norms

2. Sharing of “lived experiences”: six minority students described their experience as a minority student in nursing school (1 African American; 2 International Africans; 1 Haitian; 1 Mexican American; 1 Korean American)
Interventions

3. Role playing: The minority students simulated actual experiences and non-minority students practiced interaction skills derived from sensitivity training.
Measures

Two subscales of the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale—Short Form (M-GUDS-S) were used, assessing the cognitive, behavioral, and affective components of universal-diverse orientation (pretest/post-test):

• Relativistic Appreciation (the extent to which the individual values the impact of diversity on self-understanding and personal growth)

• Comfort with Differences (the person’s degree of comfort with diverse individuals).

Ten items were rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6).
Measures

As a component of the post test, two opened ended questions were included related to perceived value of the experience to the non-minority students.
Results

Participation in the peer development support model resulted in no significant difference between pretest and post-test scores on the Relativistic Appreciation subscale; there was a significant difference for the Comfort with Differences pretest and post-test scores.
Qualitative Themes: Selected Examples

• From hearing different perspectives, I thought about issues in a different way; I became aware of this problem I did not know existed.
• I was especially moved by the shared experiences of the minority students; I gained understanding of real life cultural issues.
• The Bafa Bafa game was an eye opening experience that really got me thinking about the challenges of being in a different culture.
• I will be more receptive to the feelings of minority students now; I can be more accepting and supportive.
• I understand social isolation as a barrier and I must do something to change this!
Stories from Minority Students: The Lived Experience

Role-Playing Scenarios

BaFa BaFa
BaFa BaFa

**Purpose:** create a feeling that is similar to the shock that people experience when they visit or live in another culture and discover they don’t understand the culture, that the culture’s values really are different than their own, and that many of the assumptions and strategies they use to get along in their home culture do not work or are counterproductive in the new culture.

Dr. Regina McClinton, Director

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