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Atlantic Crossing: international influences on Nurse Education in England



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Background



Thesis - The Good Nurse: Discourse and power in nursing and nurse education 1945 -1955

In this session – explore one aspect of the data relating to a British nurse educationalist's study year at Teachers College, Columbia University 1954 -55.

- Life history
- Semi structured interviews
- Documentary analysis
 - Nursing times and mirror
 - Alice's report to the Red Cross (1955)
 - GNC syllabus (1952)

Aims of the paper

- *What did the opportunity to study at Teachers give Alice?*
- *How did USA and UK nurse education compare in the early 1950s?*
- *What influences did Alice bring back to her role?*

ALICE BIRD 1915-2005



- **“In 1932 I was about 17, in my last year at the high school a woman came to talk to us about careers - there was a depression and colleges were shutting. She talked about teaching and then about nursing and somehow or other it just clicked with me and I thought that’s what I want to do - - I told my Dad I’m not going to college, I’m going to nurse.”**

Alice's career timeline:

- pre-registration TB diploma 1932 - 33
- SRN - 1936 - 1939
- Midwifery 1940 -41
- Night sister 1941-46 (+ sister tutor course P/T 1946)
- Nurse tutor 1946 -1956 (+ London Diploma 1949))
- Red Cross scholarship to teachers college, New York 1954 -1955
- Principle tutor 1956 -1973
- Retirement

The experience at Teachers:



- **The milieu:**
- International – 500 students from 60 nations
- Egalitarian – ‘colour, race and creed seem to be insignificant factors’
- Intellectual –the chance to study to degree level -a wide liberal curriculum

The syllabus in the UK

- National syllabus and exams set by GNC (1952)
- Three year apprenticeship with an approved hospital and attached nursing school.
- 232 hours + revision and coaching = 20 weeks over 3 years – included Pre training school = (14%)
- GNC comment: – ‘advised but not realised’ – subordinate to hospital needs.
- Anatomy & physiology, first aid, nursing practice, psychology , ward management and invalid cookery

The American curriculum -1955:

- **American curricula: 9 hospital/ university providers visited -11 courses**

12 month practical programme ? Qualification/registration?

2 years practice = associate science degree or other qualification x 2

Direct from high school -36 months = registered but no degree -2 year conversion for BSc

Direct from college – 32 months + BSc

2 years academic + 3 years practice = BSc x2

Pilot – 2 year educational course (no nursing) followed by 3 year practice programme = BSc

‘unique ‘ 3 year course ‘based on students needs’ - students follow individual patients

Direct entry post graduate – 2years 8 months practice = BSc

4 year course (no detail) =BSc

Direct post graduate – 34 months = Masters of nursing

The legacy for Alice

- Culturally rich profession in which international exchange and debate are invaluable - Alice kept in touch with international colleagues and attended the International Congress of Nursing several times.
- Influential in developing the first degree level programme in the city she was principal tutor in
- Represented the region for the RCN at national level, influencing national policy