

# Facilitating the Academic Success of International Students

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## Session Objectives

- ▶ Critically evaluate strategies to introduce students to cultural and academic norms and diversity of perspectives on these
- ▶ Analyze challenges experienced by international doctoral students and strategies to address these challenges
- ▶ Critically evaluate strategies to support students conducting research in their home countries
- ▶ Identify the role that professional organizations can play in developing the nurse researcher

## Strategies to Introduce Students to Cultural and Academic Norms and Diversity of Perspectives

Joanne Kraenzle Schneider, PhD, RN  
Professor and Interim Program Director  
Saint Louis University School of Nursing

## Strategies to introduce cultural and academic norms

- ▶ Peer mentorship program, mentors assigned before arrival
  - ▶ One from home country
  - ▶ One from U.S.
- ▶ Assign office space with students of different countries
  - ▶ Exposure to other cultures
  - ▶ Practice speaking in English

## Strategies to introduce cultural and academic norms

- ▶ ESL and EAP
- ▶ Ask/assign students to be student representative on committees
  - ▶ Research Committee
  - ▶ PhD Committee
- ▶ Have students attend conferences

## Strategies to socialize students into doctoral nursing education

- ▶ Promote networking: within and across cohorts
- ▶ Research assistantships
  - ▶ Office space
  - ▶ Exposure to academic life
  - ▶ Research skills
  - ▶ Work on a research team

## Strategies to socialize students into doctoral nursing education

- ▶ **Conference attendance**
  - ▶ Specific research conference first year; research conference of choice each year thereafter
  - ▶ Graduate Student Association Research Day
  - ▶ Lectures supported by donors (external speakers)
  - ▶ Dinner with external speakers

## Strategies to promote publication efforts

- ▶ **International authorship guidelines early**  
International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)
- ▶ **Publish with faculty**
  - ▶ Coauthor with faculty
  - ▶ Faculty coauthor with student
  - ▶ Publish in international journals in English
- ▶ **Encourage applying for funding**

## Strategies to promote publication efforts

- ▶ **Support for writing**
  - ▶ English courses prior to starting courses and 1<sup>st</sup> year
  - ▶ University courses for English (writing, reading, speaking, academic writing)
  - ▶ Writing center for review of papers
  - ▶ Hired editors (hired by students or by school)
  - ▶ Informal experiences (colleagues, events, meetings, etc.)

## Strategies to promote publication efforts

- ▶ **Nontraditional dissertations (3-article format)**
  - ▶ 2 manuscripts in press
  - ▶ 3<sup>rd</sup> manuscript submitted
  - ▶ Learn to write directly and succinctly
  - ▶ Learn to address reviewers
  - ▶ Learn to deal with coauthors

## Strategies to introduce cultural and academic norms

- ▶ **Host families**
- ▶ **Attend events with mentor/faculty**



## Strategies to introduce cultural and academic norms

- ▶ **Religious ceremonies**
- ▶ **Holiday traditions**



## Strategies to enhance international student experience

- ▶ International Day at the Farm



## Attend celebrations from students' country

- ▶ Song Kran Day: Thai New Year



## Challenges experienced by international PhD students: Strategies for addressing them

Catherine M. Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Professor and PhD Program Director  
University of Pittsburgh  
School of Nursing

## Benchmarks for Success in PhD Programs in Nursing

- ▶ The Research-Focused Doctoral Program in Nursing: Pathways to Excellence (AACN, 2010)
  - ▶ Develop the science
  - ▶ Steward the discipline
  - ▶ Educate the next generation

## Benchmarks for Success in PhD Programs in Nursing

- ▶ Training plan
  - ▶ Coursework
  - ▶ Apprenticeship experiences
- ▶ Development of research expertise
- ▶ Dissemination
- ▶ Program milestones

## Benchmarks for Success in PhD Programs in Nursing

- ▶ Established with a timeline for achievement
- ▶ Clearly communicated to all students, applicants
- ▶ Evaluated annually



## Benchmarks for Success in PhD Programs in Nursing

- ▶ We can mentor students for success by:
  - ▶ Supporting students in the articulation of their research focus
  - ▶ Ensure faculty mentor is matched to their research focus
  - ▶ Clear developmental plan established early in the program
    - ▶ Planning should begin before student arrives
    - ▶ Evaluated annually

## Challenges experienced by international PhD students

- ▶ Differences in a U.S. education
- ▶ Financial support for education
- ▶ Scholarly work
  - ▶ Conduct of research, dissemination
- ▶ Different expectations in home country
  - ▶ Differences in public health problems

## Limited Funding Available

- ▶ NIH (F31, T32), RWJ Future of Nursing Scholar , Jonas Scholars Program not available to international PhD students



## Available Funding

- ▶ Examples of grant funding options available to international PhD students
  - ▶ Sigma Theta Tau International
  - ▶ Oncology Nursing Society
  - ▶ International Society of Nurses in Genetics
  - ▶ Internal mechanisms of support

## Challenges associated with conducting research

- ▶ Establishing collaborations
- ▶ Clinical entre
  - ▶ Establishing and maintaining clinical collaborations
  - ▶ Different health care systems
  - ▶ Interactions with potential participants
  - ▶ Licensure requirements

## Dissemination

- ▶ Standards for publication in home country
- ▶ Presentations



## Supporting Students to Conduct Research in their Home Countries

Elizabeth Madigan, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Independence Foundation Professor of Nursing  
Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing  
Case Western Reserve University

