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REVEALING THE BORDERS OF KNOWLEDGE BY THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC INTERCHANGE IN NURSING

DESBRAVANDO AS FRONTEIRAS DO CONHECIMENTO PELO INTERCÂMBIO ACADÊMICO INTERNACIONAL EM ENFERMAGEM

NUEVOS CAMINOS DE LO CONOCIMIENTO A TRAVES DE LO INTERCAMBIO ACADÉMICO INTERNACIONAL EN ENFERMERÍA

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to report the student experience in an international academic interchange program, in the nursing area. Method: report of the academic and personal experiences, developed during the activities carried out in the interchange between Brazil and Hungary, from January 2014 to January 2015. Results: the experiences enabled achieving scientific knowledge in the health area and developing an expanded and multifaceted view of Nursing. Therefore, it contributed to the formation of interpersonal skills and a more critical-reflexivepoliticized thinking of the influencing aspects in the care and health care of the patient. Conclusion: one expects to encourage students to seek international academic interchange as a way to improve their knowledge and to add new personal and academic knowledge. Descriptors: Nursing; International Educational Interchange; Higher Education Institutions.

RESUMO

Objetivo: relatar a experiência discente em um programa de intercâmbio acadêmico internacional, na área da enfermagem. Método: relato de experiência das vivências acadêmicas e pessoais, desenvolvidas durante as atividades realizadas no intercâmbio entre Brasil e Hungria, no período de janeiro de 2014 a janeiro de 2015. Resultados: as vivências possibilitaram a obtenção de conhecimentos científicos na área da saúde e o desenvolvimento de um olhar ampliado e multifacetado da Enfermagem. Contribuindo, assim, na formação de habilidades interpessoais e um pensamento mais crítico-reflexivo-politizado dos aspectos influenciadores no cuidado e assistência à saúde do paciente. Conclusão: espera-se incentivar os estudantes a visarem o intercâmbio acadêmico internacional, como forma de aperfeiçoarem seus conhecimentos e agregar novos saberes pessoais e acadêmicos. Descritores: Enfermagem; Intercâmbio Educacional Internacional; Instituições de Ensino Superior.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: presentar la experiencia del estudiante en un programa de intercambio académico internacional en enfermería. Método: relato de experiencias académicas y personales, desarrollado durante las actividades llevadas a cabo entre Brasil y Hungría, a partir de enero de 2014 a enero de 2015. Resultados: las experiencias permitieron obtener los conocimientos científicos en materia de salud y desarrollar una mirada ampliada y multifacética de enfermería. Contribuyendo así a la formación de habilidades interpersonales y un pensamiento más crítico-reflexivo-politizado de aspectos influenciadores en el cuidado y atención de la salud para el paciente. *Conclusión*: se espera animar a los estudiantes a seguir el intercambio académico internacional como una forma de mejorar sus conocimientos y añadir nuevos conocimientos personales y académicos. Descriptores: Enfermería; Intercambio Educacional Internacional; Instituciones de Enseñanza

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INTRODUCTION

This study discusses the student experience of an international academic interchange program, in the nursing area, from its initial conception until the end, highlighting the importance of that interchange in academic and personal development of university students.

Globalization has as its main characteristic the extinction of frontiers between nations, in order to shorten distances and facilitate political and economic relations, quickly and effectively. Therefore, it reflects in several areas of society, such as social, cultural and educational.1

The educational area is the one that contemplates this study, since it, in the globalization scenario, undoubtedly contributes to the internationalization and transmission of knowledge. Submerging, then, a new way of education geared to the international market of education, driven by academic interchanges, involving, others, intergovernmental partnerships and interinstitutional agreements.2

term interchange derives exchange, referred to as the establishment of reciprocal relations of cultural, commercial, and among nations,³ and that exchange, in the educational context, is one of the relevant challenges stimulated by UNESCO for intercultural connection among societies in order to promote equitable access to higher education.4

view of that context of global transformations, Brazil launched, in 2011, the Federal Program "Science without Borders". The program results from the initiative of the Ministries of Science, Technology Innovation (MCTI) and of Education (MEC), through its respective institutions CNPq and Capes promotion and Higher Education Secretariats of Technological Education of MEC, aiming to stimulate the advancement of in technology, innovation competitiveness, through that international academic mobility, increasing the presence of Brazilian researchers and students institutions of excellence abroad, in their different educational areas.5

