

Kaisa Huoponen

Experiences of European nursing students in studying in a double degree program in Washburn University

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MIKKELIN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences

KUVAILULEHTI

 MIKKELIN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences		Opinnäytetyön päivämäärä 1.11.2013
Tekijä(t) Kaisa Huoponen	Koulutusohjelma ja suuntautuminen Hoitotyö	
Nimeke Eurooppalaisten sairaanhoitajaopiskelijoiden kokemuksia kaksoistutkinto-opiskelusta Washburnin yliopistossa.		
Tiivistelmä Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli kerätä eurooppalaisten sairaanhoitajaopiskelijoiden kokemuksia kaksoistutkinto-opiskelusta lukuvuonna 2012-2013 Washburnin yliopistossa. TADD-(Transatlantic Double Degree in Nursing) projekti on transatlanttinen kaksoistutkinto-ohjelma, jossa on mukana Washburnin yliopiston lisäksi Mikkelin ammattikorkeakoulu Suomesta, Queensin Yliopisto Pohjois-Irlannista ja Szedgin yliopisto Unkarista. TADD-projektissa eurooppalaisten opiskelijoiden on mahdollisuus opiskella yksi lukuvuosi Washburnin yliopistossa ja saada oman kotikorkeakoulun lisäksi sairaanhoitajan tutkinto myös USA:sta. Kyselyn kysymykset muotoiltiin tekemällä taustatutkimusta TADD-ohjelman tavoitteista ja jakamalla tutkimuskysymykset neljään teemaan: kieli ja kulttuuri, ulkomailla opiskelu, opinto-suunnitelma, ja TADD-ohjelma. Kysely sisälsi sekä määrällisiä että laadullisia kysymyksiä ja tehtiin Webropol-verkkokyselyn avulla. Kymmenen opiskelijaa kolmesta eurooppalaisesta partnerioppilaitoksesta osallistui kyselyyn ja heille lähetettiin sähköpostiviesti, joka sisälsi linkin kyselyyn. Kaikki kymmenen osallistujaa täyttivät kyselyn. Kyselyn tulosten mukaan vaihto oli hyvin palkitseva kokemus sekä henkilökohtaisen että ammatillisen kasvun osalta. Joitakin haasteita toi kulttuuriin sopeutuminen ja kielimuuri. Monet osallistujat toivoivat että vaihdossa olisi ollut enemmän käytännön harjoittelua ja että opinto-ohjelma olisi ollut monipuolisempi. Kokonaisuutena kokemusta kuvailtiin positiiviseksi.		
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DESCRIPTION

 <p>MIKKELIN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences</p>		Date of the bachelor's thesis 1.11.2013	
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Abstract <p>This thesis was designed to study the experiences of European nursing students in studying in a double degree program during the academic year of 2012-2013 at Washburn university. TADD (Trans-atlantic double degree in nursing) is a transatlantic project and with Washburn University it includes Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences from Finland, Queen's University from Northern-Ireland, and the University of Szeged from Hungary. In TADD project the European students get a chance to study an academic year in Washburn University and to get a nursing degree from the USA in addition to the one from their home university.</p> <p>The questions for the survey were based on research about the goals of the TADD program and the research questions were divided into four themes: language and culture, studying abroad, curriculum, and TADD program. The questionnaire included both qualitative and quantitative questions and was conducted using Webropol- online survey. The survey had ten participants from all three of the European partner universities and they were sent an e-mail containing a link to the survey that they were asked to fill out. All ten participants responded to the study.</p> <p>According to the survey, the exchange was a very rewarding experience both for personal and professional growth. There were some challenges with the cultural and language barriers. There were some issues that were raised among participants wishing for more clinical hours during the time abroad and for the curriculum to be more varied. All in all the experience was described as a positive one.</p>			
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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of the experiences of European Nursing students in Washburn University during the academic year of 2012-2013. The reason this subject appealed to me as a student was that I was part of the group of Trans-Atlantic Double Degree students who went to Washburn University and who will hopefully gain a double degree at the end of our studies. It seemed interesting to collect the experiences into one thesis and have it in a format that would be readable for all the partners of the double degree project so that's the reason I started working on this subject.

The Transatlantic Double Degree in Nursing (TADD) is a double degree program that gives European nursing students a unique opportunity to achieve a nursing degree not only from their home universities but also from The United States of America and also gives students from the USA the chance to get a degree from one of the partner universities in Europe. The program for the European students includes a nine month exchange in the Washburn University of Kansas, USA and also a three month Erasmus exchange in one of the partner European countries which include Finland, Hungary and Northern-Ireland. The program is funded to run for the years 2009-2014.

In this thesis I aim to study the experiences of the third rotation of European students who studied in Washburn University's School of Nursing during the academic year of 2012-2013. This group included four students from Northern-Ireland, three students from Hungary and three students from Finland, including the author of this thesis. The information of the experiences is collected by using mixed methods of both qualitative and quantitative questions including open questions and rating statements. The idea is to create a questionnaire that can be used to collect data from future exchange students as well and be utilized for both Erasmus and TADD exchanges though for this thesis it is only used for the USA exchange.

The Transatlantic Double Degree in Nursing program and the experiences that students have gained from it have been studied before. There have been two previous theses on the subject during this program that concentrated on the experiences of the first European TADD students. This thesis continues that work by providing a new questionnaire and sending it to the third rotation of EU TADD students.

2 NURSING EDUCATION IN THE USA

The Washburn University is a university located in Topeka, the capital city of the state of Kansas. The bachelor's degree of nursing was established in the fall of 1974. The School of Nursing status was granted in 1982. The Mission of the School of Nursing is to prepare future nurses to embrace evidence based nursing and to become professional nurses who know the value of learning throughout their practice. The goal of the education is to broaden the student's knowledge and skills so that they will become a professional nurse who can ethically help the clients to recognize and cope with health needs. (Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN).)

The Nursing studies are a total of 4 years of university. The first two years consist of general education or so called pre-requisite studies that prepare students for picking their major including for example humanities, psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology and other general education courses. Students are admitted to the School of Nursing in their junior year. Graduating nurses will have competence to work as a generalist in nursing. Once student has graduated from the program, they are eligible to take the National Counsel of Licensure Examination (NCLEX) and upon passing the exam get the license as a registered nurse. (Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN).)

The curriculum of a student studying the bachelor's degree in nursing includes both lectures and practical training each of the four semesters they are studying nursing. The clinical practice sites can be in acute care hospitals, different community centers, public schools, clinics and long term care homes that house elderly people. (Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN).)

The courses a nursing student major is required to take to complete their nursing degree include Health assessment (includes lab), Pharmacology (includes lab), Informatics, Evidence based nursing, Psychiatric/mental health nursing + practicum, Leadership, Quality and safety in health care, modules of nursing care of women, newborns, adults, children and older adults among a few other lecture classes and practicums. The biggest of the practicums is the final clinical called capstone where the nursing students get their final practical experience before graduating. (Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN).)

