Using a Puzzle to Avoid Committing Cultural Suicide

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Objectives

Workshop Participants will:

- Discuss cultural suicide and it’s relevance to students.
- Develop a puzzle of their most significant relationships.
- Explore ways to assist students in dealing with the prospect of cultural suicide.
Background

- Regional, commuter campus- many of our students are older than students on residential campuses.
- Students have many obligations (partners, children, work, etc) that keep them from focusing on school.
- Many have not considered the cost, in terms of their relationships, of going to school.
- If they do not learn to manage these relationships early in their school life, they are likely to become discouraged and drop out or fail to avoid “cultural suicide”.
Culture

“the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, values, customs, lifeways, and all other products of human work and thought characteristic of a population of people that guide their worldview and decision making” (p. 3).

Danger of Committing Cultural Suicide

“A student’s decision to attend college may entail many social and psychological changes. One of these is the risk of students’ being regarded with suspicion or mistrust in their home cultures and of eventually being excluded from these” (p. 153).

When I speak to students about cultural suicide I frame my comments by telling them that I am not necessarily speaking in terms of ethnic groups but of the people in their lives with whom they hold similar values, who depend on them and on whom they depend in some way: emotionally, financially, physically, and/or spiritually.
Constructive Approach to Avoiding Cultural Suicide

I developed a presentation, using a puzzle, to help Freshman Nursing Seminar students recognize the potential for cultural suicide and address it in a constructive manner before entering the nursing program.
Creating a Puzzle

Students:

- Write your name on a central puzzle piece.
Vital Relationships

- Write names of people / groups whose relationship is vital to you on adjacent puzzle pieces. Often these are spouses / significant others, children, parents, and very close friends.
Close Relationships

- Add names of individuals or groups (extended family, work relationships, social groups, faith congregations) that are important to you but not as vital as those touching your personal piece.
Transformative Power of Education

- You will be challenged to think differently, to evaluate your beliefs on a variety of topics and will likely be a different person than you were when you entered academia.

- As a puzzle piece you will change and in so doing you will lose touch with some of the surrounding pieces or you will overlap some pieces, causing tension. If the other pieces don’t change to accommodate the change in you then you will no longer “fit”.
Making Decisions about Relationships

- You will need to decide which relationships are absolutely essential for your well-being to maintain and which can be held more loosely or not at all.
- If you determine that a relationship is vital then you need to consider how to maintain it while you change as a result of education. I highly recommend that you do this before you enter the nursing program or you will find yourself torn in terms of beliefs, allegiances, time and other resources.
Effect of Going to School on Vital Relationships:

- How will you going to school affect those who you depend on you and on those people on whom you depend?
- What will you be less available to do for them than you were before?
- What will you need others to do so that you can be successful in school?
Effect of Going to School on Vital Relationships cont.:

- What do others, especially those closest to you, have to gain by you going to school?
- What do others, especially those closest to you, risk by you going to school?
Effect of Going to School on Vital Relationships cont.:

- If you want to maintain these relationships what must you do?
- Are you willing to do this?
Ways to Prevent “Cultural Suicide”

- Brainstorm about how to maintain vital relationships in times of intellectual and emotional stress and how to make time in a busy schedule to maintain those relationships.
Puzzles may be purchased in bulk from:
California Paper Goods @
http://capg.zoovy.com/customer_main.cgis
Or by calling 707 459 9124
Product JP19:#Z01
100 Puzzles 4 x 5 1/2 (16) Pieces for $30