This experience report seeks to contribute to the availability of information through this manuscript, for the academic mobility is scarce, especially in the Nursing area, and to encourage students to seek international academic exchange as a way to improve their knowledge, becoming a differentiated and Revealing the borders of knowledge by...

qualified professional, in a labor market filled with challenges. In this sense, this study aims

- Report the student experience in an international academic interchange program in the nursing area.
- Describe the stages of the experience, highlighting the importance of the interchange for academic and personal development.

METHOD

descriptive study, experience-report type, carried out during the interchange between Brazil and Hungary, from January 2014 to January 2015. The interchange in the sandwich graduation modality was provided through a scholarship in the Science without Borders Program (SwBP), made possible by the Coordination of Personal Improvement of Higher Education (CAPES), between the State University of Southwestern Bahia - UESB and University of Pécs, Hungary.

RESULT

The program "Science without Borders"

The Science without Borders Program -SwBP seeks to internationalize science and technology, innovation and Brazilian competitiveness through the promotion of interchanges for graduation postgraduation students through the granting of scholarships in various areas covered by the program, defined by priority, listing the area of Biology, Biomedical and Health Sciences in third place.5

The program aims at the subsidy of 101 thousand scholarships: 64 thousand for sandwich graduation, in order to promote the training and qualification of students of high knowledge in reputable institutions abroad. Nevertheless, the student must be enrolled in a course of Higher education, have completed a minimum of 20% and a maximum of 90% of the curriculum planned for the course, commit to remain in Brazil for a period of at least the same period of stay abroad, and have a student profile of excellence. 5,6

The objectives of the Program are: to invest in the training of highly qualified personnel in the skills necessary for the advancement of the knowledge society; increase the presence of researchers and students of different levels in institutions of excellence abroad; promote the international insertion of Brazilian institutions by opening up similar opportunities for foreign scientists and students; expand innovative knowledge of technology industry personnel; and attract

young scientists and highly qualified researchers to work in Brazil.⁵

Previously...

Knowledge of the program, motivation and measures

The knowledge on the Program occurred through the media and among university colleagues, all eager to experience such an experience. At the Academic Center, of which I was a member, there was much discussion about the Program, the need to seize and invest in that opportunity, and, thus, the interest grew.

The decision to experience a sandwich graduation by international academic mobility occurred during the course of the seventh semester of the Graduate Course in Nursing at the State University of Southwestern Bahia (UESB), with all the publicity that the Program had at the university. The objectives were many, but essentially, to improve the knowledge in Nursing; view Nursing in a different country; improve a foreign language; and to know new cultures, places and people.

Thus, when the notice of the opening of applications for the program was published on the UESB Website in July 2013, the process of that interchange began. The choice of the place began, analyzing the public calls for each country, presented on SwBP website, the availability of vacancies for nursing students and the grouping of the requested documents. In this case, Hungary provided nursing sandwich vacancies at two of the nineteen partner institutions in the country. It is noteworthy that there was the possibility of attending and public health in obstetrics institutions, because they resemble the UESB curriculum. However, the desire to compete for the University of Pécs was the first option, mainly because its teaching focus was patient care, which was very important to my training.

The first requested documents were the Application Form for the *Science without Borders* Program, Application Form for the selection of candidates for the scholarship, school history, proof of enrollment and declaration of participation in teaching, research and/or extension activities. The first document was available on the SwBP website and the others at the institution of origin. There were no difficulties to group the documents, since I always had the concern to experience the tripod of the university, teaching, research and extension.

The internal selection went through two stages. The first one consisted of an analysis

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of the Curriculum Lattes, which was updated, with a description of the activities developed during the Academy, such as participation in extension projects, monitoring, Education through Work for Health Program - PET Saúde, besides student representation, as coordinator of the Academic Center. The second stage focused on verifying the academic score, provided by the school history, showing a performance above the regular, which provided greater chances, compared to other internal analyzes. Thus, it culminated in a favorable opinion of the UESB, through the homologation of the application and the consequent classification for the next steps.

