A thematic analysis and a reflective description of the experience of nursing, midwifery and paramedic students on a short-term mobility community health placement in Vietnam

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Internationalisation of the curriculum, work integrated learning (WIL) and inter-professional education are priorities for health professional education at Flinders University. Fourteen students studying Nursing (4), Midwifery (2) and Paramedics (8) plus two staff completed a three week primary health care placement in Vietnam. The students were immersed in cultural activities and professional practice in a different health care system and provided basic health care and education in hospitals, rural clinics and schools which facilitated their clinical assessment and problem-solving skills. The students were presented with opportunities to practise skills in cross-cultural communication and culturally safe practices with this community which upon their return were able to be translated into their practice setting.

A brief review of the literature identified a paucity of research combining work integrated learning, inter-professional education and study mobility. Data was collected from the reflective journals kept by the students which described their insight into their learning experiences during their placement. A thematic analysis revealed the environment, communication, culture, resources, education, group dynamics, politics and personal development were important key experiences. This paper provides insight into student learning outcomes from an overseas community health placement and extends our knowledge about WIL with an international partner.

Keywords: International work integrated learning opportunities, inter-professional education, building student capacity