In the United States the National Council of State Boards of Nursing is responsible for licensing new nurses and making sure they are qualified to practice the profession. In the US nursing can be licensed on two levels: Registered Nurse (RN) and Licensed practical nurse (LPN). RN can direct patient care and manage other caregivers such as LPN's while LPN's work under the direction of an RN. Registered nurses can obtain the education via a diploma, Associate degree or by getting the Bachelor's degree. After getting the necessary education, a nurse must get licensure to practice nursing in their state of residence, this includes: completing the NCLEX-RN examination, graduating from a nursing program, paying a 200\$ fee for licensure and a 60\$ fee every two years for re-licensure, and going through a background check. The goal of the strict testing and re-qualification measures is to ensure that the public can rely on the professionalism and knowledge of the nurses practicing in the US. (NCSBN 2011.)

The issues that healthcare is facing now and in the future include the lack of nurses as well as the problem of many citizens not having access to affordable healthcare because of them not having the money to get health insurances. This shortage of healthcare personnel is common in many countries and in the US the issue will continue to grow because of the lack of properly trained nursing educators which means that it's difficult to train enough new nurses to match the growing demand. (NCSBN 2011.)

3 INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

The amount of University and University of Applied Sciences students both coming to Finland and leaving Finland for studying abroad has increased a lot during the past few years. In 2011 the subjects that were most active in sending students abroad were law and economic science whereas natural- and health sciences were the most passive with only less than tenth of starting students doing an exchange. The most active in student exchanges is the southern part of Finland and Eastern Finland is the quietest when it comes to international mobility in Universities. (Garam 2012, 8-12.)

In 2011 a total of 9931 University students left Finland to do an exchange abroad, a few hundred less than the previous year, and the mobility to Finland has grown and in 2011 a total of 9172 students came to Finland either to do practical trainings or attend

University classes. 65% of the students going abroad for an exchange of over 3 months head to one of the countries in Europe though Asia as an exchange destination is gaining popularity. The same is true of the students coming into Finland, though 82% are from Europe, the number of Asian students coming to Finland is growing while European student number is getting smaller. In 2011 Germany was the most popular exchange destination among Finnish university students with Spain, Great Britain and Sweden following close behind, United States was the 6th on the list with 498 students going there for an exchange. The most international students to Finland came from Germany and France, United States didn't make it into the top ten of most popular exchange destinations. (Garam 2012, 12-13.)

CIMO is an organization of international mobility and cooperation that works independently under the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. CIMO publishes a lot of information concerning student and staff mobility around the globe and they offer an annual report on the mobility of students both in Universities and other schools. (Cimo in brief 2013.)

4 JOINT AND DOUBLE DEGREE

Joint and Double degree programs are a form of international mobility that has been gaining more and more interest in the recent years and so is a very contemporary subject. A joint degree program means a program where a student studies in at least two education institutes of higher education and upon completing the program receives one degree certificate that is signed and issued by all the participating institutions. The double degree is like the joint degree but instead of earning only one degree, the students earn a separate degree certificate from all the participating institutions. (Obst & Kuder 2009, xvi.)

Joint and Double degrees are a very popular type of education. In 2008 a survey was done that included both European and US higher education institutions with a total of 180 valid responses. The survey concluded that while joint and double degrees are pretty commonly offered, double degrees are more common with 13 percent of the US institutions that responded offering joint degrees and 68 percent offering double degrees, the trend is the same in Europe with 26 percent of institutions offering joint degree programs and 76 percent offering double degrees. (Obst & Kuder 2009, 1-2.)

Both Institutions in Europe and US reported that they were most likely to have joint or double degrees with European institutions, though with European respondents the US was the most cited individual foreign partner country whereas for US institutions the most cited foreign partner country was reportedly Germany with China coming as close second. The academic disciplines that have the most offered joint- and double degrees are Business and management and engineering. In health sciences only 8 percent of US institutions and 5 percent of European institutes offer these degree options. (Obst & Kuder 2009, 3-5.)

The motivations for joint and double degrees as listed from most important to least important based on the study are as follows:

1. *Advancing internationalization of the campus*
2. *Raising international visibility and prestige of the institutions*
3. *Broadening the institution's educational offerings*
4. *Strengthening academic research collaborations*
5. *Increasing foreign student enrollments” (Obst & Kuder 2009, 12.)*

The challenges these programs face are numerous, though there are some funding sources it's still difficult to secure enough funds to make such degrees happen, the curriculum design takes a lot of time and consideration which makes it challenging and EU institutions view this as a more difficult task than US institutions. The final challenge is sustainability, which can be a problem with these programs. (Obst & Kuder 2009, 12-13.)

5 BENEFITS OF STUDYING ABROAD

As studying abroad is becoming more and more common in all parts of the world, it is important to understand the effects of both short and long term exchanges. Unfortunately especially the effects of short term stays abroad have been studied little so there isn't a lot of evidence as to how or if it benefits students, though in recent years this has become a more wanted research topic and the more international mobility progresses, the more there is need to conduct studies on how it effects students and their learning. (Mapp 2012, abstract.)

According to Taajamo (1999) studying abroad is a journey that one can not go on without difficulties. These difficulties include cultural problems and differences one has to adjust to in a new environment. The critical part of studying abroad is going into a completely new culture and adjusting to its differences. Getting to know the new environment and being able to study or work in it takes time and this process can be very stressful and psychologically draining. (Taajamo 1999, 11, 60-61)

Susan Mapp (2012) did a study on the effects of short term studying abroad on cultural adaptability. The study was done in an American University and consisted mostly of Social work majors who did a 9-day to one or two 2-week trips abroad to different places including Ireland, Vietnam, Costa Rica and Ecuador. The study was done in 2005-2009 and during that time data was collected from 87 students. Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) was used to measure cultural adaptability prior to the exchanges and after. This is a Linkert scale with 50 items with four sub scales of Emotional Resilience, Openness, Perceptual Acuity and Personal Autonomy. The study showed significant improvement in all the areas except in Personal Autonomy. The conclusion of the study was that a short term exchange is helpful for students to gain cultural competency and benefits especially social work students with adapting to environmental changes. (Mapp 2012, 727-735.)

Another study by Greenfield et. al. (2012) concentrated specifically on social work students and what are the effects of studying courses abroad versus on campus. The study analyzed data collected from University social work students who participated in either on-campus course on international social work or did a guided study abroad in social work. The aim was to see if there was a marked benefit of either model over the other. The sample was 122 students taking international courses either on-campus or abroad, most of the students were graduate social work students in US Universities. The study was done by issuing a pretest on the first day of the international courses and a post test on the last day, the idea was to see if the students in different types of environments for the courses have difference in areas of professional development. It was discovered that the baseline of the two groups wasn't significantly different. The students who did the courses abroad were more likely to have previous experience than the ones who participated in the on-campus class, neither group gained significantly greater competency from the courses but the students who did the guided study abroad gained greater self-rated skills. (Greenfield et. al. 2012 743-757.)