After the homologation of the university, the application for free competition with the other students applying to the edict of Hungary was decided, starting to analyze the High School National Exam - ENEM note, which had 600 points as a minimum mark, and proof of knowledge in English. This process lasted five months, being anxious, but, at the same time, hopeful, especially after seeing my name on the pre-approved list in mid-November. This is an important step, because it enabled developing a real expectation, and I even provided a passport for the possible trip. This tension of the wait for the result was replaced by the anxiety of the next steps, considering the approval of the interchange in December 2013.

Subsequently, the next stage represented the choice of the university, with the University of Pécs being the first choice because it is the oldest and most privileged university in Hungary and for its College of Health Sciences aggregate the Nursing Course with a focus on patient care, unlike the hospital or community approaches, aimed at a biomedical characterization, commonly seen here in Brazil. In the midst of uncertainty, there was hope, or rather confidence, that I would succeed!

Then, in the period of fifteen days, still in December 2013, I received the letter of acceptance from the University of Pécs. My happiness doubled! Along with the letter, there was a request to send the supporting documents of the attended and to-beattended disciplines, of the disciplines specified in the school history', description of the lesson plans and menus, all translated into English by simple translation. In addition, I needed to fulfill and send the commitment form to be signed for the receipt of the scholarship requested by CAPES.

The preparation, the arrangements and the big departure day

While waiting for this process to end, I searched the Internet more and more about the city, the country, the university and the course. In that time, questions, feelings of anxiety, fear and discovery were unleashed in the imagination of what life would be like in this interchange, certainly a radical change of life. The months leading up to the trip were, therefore, pure expectation and investment in the research of linguistic, cultural, climatic, social, economic and educational differences, in an odd way, contributing to greatly spend the time, slow down anxiety and know the reality that was waiting for me. Concomitant to all this process, the classes and activities of the university took place and the effort to fulfill the academic obligations, in order not to leave pending, already thinking about the return of the interchange. It was a time of great restlessness and personal and scholarly pursuits.

The contact with the other students who would go to the same country and city, and with Brazilians who already lived there because of the interchange, starting from insertion in groups of social networks, was of importance paramount to discover peculiarities and direct the responsible for possible problems. From contacts, a group of anxious exchangers formed, who were to leave on the same day for that long-dreamed trip.

The release of the initial budget, which consisted of installation, displacement and teaching material aid, took a long time to fall into the current account, previously requested for the deposit. However, when CAPES then implemented the scholarship, it was enough to cover the accommodation, air and land tickets, and the purchase of materials, such as books and laptops, requested by the university.

Those initial expenses required posterior verification of the development institution, with the exception of health assistance, which, instead of being released as initial funding, was sent directly to **CAPES** coordinators in Hungary, who were responsible for contracting and paying for such health insurance. The remaining amount was changed to euro and taken to the other necessary expenses. The scholarchip was deposited in a benefit-card, quarterly, being the exchanger responsible for organizing food expenses, transport, housing and leisure. There were no deprivations in those expenses, neither need for financial assistance from family members.

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Finally, the great day of the trip! The family present for the farewell accelerated the beating of the heart even more and a conflict wanted to settle, but the decision for the trip was firm. It was, after all, the first international voyage, which, despite being accompanied by friends from the travel group, would imply ownership of my acts from that moment on. The trip had the starting point of the city of Salvador, with a domestic flight in Recife and then the departure to Europe, making a stopover in Frankfurt - Germany, then landing in Budapest - Hungary, after twelve hours of flight.

During...

Location, university and the Nursing course

In Budapest, a transfer to the hotel had been requested, previously booked in Brazil, and later a transportation arranged by the university made the transfer from the hotel to the student accommodation in the city of Pécs. At last, when arriving at the city I would reside for the next twelve months, I realized that the expectations idealized by researches and speculations were overcome. Watching, stepping, and feeling the cold incited by the snow were the first sensations experienced and they were very pleasurable.