## Planning for return home begins on admission/program initiation

- ▶ Socialization into the US higher education and PhD prepared nurse scientist role
- ▶ Do you include NIH grant work as assignments?
- ▶ Ethical conduct of research starts early and continues throughout the program
  - ▶ Intent is to reduce issues throughout the program and minimize problems after the student returns home

## What is Needed in the Home Country to Succeed

- ▶ A mentor in the home country—may be outside of nursing
- ▶ Their US adviser (if willingness exists on both sides)
  - ▶ “Adviser for life” role
- ▶ Knowledge of funding opportunities
- ▶ IRB or Ethical review panels



## Topics for the Dissertation and Beyond

- ▶ Topics may be decided by the student
- ▶ Topics may be decided by the funder from the home country to address a country-specific need
- ▶ Issues arise when the topic decided by the country does not resonate with the student and/or advisor
  - ▶ E.g. breast self examination
- ▶ Contextualizing the issue for the home country

## Where is the dissertation study done?

- ▶ Doing data collection in the US
  - ▶ Advantages primarily related to mentoring, supervision and troubleshooting
  - ▶ Disadvantage that the process may be very different in the home country and the student cannot resolve prior to returning home
- ▶ Doing data collection in the home country
  - ▶ Advantages primarily related to providing evidence for the home country and the lived experience of doing research in the home country
  - ▶ Disadvantage related to timing of the process where “being home” means that there are competing life or work events that slow the process

## Practical issues

- ▶ Translation—word/language and cultural applicability
  - ▶ E.g. self care for older people
- ▶ Scientific support—statistical as one example
- ▶ Prepare the graduate for “culture shock” as they return home
- ▶ Role of the nurse scientist in the home country—the first few graduates from any country may have a struggle
- ▶ Managing day-to-day life

## Returning home

- ▶ Experience suggests that having a plan and time frames determined prior to the graduate returning home is effective
- ▶ Expect there to be delays: “real life happens”
- ▶ Plan regular time frames for collaboration—video conferencing, email



## Balance

- ▶ Need for the graduate to be supported in their new scientific career
- ▶ Need for the graduate to attain independence
- ▶ Need to understand the demands on the returning graduate
  - ▶ Expectation of administrative responsibilities for some schools/colleges in some countries)
  - ▶ Teaching loads are often heavy with little or no “protected time”

## The elephant in the room

- ▶ Students who do not intend to return home
- ▶ Discussions have included issues relative to students who have been supported by their governments versus those students who have funded their own education
- ▶ Challenges related to their “fit” in the American higher educational system
- ▶ Schools hiring one’s own graduates: domestic versus international

## The Role of Professional Organizations in Developing Doctoral Students in Nursing

Marie T. Nolan, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Executive Vice Dean and Professor  
Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing

## Advancing the Research Infrastructure in the Home Country

- ▶ International Network for Doctoral Education in Nursing (INDEN)
- ▶ AACN
- ▶ STTI
- ▶ NINR



## International Network for Doctoral Education in Nursing (INDEN)



President: Sonja McIlfatrick, PhD,  
University of Ulster, UK

Mission: To advance quality  
doctoral nursing  
education globally

### Executive Leadership

Vice President, Munikumar Ramasamy Venkatasalu, Brunei  
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- Jing Zheng, China

## International Network for Doctoral Education in Nursing (INDEN)

<http://nursing.jhu.edu/excellence/inden/>

- ▶ Leadership Development Opportunities
- ▶ Biennial INDEN International Conference Support

**Sponsors:** University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh, University of Michigan, UMASS Amherst, University of Alberta, Hong Kong University, University of Puerto Rico, Johns Hopkins University

- ▶ **INDEN journal, *Advances in Nursing Doctoral Education & Research (ANDER)***

<http://nursing.jhu.edu/excellence/inden/documents/newsletters/ANDER%20May%202015.pdf>

- ▶ STTI-INDEN Postdoctoral Fellowships



Tamar  
Rodney,  
JHUSON  
PhD student

## Domestic Funding Opportunities

- ▶ Grant Opportunities from Professional Nursing Organizations
- ▶ Scholarships from Foundations
- ▶ Additional *Teaching Assistant Positions*
- ▶ *Additional Research Residency/Assistant Positions*



## International Funding Opportunities

- ▶ Sigma Theta Tau

<http://www.nursingsociety.org/advance-elevate/research/research-grants>

- ▶ China Medical Board <http://www.chinamedicalboard.org/>

- ▶ International Peace Scholarship Fund

<http://www.peointernational.org/about-peo-international-peace-scholarship-ips>

- ▶ Nurses Educational Funds Inc (NEF) <http://www.n-e-f.org/index.php/about/nef-scholarships.html>

- ▶ Fahs-Beck Fund for Research and Experimentation (Dissertation Grant) [http://www.fahsbeckfund.org/grant\\_programs.html](http://www.fahsbeckfund.org/grant_programs.html)

## Setting the Stage for Success

- ▶ Emphasis on multi-lingual strength rather than limitations of ESL
- ▶ Professional Career Development office at JHU: grant writing seminars, leadership development, career planning
- ▶ International student group connections (Chinese student association etc. provide help upon arrival)
- ▶ Seminars with nursing PhD students from other countries  
JHU SON: Kings College, London, Turku University in Finland

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