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Keywords

service-learning, medical missions, pharmacy students

Disciplines

Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Comments

Poster presented at Faculty Scholarship Celebration, St. John Fisher College, October 25, 2012.

To see a video about Medical Mission trips at St. John Fisher College, click [here](#)

Personal Impact of a Service-Learning Medical Missions Elective Course on Pharmacy Student's Attitudes and Values

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Objective

A service-learning elective course on medical missions was developed to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in a domestic or international medical mission trip or service project. The course was evaluated to examine the impact of the elective on pharmacy students' perceptions of and attitudes towards poverty, cross-cultural issues and the health concerns of underserved populations.

Introduction

Service-learning courses provide students with meaningful community service opportunities in conjunction with instruction and reflection exercises designed to strengthen their learning experience.

With the increased focus on medical mission sin recent years, a service learning elective course was developed to address topics related to caring for underserved patients both domestically and internationally. The required service learning component in the course, allowed pharmacy students to apply their knowledge in an experiential service context.

It is believed that that this course, with its service learning component, can induce a significant impact on pharmacy students' attitudes and values.

Methods

Course Overview: Introduction to Medical Missions

- Two credit elective course
- Service Learning Component: 10 - 15 hours
 - International Mission Trip
 - Domestic Service Project

Assessment of Attitudes and Values

- Reflection Paper – Service Project Experience
- Reflection Paper – Overall Course Affect
- Content analysis performed to identify themes
- Number of cases (papers) and incidences within a case were recorded for each code

Results

- Thirty-one students successfully completed the course and the required reflections (recorded as cases).
- Content analysis of both sets of reflection papers revealed the following emergent themes
 - An improved awareness of global poverty, the underserved and volunteer opportunities
 - A continued commitment to serve either locally or through participation in an international medical mission trip;
 - A greater appreciation of other cultures.

Figure 1: Course Reflection Themes

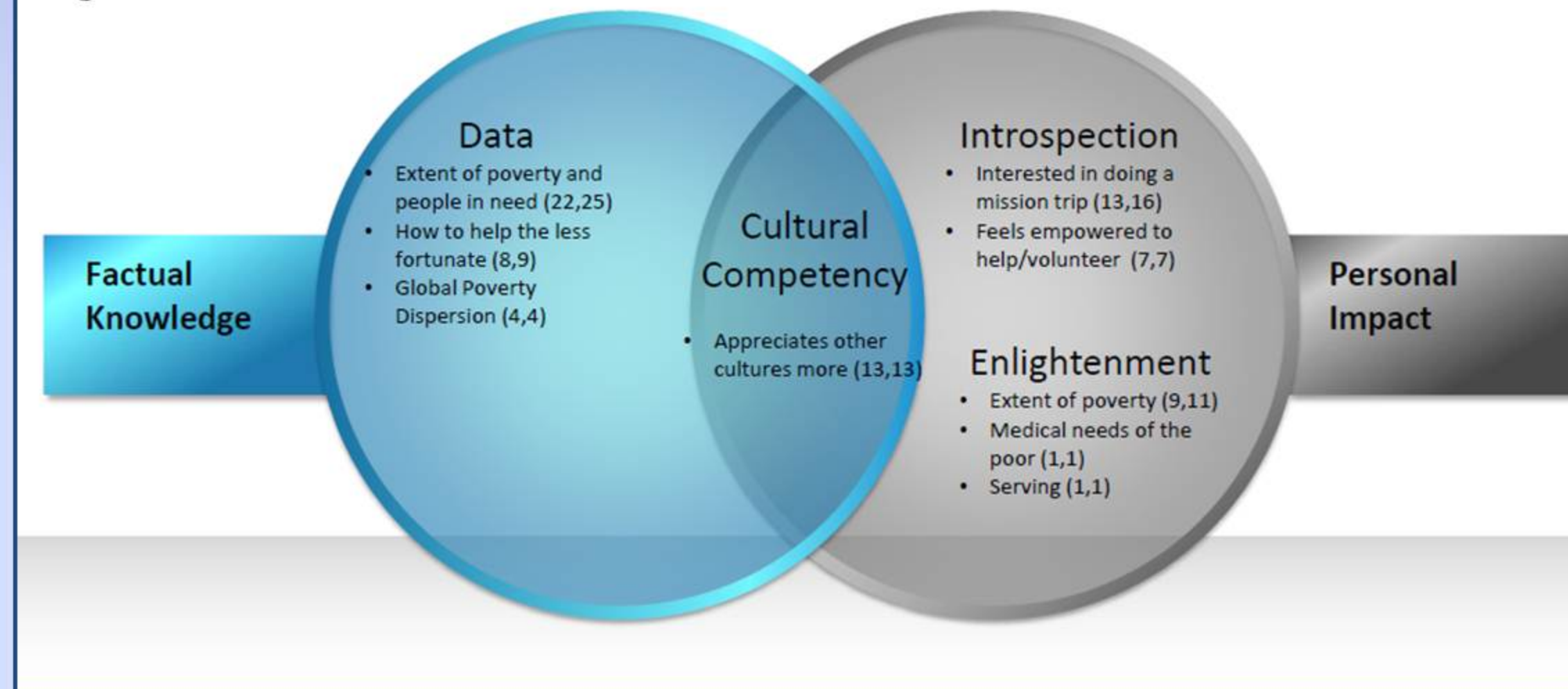


Figure 2: Service Project Reflection Themes

Themes	Codes	Cases, Incidences
Personal Impact	Personalized verbs (amazed, satisfied, proud)	25, 53
	Culturally competent	10,13
	Empowered	5,6
	Gained appreciation for what I had	4,4
	Inspired by others	3,3
Ongoing Service Effort	Volunteered beyond requirement	21,30
	Plan to continue a lasting relationship with the organization	2,2
Knowledge/Awareness	Poverty, underserved	16, 31
	Where/how to volunteer	9,10

Quotes from Student Reflections

"It was very eye-opening to see firsthand so many people in need. I hope to go back as many times as I can."

"It was very rewarding to know that you are making a difference."

"Through this project, we are touching the lives of underserved populations all over the world."

"I came away with a better respect and admiration for multicultural patients."

"I am looking forward to being able to participate in this project for years to come."

"It was easy to volunteer in this project."

"This service project opened my eyes to the extreme need."

"It gave me a deep appreciation for what I had and a greater desire to serve people."

"It reminds me of how much I have and how thankful I am for what I have been given."

"I feel like I am one step closer to being a better pharmacist and certainly a more culturally competent one."

"Helping people in need right here in my community really put some perspective in my life going forward."

Implications

The addition of service-learning courses related to medical missions into pharmacy curriculums may aid in the development of students' understanding and attitudes towards the diverse populations they will serve, both locally and globally.

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