In the lodging, the coordinator of the place received us, and instructed us about the room, its rules and responsibilities. The dormitory consisted of apartments, kitchens and communal service area. The apartments were small with one bathroom and two bedrooms for two people in each, containing beds, wardrobes and individual desks. Most of the rooms were empty because there were a few weeks left until the beginning of the classes and the other students were already hosted; they were very receptive and friendly, including instructing about markets, fairs and other establishments nearby to buy necessary materials.

The housing was provided by the university itself in one of its student housing, from the previous contact by e-mail by the coordinator of the department of international relations of the College of Health Sciences, which also provided essential information about the city and the University of Pécs. I stayed at the lodging on a provisional basis, with a change to a rented house, weeks after installation, by personal preference.

The food consisted of rice, potatoes and white meats, such as pork and poultry, which were typical dishes of the region. It was difficult to get typical Brazilian food and I found it in specific markets of international

products, being very expensive. However, the adaptation to the type of food was very fast due to the undeniable flavor, a little different due to the used condiments, but very tasty. At the university, there were only in the central library, which was far away from the housing and campus of the College of Health Sciences, so I had to cook at home, or eat in nearby restaurants, or in hospital dining rooms, during my professional practice.

On the first day in the city of Pécs, there was a reception of the College of Health Sciences, intermediated by three mentors, students from the university, who accompanied me until the last day of the interchange. There was presentation of the college campus and library, major hospitals and possible practice fields, downtown and major shopping markets, as well as exchanges of information and answer to the first doubts regarding the university and local customs.

Pécs, capital of Baranya County, is a city located in southern Hungary, with more than two thousand years old. Different nations populated the place during its years of war and struggle, in a country that was once Nazi and Communist. It has a great diversity of peoples and cultures, thus favoring the variety of traditions historically experienced by the city, which gave it the title of "capital city of European culture" in 2010.⁷

And, in this context, there is the University of Pécs, founded in 1367, emerging as one of the oldest in the world and the oldest in Hungary, offering a wide diversity of programs in its multicampi, receiving, among its 24 thousand students, about 2000 foreign students per year, from more than 70 different countries. It has ten colleges that integrate several courses, being the Nursing and Patient Care aggregated to the College of Health Sciences, along with graduate courses in obstetrics, dietetics and physiotherapy.⁸

The campi were distributed throughout the county, mostly in Pécs, structurally different, but all had their own libraries, as well as central library and the Language Department for general researches and courses in the city of Pécs. The campus of the College of Health Sciences is located in the center of the city, in an internally modern structure, despite having an outdated architecture, so commonly found all over the city and other campi. The University promotes many sports, dance, theater and leisure events in general, for student integration, as well as the ongoing encouragement of extracurricular or elective subjects, in order for the student to experience other realities and obtain greater knowledge.

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The graduate course in Nursing has a curricular matrix with a duration of four years, focused on patient care in an integral and holistic way. The graduate process has obligatory fundamental disciplines and elective ones, with a focus on the patient and divided into theory and practice, and the student can choose non-compulsory subjects for a better foundation in his/her desired professional career.

At the end of the course, the student must have 240 minimum credits in the curriculum, prepare an oriented completion of course work and present a document proving a new acquired language. The amount of credit and the entire higher education system follow the European Credit Transfer System and the Bologna Declaration, which sets out steps to be followed in all higher education institutions in Europe in order to harmonize higher education, besides facilitating academic mobility and admission of skilled workers in any country with the same educational system.9

Comparing to the curriculum of the UESB, it focuses on collective health, with few optional subjects available, and in comparison to the end of graduation, the student also needs to develop a Completion of Course Work - TCC, but does not necessarily need to know a new language, which is not required as a document for a bachelors degree, an interesting practice if adopted in the university regiment, in order to encourage the search for another language and, perhaps's through interchanges for improvement.

The remaining days after arriving at the city based on small trips to know the city and participation in the welcome event, promoted the university, to all international students, with presentations from the rectory, coordinations, directories and student groups, and exemplification of how to proceed in the application for the residence permit, since I would remain in the country for a period of one year. Days later, there was a meeting coordinators of the the general department and the international relations department of the College of Health Sciences to select the disciplines previously discussed via e-mail.

