

**ACCULTURATION & SOCIALIZATION:
VOICES OF INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED
NURSES**

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Registered Nurses in Canada

Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs)*:

- Of the 4,000 IENs who applied for RN registration in 2002, 35 % (1,400) met the educational and language requirements to be eligible to write the Canadian Registered Nurse Examination (CRNE)
- Of the 1,400 IENs who wrote the CRNEs, only 812 (58 %) passed the CRNE the first time
- Therefore, of the IENs who applied to become RNs, only 20.3 % were successful on their first attempt

Only 6.9 % of all employed RNs in Canada graduated from a foreign nursing programme**

* Canadian Nurses Association (2004)

** Canadian Institute for Health Information (2004)

Registered Nurses in Ontario

Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs)*:

- Of the 1,942 IENs who applied for RN registration in 2002, 34 % (662) met the educational and language requirements to be eligible to write the Canadian Registered Nurse Examination (CRNE)
- Of the 662 IENs who wrote the CRNEs, only 397 (60 %) passed the CRNE the first time
- Therefore, of the IENs who applied to become RNs, only 20.4 % were successful on their first attempt

Only 7.1 % of all employed RNs in Ontario graduated from a foreign nursing programme**

* Canadian Nurses Association (2004)

** Canadian Institute for Health Information (2004)

Registered Nurses in Ontario

In 2004*, of the 5,692 new applicants to College of Nurses of Ontario for Registered Nurses (RNs):

- **50.2 % received their nursing education in Ontario;**
- **15.7 % received their education elsewhere in Canada;**
and,
- **34.1 % obtained their initial nursing education outside Canada** (*quadrupled since 1993*)

* *College of Nurses of Ontario (2005)*

How do IENs become RNs? ...Sharing Personal Histories

- Qualitative research methodology...
 - Biographical Life History Inquiry*
- Research method...
 - Singular Question to Induce Narrative (SQUIN)**

* *Denzin and Lincoln (2000)*

** *Wengraf (2001)*

Study Sample

12 Participants:

China (2)

India (2)

Korea (2)

Philippines (5)

Ukraine (1)

SQUIN: The Question...

Could you tell me about the events and experiences that have been important for you in bringing you into the “bridging” nursing program that you are currently participating in here in Toronto?

Start wherever you want to...and PLEASE take all the time you need!

I will listen. I will not interrupt you. I will also take some notes to help with the interview afterwards. Does this sound OK?

SQUIN: The Clarifying Questions...

Examples:

- You said: You first came to Canada as a caregiver...
Can you tell me more about that?
- You said: You went to the College of Nurses of Ontario so that they could assess your nursing education credentials...
Can you tell me more about that?
- You said: Halfway into your “bridging program” the course requirements changed...
Could you provide a few examples of how your course requirements changed?

Results

I. Told Story

➤ Life history

...the lived experience described by the participants (sharing what is “safe”)

II. Untold Story

➤ Perceptions

...understanding that which is not said “between the lines” of what is described (unable to share what is “unsafe/painful” to share)

I. The Told Story:

Complexities of “Figuring Out” How to Become a Registered Nurse?

- i. Wanting the Canadian Dream:
Hope
- ii. Discovering the Canadian Reality:
Disillusionment
- iii. Living a Redefined Canadian Dream:
Navigating Disillusionment

i. HOPE: Wanting the Canadian Dream

Who I am is who I believe I can be

Nursing is respected...needed in Canada:

- Being encouraged to emigrate to answer perceived nursing shortage in Canada
- Being encouraged to seek nursing registration once in Canada if emigration was for non-economic reasons

Entering Canada:

- To re-unite with family (parent, child)
- To marry (spouse)
- Via alternate “doorways” (caregiver, nanny)

ii. DISILLUSIONMENT: Discovering the Canadian Reality

**Who I believe I can be...is NOT
what others believe I am**

Disappointment results from initiating process of validating nursing qualifications in Ontario:

