

Geocaching: An Innovative Learning Activity to Enhance Nursing Students' Navigation of Community Resources

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Background

- Limited literature about preparation of students for the community clinical setting
- Nursing students preconceptions about community clinical experiences are diverse and influenced by personal beliefs, past experiences, and anecdotal stories (Kundrik Leh, 2011)
- The community as a practice setting is a new and unique experience for nursing students (Pijl-Zieber, Barton, Awosoga and Konkin, 2015), but understanding the complexity of community health nursing is often abstract for nursing students (Norman, 2014).
- For nursing students new to community health there must be a shift in thinking from illness care within an institution to health promotion within a community: through immersion students learn that bringing resources together is central to community work (Diem and Moyer, 2015)
- Technology and social networking is the current reality of today's student (Drake and Leander, 2013)

Background

- As an introduction to community practice, we wanted to engage students in a way that would enhance their knowledge, confidence, and attitudes surrounding community health nursing



Professional Practice:

Families and Communities

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Entry-to-Practice Public Health Nursing Competencies for Undergraduate Nursing Education (CASN, 2014)

One of the Domains of this competency framework is Population and Community Health Assessment and Analysis

CHNC Standards of Practice

- Provide, coordinate or facilitate direct care and link people to community resources
- Uses knowledge of the community to link with and refer to community resources or develop appropriate community resources as needed
- Awareness of community resources, values and characteristics

Background: What is geocaching?

- Geocaching is a worldwide activity in which Global Positioning System (GPS) technology is used to pinpoint a location and to hide and seek “treasures” or “caches”



Goals of geocaching activity

- In an adaptation of geocaching nursing students used their cell phone GPS to:
 - enhance understanding of community health resources through finding virtual caches
 - navigate community health agencies/services/resources through geocaching
 - develop a repertoire of community family resources



The activity...

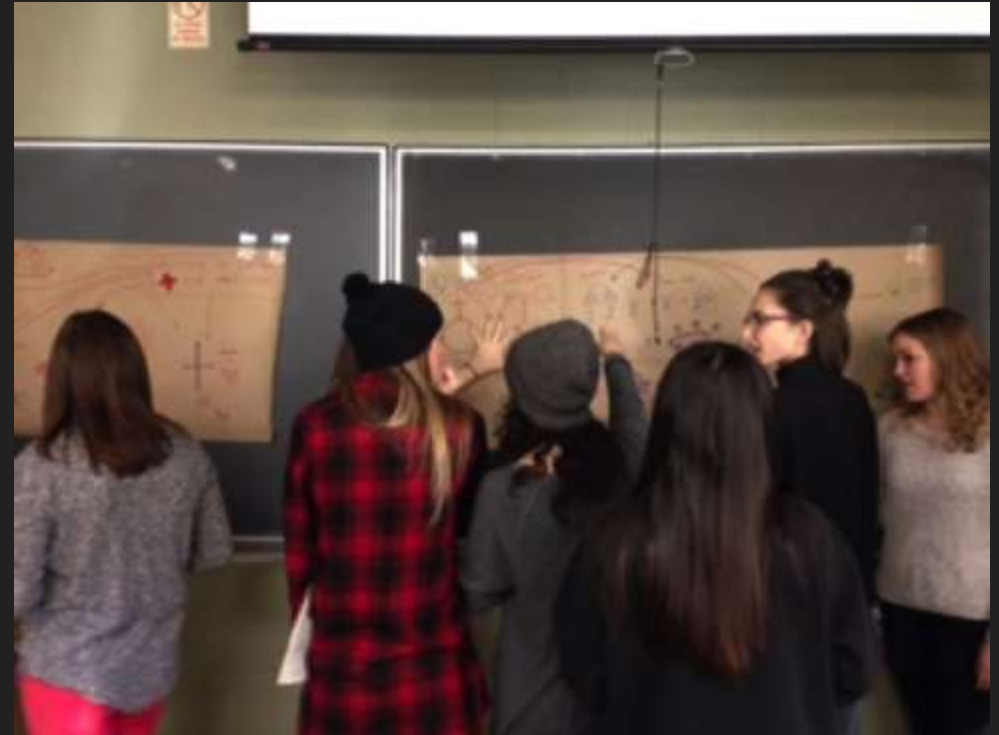
Student pairs were given a list of addresses and instructed to use their cell phone to:

- locate community agencies
- take a 'selfie' to depict their successful navigation
- research the agency
- reflect on the experience