Therefore, six subjects were listed for the first semester, with five compulsory and one optional, Advanced Skills in Nursing (theoretical and practical laboratory), Intensive Care (general practice), Internal Medicine (general and cardiology practice), in addition Hungarian for foreigners to (theoretical), as optional. In the second disciplines, semester, three Gerontology

(general practice), Gynecology-Obstetrics (general practice) and Intensive Therapy (practice in anesthesiology) were listed. There was also an extracurricular internship between the semesters, from June to August, in the departments of Vascular Surgery and Heart Institute, allowing a different look and better knowledge, given the inexistence of those practical fields at the UESB.

began with first semester discipline Advanced Skills in Nursing, which deals with the fundamentals of Nursing, in which most subjects were already known and new practices were added to the learning process. Concomitant to the theoretical classes, the internships began in the Internal Medicine, in the Department of Cardiology and, later, in the Department of Internist, ending with general practice in the ICU. In the second semester, the coordinator realized the efficiency of the studies in Nursing coming from my formation at the university of origin and then instructed the course of only practical subjects, which were chosen by the student, the Department of Psycho-Geriatrics for the practice of Gerontology; the maternity ward, the neonatal ICU and the Reproduction Center for Gynecology-Obstetrics practice; and the general ICU for the practice of Intensive Care, focusing on anesthesiology.

Comparing the available disciplines, there are no major differences with those of the UESB, only in terms of contents, which have a assistance approach. Nonetheless, regarding the institutional regiment, there are some distinctions, such as the non-obligatory physical presence of the student in the classroom, besides the reduction theoretical hours, encouraging the student to seek answers and to study more the subjects ministered. Students and professors usually do not debate and discuss subjects in the classroom, only later, at a schedule time with the teacher of the discipline. The student has three chances to take the tests, schedules by him/herself on the dates provided by the professor, being the theoretical tests written and/or oral.

All theoretical classes were taught in English in classrooms of the college campus, usually during the morning shift, in which professors used slides and self-explanatory videos as audio-visual resources, later available on the university's Academic Registration System, besides the use of the elaborated in English by the professors of the discipline, containing all the subjects in a succinct form.

The optional, Hungarian for Foreigners, was attended at the Language Department of the

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university, which had several classes for the mentioned discipline, being chosen the last group of the afternoon shift, ir order not to overlap other disciplines in course. The laboratory practices were carried out on training simulator dummies in laboratories very well equipped with sufficient and modern inputs, which occurred after the theoretical classes, therefore, accompanied by the professor who did not use and did not charge the use of the lab coat, a not very frequent clothing until hospital practices, but required the use of the other Personal Protective Equipment - PPEs, while performing the procedures.

The practical fields, properly speaking, were carried out in public hospitals linked to the university, with compulsory use of white clothes, PPEs and a disposable apron for the various procedures. The schedules were discussed with the unit nurse, who could perform the practices in the morning, evening and/or night shift depending on the nurse's scale in the period, since most of the time the student adapted to his/her times. The number of patients per student pair or trio depended on the practice sector, two per shift in intensive therapies and five to fifteen in other departments.

It is important to emphasize that the assistance of all the multiprofessional team was constant and always supervised by the nurses, who were responsible for that function and for providing the daily the performance of the student to the professor responsible for the discipline. That artifice contributes greatly to the real learning of the functioning of the unit and the procedures performed by the nursing, in addition to dealing better with the multiprofessional team, since it is already included in the nursing.

