

Going Global: students' satisfaction and strategies to improve international interprofessional clinical education

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Introduction: Annually, students (n=80) from the occupational therapy, physiotherapy, pharmacy, nursing and speech therapy schools at Curtin University of Technology participate in Go Global, an international interprofessional clinical placement delivering over 12000 hours of service to consumers and staff at host sites in China, India, South Africa and Ukraine. Go Global addresses Thibeault's (2006) World Congress keynote which declared "...students in the current education system can go through their whole university training without ever being exposed to the global issues that will shape their future" (p.160).

Objectives: This paper describes the Go Global program, focussing on reported participant satisfaction from 2007 to 2009 (n=200). Occupational therapy educators will be challenged to incorporate international interprofessional experiences into their curricula to foster graduate attributes of 'global perspectives' and 'cross cultural capability' (Killick, 2008).

Description/Report: Student satisfaction was measured using the eVALUate tool (Curtin University of Technology, 2009) where students rated aspects of Go Global against; learning outcomes, resources and experiences; assessment, feedback and workload; quality of teaching and overall satisfaction. Students also provided qualitative feedback to identify the 'most helpful aspects' and 'how the unit might be improved' (Curtin University of Technology, 2009).

Results/Discussion: 100% of respondents indicated they were satisfied with the Go Global program. Qualitative responses indicate the interprofessional experience whereby students learn, work and live together for five weeks and development of cultural competence were highly valued outcomes of the Go Global program and these are consistent with Curtin graduate attributes. Students indicated that the primary factor enhancing overall satisfaction is the extended immersion and service delivery in a cultural and social milieu vastly different from the Australian context.

Conclusion: Allied health students value interprofessional education conducted through immersion in an international service learning environment. The paper demonstrates how the program has matured in response to evaluation, strengthening the Go Global pedagogy.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy: In an increasingly globalised world, producing graduate occupational therapists that have been immersed in international service delivery will cultivate the development of occupational therapy practice and outcomes for consumers through enhanced intercultural and interprofessional skills.