Proposal for Graduate Student Symposium

This paper addresses the issue of training culturally diverse healthcare workers; Etowa, Foster, Vukic, Wittstock and Youden (2005) identified the necessity of a "culturally diverse nursing workforce. Canada has utilized immigration from developing countries to address its needs in the health care human resource area which complements our policies regarding refugees from countries torn by repression and war. The immigrant population has grown four times faster than the Canadian-born population since the previous census in 2001 and accounts for more than two-thirds of the country's population growth. "Almost six-in-10 (58 per cent) newcomers who arrived between 2001 and 2006 were born in Asia and the Middle East and for the first time, Canada is now home to more people from Asia and the Middle East than from Europe. This paper explores a training program for nursing students in the context of these revolutionary changes in Canadian demographics. The program is a very fast paced 15 month course and it has garnered a great deal of interest from immigrant students, especially due to the length of the program and also to the ability to receive funding from Employment Assistance. The students who come into the program are often not prepared and therefore, there are a large number of academic failures which are expensive for both the students and society. Dalhousie University (2005) explored initiatives which, involves helping to recruit and retain minority students. Dalhousie made a point of actively involving the community at large and making changes to the curriculum. I used the theoretical perspective of Mezirow and Foucault. Mezirow, because transformational learning is taking place; however, I look at it also from the point of view of the teacher and the other students. In using Foucault, the power concept in knowledge and language are quite strongly felt in the classroom, as these students are often EAL (English as an additional language) students. The paper is based on observations of the students and the teachers.