Atlantic Crossing: international influences on Nurse Education in England

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Background


**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.
Methods

- 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?
“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

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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 – 2 years 8 months practice = BSc
4 year course (no detail) = BSc
Direct post graduate – 34 months = Masters of nursing

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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