All interpersonal communication was in English, but whenever possible I also trained the Hungarian language, preparing myself mainly to deal with the elderly, who were not very fluent in English. The difference in pronunciation and language, especially with the elderly, had been noticed immediately since the first contact with immigration control when arriving in Hungary, but it became easier with the development of interpersonal communication with patients and colleagues of the university, who assisted in translation interpretation. The patients were active, a factor greatly encouraged by hospitals, from various economic and school levels, well informed about their illness and prescribed medicines and a singular receptivity, noticed in all the departments, where they requested

to be attended and accompanied by foreign

The entire teaching-learning process took place through exchanges of knowledge and culture, which went through some easenesses and difficulties. There were many easinesses from the initial stages to solve academic and personal problems, with the help of the coordinators of the general department and the international relations department of the assisting in bureaucratic academic procedures. In addition to the mentors, who collaborated in all the moments lived, with exchanges of experiences, both in academic as extramural fields, in accordance and traditions, the local culture facilitating, also, the interpersonal communication with the other Hungarians and users of the health system.

The adaptation to the university and to the city, the communication in English and in the new local language, the Hungarian, besides other difficulties found, were becoming easier with the days of experience in the place. Moreover, in the friendship of Brazilians from several states and other friends of different nationalities, languages, cultures and ethnicities, as well as trips within Hungary and other countries in Europe, Africa and Asia. All of this has provided unspeakable gains in personal and academic growth and certainly professional development.

And, for all those reasons, the farewell to the university, friends and country has become a difficult task, but softened by Brazil's longing, friendship and, especially, by family ties, making the return more desired and with feelings of longing, for wanting to experience the changes that occurred in my locality and to share the acquired knowledge.

After...

The return to personal and academic activities

The return to our country after a year of absence is undoubtedly very pleasant and desired. This time, the conflict was the reverse, going back, resuming my course, and leaving behind the interchange and everything it represented for my life. The acquired knowledge and innumerable doors windows opened gave more security, autonomy and daring to other projects of this nature.

After the meeting with the family and close friends, of the personal arrangement, I arrived at the city of my University, where I reside. The receptivity was warm and of many inquiries. In fact, everyone wanted to know if the interchange was worth it.

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When returning to my university of origin, the process of credit equivalence of the possible subjects studied was started, and the equivalence of the course Supervised Stage II was approved, due to the hospital experience during the exchange. There was only the Orientated II disciplines left, construction of the Course Completion Work Supervised Internship I, since discipline focuses on the basic care network, promoted by the guidelines of the Unified Health System and, for this reason, it was not possible to validate by distancing from the reality of community health, present in the curriculum of the College of Health Sciences. Therefore, there were no academic losses, due to the increase of one more semester in the expected for collation of degree being small to the exceptional gain with the interchange experiences.

The participation in the event "#Chega+ (Come closer): experience report in Science without Borders", promoted by the Academic Nursing Center with the support of some professors and the Innovation Coordination, gave the opportunity to report part of the experience and how to join the program, collaborated a lot in the reinsertion of the exchanger student in the course of origin. This, too, prompted the development of this manuscript, as the Course Completion Work, replacing another project that had been anticipated on the trip to Hungary.

CONCLUSION

Experiencing an international exchange, with a distinct health system, imposed the need and the importance of knowing the historical-social and cultural aspects of such experience, allowing a better understanding of its context. Thus, it was possible to deal with problems, adverse situations and overcome the challenges that arose, which enabled a differentiated growth, both personal as academic, and, in the future, as a professional.

experience in this international interchange allowed an indescribable personal growth with an increase in independence and autonomy, the acquisition of cultural and values, of new friends, social the improvement of the English language, contact and practice of other languages, the unfolding of new countries, their customs and traditions and, with emphasis, the development of expanded an and multifaceted view of Nursing. has significantly contributed to interpersonal skills and to a more critical-reflexive-politicized thinking of the influencing aspects of patient

care and health care, inserted in a multicultural context, with his/her own customs and traditions.

It is impossible not to mention the support of the family and affective and institutional links that are essential in the realization of this interchange and in the fulfillment of this experience. Therefore, there is the certainty of having made the right choice and of the encouragement evoked by this manuscript to the students, so that they become interested in an interchange, in the desire to obtain new experiences and to add knowledge, which will reflect in personal growth and in the exercise of the future profession.

Thus, with the certainty of having met the objectives proposed for this experience report. of describing the experience. highlighting the importance of this interchange for academic and personal development, I make myself available to academics and professors interested specific clarifications, which may not have been considered with the precision they need.

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