Sagulin (2005) did a study as her pro gradu work, about the benefits studying abroad has for University students. She used five themes she gathered from previous studies to collect the data: language skills, cultural preparedness, personal growth, academic-, and work life preparedness. The study focused on the students from Jyväskylä University in Finland who studied abroad for a period of time. In the first part of the study, a letter was sent to 89 students asking for a written essay of their studies and experiences with 22 responses of which 21 were taken into the study. The second part of the study was to interview 15 students who had recently gotten back from studying abroad, not one student was in both written and interview part of the study. The results of the study indicated that students took studying abroad in a more laid back manner than studying in their own university and they spent more energy and resources with getting to know the culture and traveling. The exchanges have a very positive effect on social networking. (Sagulin 2005, 30-79)

6 CULTURAL COMPETENCE

According to Campinha-Bacote (2008) cultural competence is an ongoing process that is based on cultural desire. To gain cultural competence a person must have understanding of social injustice and how it affects individuals. Once a person is culturally competent, they try to rid themselves of such injustice. (Campinha-Bacote 2008, 141-148.)

In her theory Campinha-Bacote (2002) also describes the process of becoming culturally competent as something that is built of five constructs which are: cultural knowledge, cultural awareness, cultural skill, cultural desire and cultural encounters. Knowledge is obtaining education to broaden informational base of cultural diversity. Awareness means understanding one's own relationship to cultures and any bias they might have and being aware of their own racist ideas. Skills includes the ability to make a professional cultural assessment and a culturally competent physical assessment to gain insight on the problem the individual is presenting. Cultural encounters means the willingness of a healthcare worker to have contact with clients from different cultures while cultural desire is what makes them want to gain cultural awareness. (Campinha-Bacote 2002.182-184.)

In health care cultural competence can be more simply defined as the ability of a certain medical professional to possess cultural skills, awareness, and knowledge to collect medical history from a client and provide them with a diagnosis and a plan for their care. Because of this, many healthcare educators are in agreement that cultural competence is an important part of studies and should be incorporated into a study curriculum so that healthcare workers can obtain the necessary competence. (Kelly 2011, 38-39.)

Leininger determined that offering culturally competent nursing means understanding, knowing and interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds and it is important for a nurse to understand cultures and their values, beliefs and living patterns. Knowledge promotes cultural awareness that is an important part of nursing and is going to be an even more growing field as time goes by. Leininger defines cultural awareness as something that can not be obtained without a conscious effort to learn about the way of life of a particular group. (Leininger 1994, 7-8, 336-337.)

Culture is a very broad term and in order to get an idea what it involves to gain competence in it, we need to figure out a way to analyze culture and differences between cultures. Bartlett and Davidsson (2003) list out the key concepts one needs when thinking about cultures. These include: Beliefs, Expectations, Attitudes, Ethnocentrism, Prejudice, World view, Social organization, Norms and Values. These concepts are important parts of culture. Beliefs tell us how we view things, to some a dog is a cute family pet while in other cultures it is viewed as a working animal or even a meal. Expectations are beliefs of what is to come and this might include expectations on how a person should behave, if one doesn't comply with norms and values the expectation can become wrong or negative. Ethnocentrism means the tendency we have to evaluate the behavior of a foreigner by our own standards and to view our own culture as superior to others. World view consists of a culture's view of philosophical issues and this has an effect on norms that tell us how people are supposed to behave. Values are also influenced by world view and vice versa because values define what is important in a certain culture and we express our values with the attitudes we have learnt. (Bartlett & Davidsson, 2003, 32-34.)

Some of the key cultural dimensions are good to understand in order to understand the behavior of people of certain cultures. One of the key cultural dimensions is time. In

some countries punctuality has a more pronounced role when in others flexibility is more appreciated. For example in German countries, Scandinavian countries and USA time is considered according to a so called monochronic system where punctuality is key, plans are important and people are committed to doing one thing at a time according to a timetable. A contrast to this are polychronic countries such as Mediterranean countries where multiple things are often done at the same time with programmes changing and interruptions viewed as acceptable. Punctuality in these cultures is viewed as relative. Because of these differences it is important to understand the different meanings time can have so that we can understand why to some people punctuality is or isn't important. This reflects to people keeping appointments and showing up on time or later at meetings because they might have different view on what is acceptable. (Bartlett & Davidsson, 2003, 20-21.)

Other key dimensions include context and uncertainty avoidance. Context dictates how people communicate with one another, in some cultures simple phrases hold more meaning because of context like expressions and the like, when in other cultures one has to be careful to voice their meaning in a straightforward manner that can't be misinterpreted. Uncertainty avoidance means the way people view future, in some cultures people like to be in the know of things before they happen and they look far into the future when planning their lives and in contrast other cultures have a more uncertainty oriented view where it's considered better not to know everything and life is taken as it comes one day at a time. Power distance, Individualism and status are the final key dimensions and they include the hierarchy of a culture as well as whether a culture is more individual oriented or group oriented. (Bartlett & Davidsson, 2003, 22-31.)

Gaining cultural competence means gaining knowledge of different aspects of culture and understanding cultural differences as well as similarities. In the modern world where distances seem to diminish all the time and people from different cultures venture further from their geographical place of origin, because of this globalization it is important that we gain competence working in multicultural environment. When learning about new cultures there's always the risk of falling for the stereotypes and thinking everyone in a certain culture behave exactly alike, but as we gain cultural competence we shouldn't forget that everyone is still an individual and things are rarely completely black and white.

7 TRANSATLANTIC MOBILITY AND TADD- PROJECT

The goal of the transatlantic degree programs is to provide students with the opportunity to improve their cultural competence by studying abroad and also getting a second degree in their field from a foreign University which gives them an advantage when applying for a job both in their own countries and enhances their possibility to work abroad (EU-USA (Atlantis) 2013.)

EU-USA ATLANTIS stands for *Actions for Transatlantic Links and Academic Networks for Training and Integrated Studies* and it funds exchange projects between the US and EU. The goal of the program is to promote co-operation between universities in the USA and EU and better the quality of studies through this partnership. The networks of Schools in this program are called Consorts and generally they must include at least two Universities from Europe and one or two from the USA, though the participation is not limited only to Universities and other organizations can get involved as well. The types of programs that can apply for funding are divided into three groups: Transatlantic degree projects, Excellence in mobility projects and policy-oriented measures. The TADD (trans-atlantic double degree in nursing) program is part of the Double Degree projects. (EU-USA (Atlantis) 2013.)

Though there are other models of transatlantic exchanges this thesis concentrates solely on The Transatlantic Double Degree in Nursing Project (TADD) that is a nursing program between four partner universities: Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences (MUAS) in Savonlinna, Finland, University of Szeged (USZ), Szeged, Hungary, Queen's University Belfast (QUB), Northern Ireland, and Washburn University (WU), Topeka, Kansas.