- Appears inefficient
- Often misleading
- Is time-consuming
- Quite expensive
- Extremely frustrating

iii. NAVIGATING DISILLUSIONMENT: Living a Redefined Canadian Dream

**To become what others believe I am not,
I must re-learn what I do**

Returning to nursing school involves sacrifice:

- Expensive/financially draining
- Time-consuming/logistically difficult at times
- Affects ability to work (and earn) as a nurse
- Sleep
- Family Time

NAVIGATING DISILLUSIONMENT: **Living a Redefined Canadian Dream**

**To do what others expect of me,
I must persevere**

Pressures to succeed:

- As a competent nursing professional
- As a financial contributor “here”... “back home”

Pressures to adjust to differences:

- Culture
- Language

NAVIGATING DISILLUSIONMENT: **Living a Redefined Canadian Dream**

**When I must meet new expectations,
I feel vulnerable...**

Doubting capabilities:

- Decision to emigrate?
- Becoming a Canadian nurse?

Grieving separation with “home country”:

- Contact with family/friends
- Social/cultural isolation

Characteristics of Disillusionment:

1. Unclear Communication of Process*:

“Just tell me what to do and I’ll do it!”

“Please stop changing the rules!”

“Just missed it? Too late!”

“Why are they playing with our lives?”

“What do they really want from us?”

** Informants*

Characteristics of Disillusionment:

2. Unclear Expectations of Process:

i. Validating Professional Credentials*

- RN versus RPN
 - ❖ Why weren't both qualifications assessed?
 - ❖ Cost of assessments?
- Length of time for assessments...
 - ❖ Why do countries differ?
 - ❖ Why do schools within the same country differ?

** at the College of Nurses of Ontario*

Characteristics of Disillusionment:

- Changes in requirements after the assessment process has been initiated...
 - ❖ Why weren't we notified?
 - ❖ Why were we affected?
 - ❖ Just missed it!...Too Late!

ii. Upgrading Professional Qualifications*

- ❖ Changes in number of courses needed
- ❖ Clinical/Theoretical/Technological?

** at George Brown College*

Characteristics of Disillusionment:

3. Witnessing, Experiencing, and Perceiving Injustice:

- Financially
- Ethically
- Personally
- Culturally

II. The Untold Story:

**Value me for who I am
...a potential colleague**

- i. Feeling of...being misled**
 - Can I trust the system?
 - Do I have faith in the process?
 - How can I learn the truth?
- ii. Frustration with the process of evaluating foreign nursing credentials**

The Untold Story (cont'd)

**Value me for what I can contribute
...NOT what I “apparently” lack**

- iii. Anger with the uncertain requirements to upgrade nursing qualifications**
- iv. Cynicism from perceived Hypocrisy?**
 - Is there a nursing shortage?
 - Is there a language issue?
 - Is there a lack of clinical experience?
 - Is there a lack of Canadian experience?

Implications: IEN Competency Assessment

- 1) Standardize the process
- 2) Streamline the process
- 3) Communicate changes of process:
 - To the inquiring public
 - To the academic institutions of higher learning where nursing is taught
 - To the public and private agencies recruiting foreign educated nurses

Implications: IEN Educational Programs

- 1) Identify learning needs of IENs...
address issues relevant to the
Canadian context of nursing practice:
 - Professional roles and responsibilities
 - Healthcare delivery system
 - Clinical practice experience
 - Language facility
 - Technology facility

Implications: IEN Educational Programs *(cont'd)*

2. Design/deliver courses to meet the identified learning needs of IENs:
 - Explore ways to facilitate teaching-learning of multiculturally-diverse students
3. Consider financial constraints of IENs:
 - Work/Study paid clinical practice internships
 - Daycare

Implications: Research

- Engage IENs to continue telling their stories.
- Explore role(s) of immigration policies as they relate to recruiting/integrating IENs
- Explore role(s) of regulating bodies in verifying IEN competency
- Engage nursing educators to continue to research the learning needs of IENs while supporting their acculturation and socialization to nursing practice in Canada

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Thank You For Listening !!!

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