Introducing the World Café to Doctor of Nursing Practice Students

The concept of a World Café was born in 1995 by a group of academic and business leaders to engage in dialogue that would be strategic, transformational, and result in social innovation that would spread around the globe. World Cafés create a space for conversation and sharing of diverse perspectives (The World Café, 2017). Since its inception, the World Café has altered the scope and depth of dialogue engaged in by leaders in business, health care, education, environmental protection, social welfare, and many other fields. The outcomes of this transformative dialogue have been innovative approaches to critical issues facing current society.

The World Café provides a safe place to discuss varied and important topics using an integrated set of ideas and practices. These ideas and practices were formulated into seven design principles. The principles include:

- Setting the context
- Creating hospitable space.
- Establishing an intent to explore questions that matter.
- Encouraging everyone at each table to participate.
- Connecting diverse perspectives.
- Listening for patterns and insights.
- Sharing collective discoveries.

Designing a dialogue using the World Café structure contributes to the development of competencies in communication, relationship building, and strategic planning.

Introducing the structure of the World Café to Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students enrolled in leadership and health policy courses established a safe environment for strategic dialogue, multistakeholder engagement, multigenerational collaboration, and designing cooperative action around the topic of independent practice for advanced practice nurses (APRNs). Any topic facing nursing and advanced practice nursing could be the main topic for discussion; however, independent practice for APRNs is currently a hotly debated subject in Texas.

Nursing education and practice are influenced by public policies. Nurses have the potential to influence public policies through active engagement in the policy process. However, nurses have not been actively involved in the formation of health policy due to several barriers, such as lack of understanding of complex political process and time constraints (Short, 2008). The introduction of the World Café as a teaching strategy creates a broad context forum for students to actively engage in exploring the nature of policy and policy analysis.

The assignment of planning and engaging in a World Café reflected the objectives in the leadership course relating to DNP Essential II: Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Improvement and Systems Thinking and the objectives in the health policy course relating to DNP Essential V: Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2006).

The World Café method required the student to invite members from their local personal and professional contacts to meet on a Saturday morning at the college of nursing. Students were given the link to the World Café Web site and instructed to review the history, methods, design principles, graphic recording process for harvesting data, and a summary of conversational leadership. Six students participated in the first World Café. Each of the six students was assigned to be a host at an individual table and as responsible for developing a question or idea to be discussed at their table that pertained to the main topic of independent practice. Guests at each table were peers, community members, and previous patients. The table topics were planned to engage participants in discussions of a variety of subtopics that would affect independent practice for APRNs. The topics selected by the students ranged from education and internships to policy and legislation. The assignment of the World Café concluded with a class presentation designed to share the information harvested from the individual tables, followed by a written paper in collaboration with other students that summarized all the information harvested across the tables.

The ideas harvested from the tables included (a) an internship for APRNs after graduation and before full-time practice, (b) APRNs practicing independently should have admitting privileges to hospitals, (c) independent practice might interfere with an adequate work–life balance, and (d) APRNs engaged in independent practice should have full prescriptive authority. The student opinion survey following the class was uniformly positive, scoring the project at 4.5 to 4.8 on a 5-point scale. Comments from the students reflected positive engagement with others, interest in pursuing community ideas about health care, and desire to become involved in political action committees both regionally and nationally.

The World Café will continue to be a main project for the courses in leadership and health policy in the DNP program. The intent is to expand the opportunities for community contact and involvement through transformational dialogue and the collective intelligence harvested from this method.

References


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