

Decolonisation of the Nursing Curriculum by the South African Nursing Students' Association

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The South African Nursing Students' Association (SANSA) held its fourth annual symposium which was co-hosted by the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and the University of Pretoria (UP) on 4 to 6 July 2018.

The universities which attended the symposium included the University of the Western Cape (UWC), the University of the Free State (UFS), the North-West University (NWU), the University of Venda (UNIVEN), the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), the University of Johannesburg (UJ), the Walter Sisulu University (WSU), the University of Limpopo (UL), the Durban University of Technology (DUT), the University of Pretoria (UP), the University of Zululand (UNIZULU), and the Nelson Mandela University (NMU).

The mission of SANSA is to share ideas, knowledge and experiences about challenges facing nursing students in South African universities, to ensure sustainable development in communities that SANSA members serve, to inculcate the spirit of leadership, evidence-based practice, nursing excellence, and to provide top quality nursing care.

The official opening was done by Dr Havenga who is the Head of Department, School of Nursing Science (SONS) at the TUT. She encouraged SANSA members to be a well-established organisation within the nursing fraternity, especially among the nursing students at the various universities. Furthermore, she said the resolutions that emerge from the discussion panels during symposiums must be shared with colleagues in the different nursing education institutions for implementation.

The theme of the symposium was “Decolonisation of the nursing curriculum” and was presented by Mr Moeta (UP). His focus was mainly on pluralism in health, consequences of the lack of pluralism, the current nursing education and training system, professional socialisation of nurses, the doors to decolonisation, epistemology,

barriers to curriculum transformation, intellectual property, and the benefits of pluralism and its impact on patient-nurse relationships.

There was a panel discussion based on the theme, and panellists included Prof. Nkondo, Prof. Nematindi, Dr Mabena (a traditional healer and environmental health practitioner), Mr Matsoge (a registered nurse), and Prof. Mulaudzi (UP) who was the interviewer of the panellists. She asked the following questions: How do we deal with these terms and what do they mean to us (decolonisation, Africanisation and transformation)? Do we have philosophies which can inform the curriculum and who should teach the curriculum? Where and how are assessments done?

On the second day, presentations of different specialities were delivered which included Child Nursing Science, Critical Care Nursing (by Prof. Maree (UP)), Trauma and Emergency Care (by Mrs Smith (Mediclinic)), Advanced Midwifery (by Dr Yazbek (UP)), Nursing Education and Administration (by Prof. Peu (UP)), Oncology and Palliative Care (by Mrs de Villiers (TUT)), Occupational Health (by Dr Pilusa (TUT)), Advanced Psychiatric Nursing (by Dr van der Wath (UP)), and lastly Postgraduate Masters and Doctorates (by Prof. Ramukumba (TUT)).

There was a competition where the delegates from the different universities were expected to present the programmes they offer, community development programmes, slogans, visions and missions. The first prize was awarded to UNIVEN, and the second price to the NWU. A session that consisted of role play took place on the third day and dealt with nursing in the South African context. Five people participated under the following categories: patient, good nurse, rude nurse, child as the patient, and the cleaner. The purpose of the role play was to reveal what SANSA is, and nurses who want to make a positive change and nurses who do not care about their profession.

Lastly, Dr Mokoka (the CEO of FUNDISA) had an opportunity to address the students from the different universities. She started by asking “now that we have heard it all what now?” She was asking what we are going to do with the lot of information we heard at the Symposium. Are we going to make a difference or are we going to join the people who always see the difficulty in every challenge? She touched on areas such as navigation, emotional and social intelligence aspects, and five crucial competencies which are self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, self-empathy, and effective relationships.

The take-home message was provided by Mr Morakeng (a registered nurse) who is one of the founders of SANSA. He said “don’t be afraid to say NO when all says YES”, and continued to motivate the attendees by saying they need to be active, to believe in themselves, to be leaders and not just act like leaders, and lastly, to do what needs to be done.

A vote of thanks was extended by Dr Havenga, and she added “it is in your hands” whether we make a difference in our community or just sit and complain. All the information we received from the different presenters is imperative to our profession, especially when inculcating the spirit of nursing in upcoming nurses.

Acknowledgements

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