

ABSTRACT

Using a critical ethnography design, the investigator foregrounds nursing students understanding of the concept of culture, how they learn about the concept of culture, and apply what they learn in providing care for a culturally diverse population. Eight students from diverse ethnic, cultural, and educational backgrounds, with varying lengths of clinical experience voluntarily participated in the study. Data were collected through access to two students' reflective journals and in-depth interviews with students using open-ended questions, which were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Socio-demographic data were also collected. The data were analysed using narrative analytical techniques.

The findings from this study suggest first, that students hold diverse perspectives on the concept of culture. At the same time, it is also crucial to value and respect the perspectives of others and recognise the implications of particular ideological stances toward the concept of culture. Second, the process of learning and understanding about culture involves giving voice to multiple representations of realities, and cannot be isolated from socio-cultural, historical, economic, and political contexts. Third, inequalities and oppression that result from particular perspectives on culture can only be overcome when nursing students and nurses engage in a continuous discourse and problematise culture and bring critical perspectives to the processes of learning about culture. In addition, learning about culture must be ongoing and must draw from academic, personal and nursing

experiences. Fourth, there is a dialectic relationship between culture and life experiences. The research indicates that the perception of culture influences values and beliefs, and these values and beliefs are rooted in their life experiences, whether they be of a personal, academic, and nursing nature.