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Blending cultures, identities in transition: nursing students from African countries in a South Georgia University

Kathy T Morris

Armstrong State University School of Nursing, USA

The classrooms in today's institutions of higher education in the US are becoming increasingly diverse, and educators are charged with effectively and sensitively meeting the needs of all students. Many international students come to the US to study every year, including thousands from African countries, and they must overcome incredible barriers in their quest for higher education in this country. This study looked at the barriers to success faced by African born international students in an undergraduate nursing program in southeast Georgia, in the United States. As nursing faculty, understanding the barriers that our African-born international students must overcome in order to be successful in this country is crucial. In order to provide adequate and culturally sensitive academic support to international students, faculty members must seek knowledge and understanding of those students' cultural backgrounds and belief systems. Teachers who are culturally sensitive can help students to achieve academically, while also enabling and assisting students to become culturally competent, as well as critically and socially conscious. The purpose of this study was to gain insight into, and construct meaning from, the lived experiences of African international students in an undergraduate nursing program in southeast Georgia. The problems that these students encountered while studying in our nursing program and in our culture were explored, in order to gain a better understanding of the obstacles that they were faced with and to seek their input into ways that faculty members could help to facilitate their success.

kathy.morris@armstrong.edu