The TADD program officially began in 2009, though the planning for it started earlier and included careful consideration of the partner Universities, curriculum of the project and funding, which all culminated in 2009 when the application for the Consortium Project was filed by the EU project leader Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences and the US counterpart, Washburn University. This application secured the project funds for the years 2009-2014. (EU-US Atlantis programme 2009.)

The Transatlantic Double Degree and its curriculum are built by themes of what the students are to study in each of the host Universities they will visit, these themes are the basis of the TADD Common Core Curriculum and it is the framework upon which the actual studies are designed. The studies everyone is to complete in the host institutions are divided into Common TADD studies which include the following themes: Community health nursing theory and practice, Leadership and Management theory and practice, Evidence based research and practice, Ethical and legal issues in nursing practice and language and culture studies. In addition to these Common studies there are also partner specific studies that include studies that are dependent on the expertise of the host University and regulations and then there are additional required studies and all this adds up a total of 200-240 ECTS of the European degree for the US students and 248 ECTS of the US degree for the European students. (EU-US Atlantis programme 2009, 7-8.)

The main objective of the TADD project is to prepare nursing students for more universal practice both in the US and EU. Nursing care is globalizing more and more with trends and practices spreading and becoming more global so this project gives student nurses the readiness to provide competent care for patients from different cultures and backgrounds as well as the understanding of these trends. The project gives the students the chance to earn a double degree and to gain new language skills, new knowledge of diverse nursing of different populations, understanding of cultures and understanding of different techniques and technology. (EU-US Atlantis programme 2009, 5-6.)

8 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON TADD

There has been two previous studies conducted concerning the experiences of the European TADD students in the project. These studies concentrated on the first rotation of students including one student from Northern Ireland, two from Finland and two from Hungary.

The First study was the thesis done by Masalin and Ylikoski (2012), two students who were studying in Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. They were part of the first rotation of the project themselves and so participated in the study. The study was conducted using the qualitative method and it covered both the exchange the students did

in the USA but also the Erasmus exchange they did in another European university. The questions were divided into four categories: Professional, Cognitive, Cultural, and Personal growth. The conclusion of the study was that the double degree program is very beneficial to a nurse student's professional growth but also to their personal maturing. The participants indicated that they think having international experience will benefit them when applying for a job. The experience for the students was hard, but according to the study, well worth it. (Masalin & Ylikoski 2012, 32-33.)

The second study done on the subject was conducted by Nehring and Sipe (2012) in their unpublished Bachelor's thesis. Nehring and Sipe were Washburn University students who participated in the TADD project's first rotation. In their thesis Nehring and Sipe created a portfolio for the European TADD students to fill out which included both qualitative and quantitative data collection. The survey was conducted via email and the focus group was the first TADD students. Unfortunately one of the students the portfolio was sent to failed to respond within the time frame and so the participant number was only four and in addition the portfolios that were returned were incompletely filled so there was very little data to analyze so qualitative questions were ruled out completely and only quantitative data was analyzed. What little could be analyzed though seemed to correspond with the findings of Masalin and Ylikoski and indicate that though the TADD project is challenging it does have both professional and personal benefits. (Nehring & Sipe 2012)

In addition to these two studies, there have been two bachelor's theses done that were inspired by the TADD exchange and done by the students in the program. The first one of these is the thesis by Collett and Davis (2013), they did a report of the differences between the nursing curriculums in Finland and in Kansas. They concluded that though both Universities have competent graduates, the curriculums have a lot of differences with Washburn having more general education and Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences (MUAS) having more foreign language studies in the curriculum and the students in Finland are required to complete a thesis before graduation. A big difference between the schools is also the clinical hours required with MUAS requiring more practical training hours. There are also similarities: evidence based nursing and leadership are an important part of both curriculums. (Collett & Davis 2013, 29.)

The second thesis by Ellis (2013) dealt with the intersection of nursing and social justice. In the United States the injustice of the healthcare system has been brought to attention for the way less fortunate people are left outside the system. In his thesis, Schuyler discusses the ways this injustice could be removed and he analyses the ethical instructions of healthcare. He concludes that it would be beneficial to both healthcare workers and clients to take the principle of justice more into consideration. (Ellis 2013, abstract.)

9 RESEARCH METHODS

Quantitative research is a method that highlights the laws of cause and consequence. Important for this type of study is to have clear conclusions from previous studies as well as to have knowledge of existing theories. In quantitative research there must be data that can be applied to numeric measures and the data is organized into tables or charts so that the results are statistically valid. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2012, 139-141.)

Qualitative research as a method describes real life. The idea is that reality can't be diced into random pieces and one has to keep in mind that it has to be viewed as a complex thing. In qualitative research the subject is researched as diversely as possible. The things measured using the qualitative method are the ones where simple numeric or one word descriptions aren't enough and we need more complex data that has more descriptive value. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2012, 160-162.)

In this survey both qualitative and quantitative methods are used to get the best possible representation of the experiences of the subjects. Each question is given a five point, rising Likert scale. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2012, 200.) Along with the scales, each question will have a follow-up question for comments and examples and the participants will be asked to provide a written answer to all questions to provide additional information to accompany the numerical scale (Appendix 1).

The questions of the survey are divided into four categories, the first one includes questions about Language and Culture, the second studying abroad in general and the practicality of such endeavor, the third category is about professional growth and

deals with the curriculum and the final category has general questions regarding the TADD program.

The questions were designed to see how well the TADD project and more specifically the Washburn exchange has filled the goals set for it in the original project application form and also to get an idea about the experiences the students had during the exchange and how well it was organized. The questions ask about how well the host University supported the learning of the students and were all the themes of the curriculum met. The survey questions are also formed so that it gives an idea whether the project has been successful in its goal of improving students' cultural competence and preparing them for more globalized nursing either in their own countries or abroad.

10 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions this survey is based on is whether the students of the third cohort of European TADD students feel the project has met with the objectives set for it and what kind of experiences the students had at Washburn University. The questions are built using both the general and student oriented objectives of the TADD project and looking at the curriculum and what are the learning goals for students (EU-US Atlantis 2009, 5-6).

The objectives of the TADD project are divided into General, Specific and Operational objectives and there are also listed outcomes and more specifically student achievements (EU-US Atlantis 2009, 5-6). These along with the curriculum of the project are the base for the questionnaire I use in this thesis.

For this thesis I have divided the questions into four themes: Language and Culture, Studying Abroad, Curriculum and TADD Program.

10.1 Language and Culture

Learning the language of a host country and experiencing the culture is a big part of an exchange and so a vital part of the survey. If language skills don't reach a certain level it takes away from other parts of the exchange and affects the whole experience of the country.

In the TADD project there are specific objectives that dictate that the project offers a chance for transatlantic mobility with language and culture as a focal point. It is also stated in the Operational objectives that students will during the project gain sufficient language and cultural competence so that they can provide nursing and population based nursing care. (EU-US Atlantis programme 2009, 5-6.)

There are four questions in this section and their purpose is to measure if the objectives for this have been fulfilled and sufficient language skills were obtained so that the students were able to communicate with people in school and clinicals and if cultural competence improved during the exchange.

The main research question for this section is: how was cultural competence developed?

10.2 Studying Abroad

When studying abroad there are some basic things one must consider, practical arrangements before the exchange, living arrangements, costs etc. This section of the questionnaire is dedicated for these basic questions that are an important part of an exchange.

These questions were made to reflect the important aspects of studying abroad and to get an idea of the personal experiences students had during the exchange. Good accommodations, not having to worry about having enough money to get by and having the opportunity to travel and meet new people are just some of the things that make an exchange more valuable and enjoyable. Having the support of the host University makes studying abroad easier and more rewarding so in this section the questions seek answers to knowing what the students felt these aspects were like for them and if they had enough support financially and otherwise to make most of the experience. So the research question is: Was the experience of studying abroad well organized and satisfactory.

10.3 Curriculum

The TADD project has a very structured curriculum with each University having a different subject of emphasis. The Common Core Curriculum (CCC) is the base of course themes offered to the students who seek the double degree and the questions in this section of the questionnaire are based on this curriculum and the Specific objectives of the project. (EU-US Atlantis programme 2009, 5-8.)

The objectives for the TADD project highlight the importance of students' professional growth being enhanced by offering studies in professional nursing leadership, research and evidence based nursing (EU-US Atlantis programme 2009, 5). The questions in the survey for this section are designed to answer if these objectives have been met with this group of students and if they feel they gained enough knowledge on these subjects. Additionally teamwork, critical thinking and use of technology are an important part of nursing and are mentioned in the program so those are part of the questionnaire as well. The research question is: Has the TADD project achieved the set objectives as far as the curriculum is concerned?

10.4 TADD Program

The student achievement section of the project outcomes details the things students are meant to achieve during the TADD program. Three of these major achievements were taken as part of the questionnaire: students gaining professional and personal experience, obtain a double degree, opportunity to seek employment in other countries. (EU-US Atlantis programme 2009, 6.)

The questions in this section are based on those outcomes as well as asking the students of their motivation to enter the project and how they feel about having been a part of it. As getting the double degree and getting an opportunity to work abroad are an important part of the outcomes it is important to ask the students if they feel they gained enough experience from the program to attempt the NCLEX exam which one needs to complete to gain license in the United States to work there as a nurse or to seek work from some other foreign country. The research questions for this section

were: What was the reason for applying for the program? Were the TADD objectives met?

11 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The survey was conducted using a web based Webropol- program. The ten people the survey was sent to received an email with a link to the survey that was designed so that it could be accessed only once so there was no possibility of going back to change the responses later and the participants were given a week to respond. The surveys were sent out in the fall of 2013 after doing a trial with the questionnaire and getting feedback on it which resulted in minor changes concerning wording and grammar.

The survey settings were made so that it was impossible to send the survey back without filling out all the questions, though there was no upper or lower limit on how long the responses were supposed to be. This guaranteed that all the surveys were completely filled out, only exception being the questions about language and the last one asking if there is anything additional to say.

The survey includes both qualitative and quantitative data. The goal of the quantitative data is to see if the participants agree or disagree with statements about their experiences abroad and the qualitative data's purpose is to get a closer idea of the nature of the experiences.

The survey was conducted in Webropol online service that was also used to help with the analysis of the data. The scale used was: 1. Strongly Disagree, 2. Somewhat Disagree, 3. Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4. Somewhat Agree, and, 5. Strongly Agree. The numbers were assigned to make the analysis easier. In the analysis the purpose was to figure out if the participants agree or not with the statements.

The analysis of the qualitative data begins with going through the data and then reducing the responses into simplified statements. This means taking out all the information that is unnecessary for the purpose of this study. (Tuomi & Sarajarvi 2009, 108-109.) In this study this means taking out the data that doesn't relate to the experiences at Washburn University as there are few mentions of other exchange experiences that

were not part of the study so those are cut out of the analysis and only the relevant information is left to reduce.

After reducing the data the next step is to cluster the information into groups and then abstracting the information to make a conclusion and continuing the process as far as the data allows (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 110-111).

12 RESULTS

The percentage of response was 100%. All of the ten participants who the survey was sent to responded to both the qualitative and quantitative questions in a satisfactory manner with none of the questions needing to be removed because of lack of responses. Only one of the qualitative questions about language skills was skipped by one of the participants, but with 9/10 responses it still has enough data to analyze.

The analysis is done in the four themes the questions were divided into by looking at the individual questions and the responses to them.

12.1 Language and Culture

The language and culture related section includes five questions about adjusting to the cultural differences and a different environment. The quantitative data is organized into a chart with each column having the percentage of responses of a certain rating and the last column having the mean value (see table 1).

TABLE 1. The quantitative data from Language and Culture

Question:	1. Strongly disagree	2. Somewhat disagree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Somewhat agree	5. Strongly agree	Mean
1. I learned enough of the host language to do well in school and clinicals.	-	-	10%	30%	60%	4,5
2. I was able to communicate clearly with patients, staff and teachers.	-	-	-	60%	40%	4,4
3. Adjusting to the cultural differences was challenging	10%	30%	10%	40%	10%	3,1
4. The exchange improved my cultural competence	-	-	-	30%	70%	4,7
5. I had the opportunity to deal with people from different cultures during clinicals	-	-	-	10%	90%	4,9

According to the responses 90% of the students felt that by the end of the experience they had enough language skills to do well academically and all felt that they were able to communicate with people in their host environment. Half of the participants felt they had good English skills already in the beginning of the exchange, but the rest felt their language skills improved a lot during the 10 months and many found the intensive English courses useful.

"I noticed a difference in my English skills when I was able to raise my grades during the second (Spring) semester. It felt easier to study for the exams. It felt also easier to communicate with the patients and understand the teachers during clinicals."

6/10 of the participants commented that their own accent or other people's accents or them speaking too fast was problematic in the beginning of the exchange but that this improved as the exchange progressed and the students got used to the difference.

"At first I felt that everyone had a hard time understanding my accent. Then hearing English every day improved the accent and speaking skills which made me feel comfortable and brave speaking with everyone. I also felt that communication with everyone got a lot better during the whole period."

Adjusting to the cultural differences split the opinions a lot, to some adjusting was difficult and to others it was easy. One participant commented that the culture didn't differ that much from their own and two others said the culture in the states is really different to what they were used to. Though even with the differences everyone agreed that they gained cultural competence during the exchange.

"It is easier to approach foreign people and communicate with them, easier to travel everywhere by myself, and knowing more about the other cultures. The experience made me open up for everything new"

The healthcare system was raised as one of the key differences that took some getting used to but students thought that learning about it benefited their cultural competence. All participants felt they got to interact with people from different cultures especially Hispanic people in clinicals and many of the participants indicated that they shared accommodations with international people.

12.2 Studying Abroad

Studying abroad is a big venture and there are a lot of things to consider and organize before and during an exchange. The seven questions in this section deal with those things and the results of the quantitative questions are below in table 2.

TABLE 2. The quantitative data from studying abroad questions.

Question:	1. Strongly disagree	2. Somewhat disagree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Somewhat agree	5. Strongly agree	Mean
6. I was given enough information prior to the exchange concerning the practical arrangements	-	-	10%	70%	20%	4,1
7. The host University was supportive with my studies	-	-	-	20%	80%	4,8
8. I had a lot of opportunities to travel and experience the culture of the host country	-	-	-	20%	80%	4,8
9. The grant was sufficient to cover living expenses	-	10%	-	30%	60%	4,4
10. I gained valuable personal experiences	-	-	-	-	100%	5
11. There were enough extra curricular activities to occupy my time	-	-	10%	40%	50%	4,4
12. The accommodations were adequate	-	10%	-	40%	50%	4,3

The participants felt that Washburn University was helpful both prior to the exchange with the practical arrangements and during the academic year with teachers helping with the courses as much as they were able. All the participants felt they got enough support though one commented that there were teachers who didn't realize that TADD students were working a different schedule to other students but on the other hand one participant felt as TADD students they had easier time with teachers not being as strict to them as they were with American students.

"The information from Washburn was good and helpful. Everything was organized in advance"

"The teachers always helped when asked. They also gave a lot support and advises during the hard times"

All of the participants felt they had opportunities to travel and everyone took advantage of that and saw other parts of the states during the exchange period. The grant was said to be enough for covering the living expenses though some said they needed to use their own money for travelling and such and two indicated that they could have generally used more money.

All of the participants agreed completely that they gained valuable personal experiences during the exchange:

"I learned a lot about myself and how I deal with different situations. I met a lot of new people who became my friends and they really made the experience valuable for me"

Most of the students in the study thought they had enough to do during free time with the gym being at their disposal and there were many games and music stuff to get involved in. One wished for more activities and trips from the international house and again there were comments that there could have been more clinicals with the amount of free time there was.

"I was involved in the choir and I had a part time job during the host university, plus I attended the gym and made new friends."

Most of the participants were satisfied with their accommodation at Washburn though one was disappointed with their apartment and from the ones who were satisfied five commented that the accommodation was excellent and two thought they were adequate to live in for a year.

"My accommodation was excellent but I was aware that some of the students had less than satisfactory living conditions"

"was expensive, but very safe. I wish we would have had more washing machines and refrigerators. (Kuehne Hall)"

Overall the results of the questions about studying abroad seem to indicate that most of the participants were satisfied with all or most of the practical arrangements of the exchange.

12.3 Curriculum

The curriculum was one of the key things I wanted to study in the thesis and how the curriculum was seen by the participating students. The results of the quantitative questions for this sections as can be seen in table 3.

TABLE 3. The quantitative data from Curriculum questions

Question:	1. Strongly disagree	2. Somewhat disagree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Somewhat agree	5. Strongly agree	Mean
13. Overall the exchange curriculum was interesting and challenging	-	10%	10%	30%	50%	4,2
14. I learned new and useful nursing skills	-	-	10%	30%	60%	4,5
15. Nursing ethics were practiced and strengthened during the whole exchange	-	-	30%	20%	50%	4,2
16. My nursing leadership skills improved	-	20%	30%	40%	10%	3,4
17. The courses included a lot of teamwork that improved team working skills	-	-	10%	50%	40%	4,3
18. The exchange improved my critical thinking skills	-	-	10%	50%	40%	4,3
19. In practical placements I learned to use technology that was different from what we have at home	-	20%	20%	10%	50%	3,9
20. During the exchange I gained new competencies in research and evidence based nursing	-	20%	30%	10%	40%	3,7

The curriculum divided the opinion of the participants. Most of the participants thought the curriculum was interesting, but though one thought some of the courses were too difficult, others commented that there were courses that were too easy or not that useful because they were repeating courses already done in their home university.

"The curriculum was both, there were classes available that were so interesting and excellent to take as a nursing student, I will use the knowledge gained throughout my career then there were classes that were not so useful"

Seven of the 10 participants felt that only useful and new nursing skills they learned were the skills from the Health Assessment course like listening to lung and heart sounds and doing a full physical assessment. One felt they only gained academic learning and another participants said that though they didn't learn new things they gained new perspectives.

"Health assessment skills assessing the vitals were new. Social skills of course got better, too especially during the Community and Public health visits and in the hospital."

Two of the participants felt their ethics weren't strengthened during the exchange but the rest thought that with the ethics class and clinical experience they got to see ethical examples in practice. From the leadership class most of the participants felt they gained more confidence or new perspective on nursing leadership though two participants thought their leadership skills weren't improved at all.

"We had ethics classes and thank to it I've learned the nursing ethical co-dex points and I saw them during my clinicals, for example when the AIDS patient was dying and the family had to decide about his future"

All but one participant agreed that there was a lot of teamwork during the classes which improved their team working skills but in the comments everyone indicated that there was a lot of teamwork they were a part of. According to the students the team working allowed them to get to know other students outside the TADD group and to learn how to be a team player. The leadership class was raised as the best course for promoting cooperation and how to work together. 9 of the participants felt their critical thinking skills were improved during the exchange allowing them to view things differently and to evaluate things more critically.

Half of the participants felt they learned to use new kind of technology, the computer charting systems were indicated as being different than in the other countries and the medicine distributing technology was said as being new to most of the participants.

"All the documentation was on computers, we still use papers. All the IVs were functioning with pumps, we only use them at the ICU. I saw syringe drivers what I don't think we have at home. The venflons and needels are much safer thank to the lid which goes on the needl when finishing the punctuation for example."

Evidence based nursing and research are important part of the studies. Three of the participants felt they didn't gain any new knowledge about either during the exchange. Half of the students commented that they learned new things about the importance of research and how to examine the evidence.

12.4 TADD Program

The TADD program is a big experience in many ways. The questions in this section collected data on the nature of this experience and why the students wanted to be a

part of the program. The quantitative data for these questions can be seen below in Table 4.

TABLE 4. The quantitative data from TADD Program questions

Question:	1. Strongly disagree	2. Somewhat disagree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Somewhat agree	5. Strongly agree	Mean
21. I gained professional experience during the program	-	-	-	30%	70%	4,7
22. My overall experience in the program has been positive	-	-	-	20%	80%	4,8
23. The reason for applying into the program was to earn a second degree	-	-	30%	40%	30%	4
24. The reason for applying into the program was to get a chance to travel	-	-	20%	30%	50%	4,3
25. I had other reasons for applying to the program	20%	-	30%	20%	30%	3,4
26. The experiences have sufficiently prepared me to work abroad if I so choose	-	-	20%	50%	30%	4,1
27. The USA exchange prepared me for the possibility of taking the NCLEX	10%	30%	10%	40%	10%	3,1
28. I would recommend this program to other nursing students	-	-	-	10%	90%	4,9

All of the participants felt they gained professional experiences during the program. From the written answers the capstone clinicals rise as the most important source of the experience though one of the participants said there could have been more clinical experience to give more professional growth. Everyone also agreed that the overall feeling they have of the program has been positive and given them a lot of great experiences and helped them learn new things.

According to the responses, over half of the participants indicated that travelling was the biggest reason for participating in the program though most also said that getting the second degree was a big reason to participate in the TADD project though only two commented that this was the main reason behind the application. The other reasons for participating in the program according to the comments were: education, life

experience, getting to know the health care system, making new friends, and to learn about new cultures.

"The second degree is one of my goals, but I had more expectations. I wanted to know more about the health care, the education system, the culture. And I've got everything what I wanted."

Over half of the participants felt that after the program they are more equipped to work abroad and feel they have sufficient knowledge to work outside their home countries though language skills were raised as one of the points of concern by two of the participants. The NCLEX exam is needed to work as a nurse in the United States and half of the participants commented that they didn't feel they were prepared for the exam as well as the nursing students in the States and so feel they would need more education on the subject and to learn about the test before being able to work in the States.

"The students of Washburn practiced the NCLEX on an ATI program that we didn't use and we didn't get much information on the exam itself and what to take into consideration before doing it"

All of the participants of the study feel they would recommend the program to other nursing students because of the value of their experiences.

"This has been a great experience and given me so much. I haven't regretted getting into the program one moment"

"The tadd programme was a once in a lifetime experience that I will cherish forever, the people the culture the whole experience made a better nurse and person, I feel cultured and more understanding and open to different cultures"

Comments on the program included comments about how great it was as an experience and how none of the participants have any regrets about being a part of the project.

12.5 Conclusion

According to the responses from the participants, the exchange as a whole was rewarding and everyone gained valuable experiences both personally and professionally.

It appears from the data that the language and culture part of the exchange was well organized and the participants felt that their cultural competence improved during the exchange as were their language skills. For some of the participants adjusting to liv-

ing in another country with a different kind of culture was challenging, but they got a lot of support from their host university which helped them along the way.

The issues that were raised in the responses were the repetitiveness of the curriculum to what students had already learned in their own universities and the clinicals. The results correspond with the study done by Masalin and Ylikoski (2012) where they also discovered that many of the students felt there was a lot of repeating the same courses. Most of the participants commented at some point that there could have been more clinicals both to fill the spare time and to promote more learning during the exchange as many felt the learning was more academic than practical in nature and the only nursing related class they felt was useful was the health assessment course where basic skills were learned and strengthened.

Another issue that was raised was the curriculum with a lot of participants feeling it was not challenging enough and some feeling that there were courses that were too difficult though there weren't any data on which courses were difficult and which easy other than that intensive English was said to be very useful to those with less English skills and health assessment was said as having been useful by most of the participants. One of the students commented that they learned a lot in the research class though half of the participants felt they didn't gain anything new from this particular module, the other courses were not mentioned by title so it's impossible to evaluate which courses were considered useful by the participants.

There was no clear main reason for people to participate in the TADD program though it seemed that many felt there was no one reason to apply though most did indicate that travelling was raised as one of the biggest reasons. For most both getting the second degree and travelling were important aspects of the decision making. There were also other reasons mentioned in the comments and for some those were just as important as the academic accomplishments and travelling.

Though there were obvious difficulties and challenges with different aspects of the exchange, it's also clear that it is a very unique and rewarding experience that all of the participants were glad they participated in. There were some issues with the curriculum and many felt there could have been more teaching about the NCLEX exam, but overall everyone was left with a positive feeling of the whole program. The fact

that the program was felt as rewarding and positive experience is the same conclusion that Masalin and Ylikoski (2012) reached in their thesis.

13 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability means the repeatability of a given study. If the findings can be analyzed by two separate people and get the same results then this represents reliability or if the same person is being studied on two separate occasions and the findings are the same (Hirsjärvi, et al. 2012, 231).

In this study the reliability could be determined if someone else did the same data collection and got the same results as me. The questionnaire is provided in the appendix 1 so it would be possible to recreate the study though the names of the participants are confidential.

Validity of a survey literally means how valid the survey is. This evaluates the accuracy of the chosen research method to collect the intended data to see if the data answers the research questions. Validity can be weakened by unclear questions that leave room of interpretation so that the researcher is analyzing the data in a different way than the participants intended it. Both reliability and validity are terms of evaluation that are more appropriate for qualitative research rather than quantitative. (Hirsjärvi, et al. 2012, 231-232.)

The validity of this study is strengthened by the use of mixed methods of research so that the qualitative responses can be used to hopefully back the quantitative data and vice versa.

The concerns for this kind of study is getting all the participants to respond to the questionnaire and fill it out appropriately so that the results are valid. The survey is done a few months after the exchange so the time in between shouldn't be long enough to cause people to forget parts of the exchange and so be unable to really provide satisfactory answers. The electronic questionnaire sent to all participants is designed so that it is not possible to send incomplete survey but all questions have to be answered though this doesn't give any guarantees on the quality of the responses. Also it was not

possible for participants to go back after sending the survey to change their answers so it gave them a motivation to think about what they wrote.

The survey is sent to all the participants so that they can answer in Webropol so that no-one can see who answered what, this gives them the anonymity to answer truthfully. Though I am a participant in the survey myself, I feel there is no possibility of subjectivity when it comes to analyzing the results as everything will remain nameless and I will have no influence on the responses. The quantitative part of the survey will be analyzed by using simple calculations to get an idea of the overall rating for each question and hopefully the written answers will support the quantitative data.

14 ETHICS OF RESEARCH

According to Christians (2003) there are four main principles of ethics when it comes to research and studies. The first part is that the people in the study should be aware of what kind of study it is and they should have the right to refuse participating so participation should be voluntary. Secondly cheating of any kind is not ethical and deception of any kind is not allowed. The third part is the importance of anonymity of the participants which means protecting the identity of the participants and their responses in the study. The final principle is being meticulous and making sure all the information is accurate and no data should be falsified or neglected. (Christians 2005, 144-145.)

In this thesis the participants had a chance to decline from participating in this study and they were also told about the anonymity they would have and that their answers wouldn't be associated with them personally but all the data would be analyzed without knowing who said what. The students in this study were all part of the TADD program and so knew what the program is about and I tried to be as clear as possible with the email and instructions so that everyone was well aware what the questionnaire was for and how the data would be used.

Myself being a part of the group of students who filled out the questionnaire is ethical because the answers are just nameless answers among the rest and were analyzed accordingly without any subjectivity concerning those particular responses. The analysis was done being completely objective and only stating what the data indicates.

15 EVALUATION OF THE SURVEY

There were three participants who commented on the length of the questionnaire and said it to be a bit too long. Otherwise it appears that the questions were clear enough to understand though there was one person who wrote about their experiences in other exchanges as well as the Washburn one though those were easy to rule out of the analysis.

I really think doing the survey via Webropol was the right choice because it allowed me more control over the survey and it was more user friendly than doing a word document would have been. The survey was easy to fill out and the collected data was good and almost everyone responded to all of the questions in a satisfactory manner.

I do however feel there were things that could have been improved. I agree with the comments about the length of the questionnaire, with less questions I probably would have gotten longer and descriptive answers instead of getting a short answer to all or most of the questions. From the Webropol service I was able to see how long participants took to fill out the survey and everyone really took their time with it, but there were just too many questions to give a complete response and explain everything to each one.

Another thing I would change would be leaving out the quantitative questions and concentrating on the qualitative data, this way the participants would really be able to just write down their opinions and examples without having to think of the ratings and the like. Originally I felt the quantitative data would be more useful as a source of data, but doing the analysis I realized that it would be more useful to have more written data than to have the ratings though they do tell something about the things in the questions. So basically less questions that would guide the participants to write about their experience.

16 DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The questionnaire for this thesis was done using Webropol-program which allowed the survey to be sent to participants in different countries so that they were able to respond anonymously and easily with the format being as user friendly as possible. All of the ten participants filled out the survey so that the percentage of participation was 100%.

The responses were mostly pretty narrow and short which might be due to the length of the questionnaire, but most of the responses were to the point and informative though the word count was low. The results correspond with previous studies and give an idea of the experiences the students had during the academic year of 2012-2013 at Washburn University.

From the results of the questionnaire there were things that rose as interesting to pursue in further research. It would have been interesting to have more data on the reasons students chose to participate in the double degree program, there could be further research on the subject that could be expanded to include exchange studies in general to see why students do studies abroad.

The curriculum was another thing that rose as a subject that could be studied more. There were split opinions on some parts of the curriculum with some feeling there was maybe too much repetition and not enough clinicals so it would be beneficial to gain more insight on the positive and negative sides of the exchange curriculum and to get ideas on how the students feel it should be developed so that they get maximum professional benefits from the program.

Seeing as this study concentrated only on the European TADD students, there could be a possibility of doing a similar study on the experiences the American TADD students gain during their exchanges in Europe and how they view the whole program. Because there are cultural differences between American and European way of thinking, it would be interesting to see if the benefits and challenges students see in the program are the same or how they differ.

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Experiences of the European TADD students at Washburn University

This questionnaire is designed to collect information on your experiences in the TADD program, more specifically during your time at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. The questionnaire is composed of statements that you are asked to rate and then you need to provide a written explanation for the rating for each statement. The ratings used in this survey are as follows:

- 1. Strongly Disagree**
- 2. Somewhat Disagree**
- 3. Neither Agree nor Disagree**
- 4. Somewhat Agree**
- 5. Strongly Agree**

Please read each statement carefully AND select the appropriate rating based on your experiences. After this provide a written answer as to why you chose the rating you did in the follow-up question. You are also encouraged to give examples from your time in the TADD program.

Please fill out the whole survey and make sure you have chosen a rating for all the statements and written down an explanation for it!

Language and Culture

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Somewhat Disagree 3. Neither Agree nor Disagree 4. Somewhat Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1. I learned enough of the host language to do well in school and clinicals.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Comments on learning the language

3. I was able to communicate clearly with patients, staff and teachers. *

1 2 3 4 5

4. Examples on communication *

5. Adjusting to the cultural differences was challenging *

- 1 2 3 4 5

6. Details on adjusting to cultural differences: *

7. The exchange improved my cultural competence *

- 1 2 3 4 5

8. How did cultural competence improve or why didn't it? *

9. I had the opportunity to come into contact with people from different cultures during clinicals *

- 1 2 3 4 5

10. Examples: *

Studying Abroad

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Somewhat Disagree 3. Neither Agree nor Disagree 4. Somewhat Agree 5. Strongly Agree

11. I was given enough information prior to the exchange concerning the practical arrangements *

1 2 3 4 5

12. Comments about practical arrangements *

13. The host University was supportive with my studies *

1 2 3 4 5

14. Comments *

15. I had a lot of opportunities to travel and experience the culture of the host country *

1 2 3 4 5

16. Please provide details *

17. The grant was sufficient to cover living expenses *

1 2 3 4 5

18. Comments *

19. I gained valuable personal experiences *

- 1 2 3 4 5

20. details *

21. There were enough extra curricular activities to occupy my time *

- 1 2 3 4 5

22. Please give examples *

23. The accommodations were adequate *

- 1 2 3 4 5

24. Comments *

Curriculum

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Somewhat Disagree 3. Neither Agree nor Disagree 4. Somewhat Agree 5. Strongly Agree

25. Overall the exchange curriculum was interesting and challenging *

1 2 3 4 5

26. Comments *

27. I learned new and useful nursing skills *

1 2 3 4 5

28. Please provide examples *

29. Nursing ethics were practiced and strengthened during the whole exchange *

1 2 3 4 5

30. Comments *

31. My nursing leadership skills improved *

1 2 3 4 5

32. How were nursing leadership skills improved? *

33. The courses included a lot of teamwork that improved team working skills *

- 1 2 3 4 5

34. Comments and examples *

35. The exchange improved my critical thinking skills *

- 1 2 3 4 5

36. Comments *

37. In practical placements I learned to use technology that was different from what we have at home *

- 1 2 3 4 5

38. Please provide examples *

39. During the exchange I gained new competencies in research and evidence based nursing *

- 1 2 3 4 5

40. How were research and evidence based nursing skills improved? *

TADD Program

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Somewhat Disagree 3. Neither Agree nor Disagree 4. Somewhat Agree 5. Strongly Agree

41. I gained professional experiences during the program *

1 2 3 4 5

42. What kind of experiences? *

43. My overall experience in the program has been positive *

1 2 3 4 5

44. Comments *

45. The reason for applying into the program was to earn a second degree *

1 2 3 4 5

46. Comments *

47. The reason for applying into the program was to get a chance to travel *

1 2 3 4 5

48. Comments *

49. I had other reasons for applying to the program *

1 2 3 4 5

50. What were the reasons? *

51. The experiences have sufficiently prepared me to work abroad if I so choose *

1 2 3 4 5

52. Please explain *

53. The USA exchange prepared me for the possibility of taking the NCLEX *

1 2 3 4 5

54. How were you prepared or if you weren't then why? *

55. I would recommend this program to other nursing students *

1 2 3 4 5

56. comments *

57. Is there anything else you would like to say about the TADD program or this questionnaire?