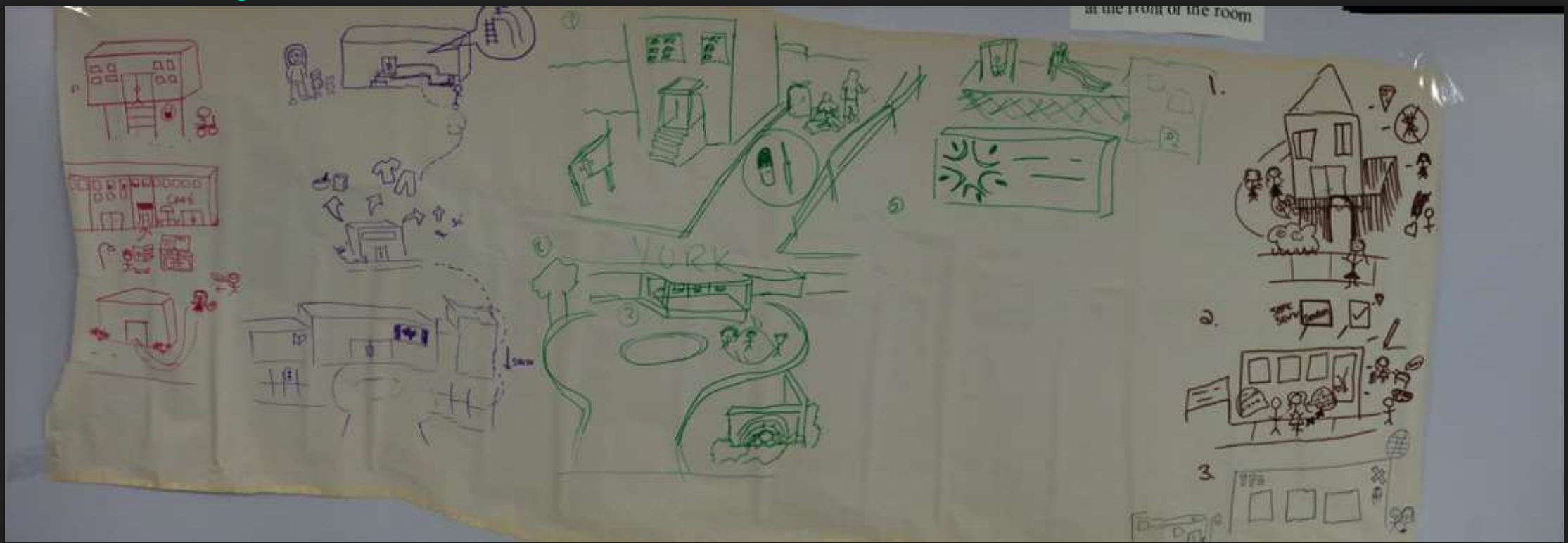


Chalk Talk Activity

- In a chalk talk activity (Brookfield, 2006) students were asked to silently illustrate a representation of the agencies they visited.



at the front of the room





Group and class discussion

- After illustrating the agencies/resources/services students discussed commonalities and themes among and across illustrations
- The discussion was facilitated by open ended questions
 - What was your experience of locating, travelling to, and researching your assigned agencies?
 - What themes did you notice among the agencies?
 - Who accesses these agencies and why?
 - What surprised you during this process?

Student Learning- THEMES

- **System navigation**
- **Social determinants of health (SDOH)**
- **Community resources**
- **Community nursing**
- **Collaboration**

System Navigation

- *“It was not easy to find some agencies”*
- *“I learned that taking a bus to an agency can be very troublesome...”*
- *“We had to take two buses and when we got off the bus we couldn’t find [the agency]. Luckily we had our GPS, and ended up walking a few blocks and finally found it.”*



<http://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/photo/arrows-pointing-in-different-directions-royalty-free-image/160443390>



<http://www.transithub.net/london.htm>

Community Resources

- *“Lots of resources however they are in such demand... the type of service needed is there but there are long waiting lists”*
- *“Access seems to be an issue...just because it's there doesn't mean people are able to access it”*
- *“One thing I learned from this activity is the amount of services London offers. I never realized how many agencies there were to help the community. Each agency has their own range of targets such as women, people living in poverty, and homeless people”*



Community Nursing



- *“By going out in the community visiting agencies, I learned there are so many opportunities for community nurses”*
- *“...Being able to have resources available to people, such as victims of domestic violence...[as a community nurse]...you refer them to resources such as this.*
- *“As a future nurse, I should not only educate myself on these resources but educate my patients so they are aware of resources in the community”*



Collaboration

- *“One organization in the community cannot meet all the needs of people who are at risk, different agencies need to work together”*
- *“Many more services than I thought and interagency collaboration”*
- *“Interagency collaboration is vital to community access”*



[https://www.cshsurrey.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/images/Services/child%20health%20clinic%20\(small\).jpg](https://www.cshsurrey.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/images/Services/child%20health%20clinic%20(small).jpg)

Discussion

- Geocaching promoted engagement and interaction for BScN nursing students to learn about the community and its resources
- Students expressed learning and knowledge expansion as a result of the activity
- Geocaching provided a successful introduction to students' professional practice in the community
- Students were surprised by the breadth and depth of community resources available that promote, support, and maintain health
- These insights led to greater awareness of barriers that individuals and families may encounter in accessing community resources and an increased understanding of the nurse's role in supporting and facilitating system navigation

Moving forward...

- Continue to use geocaching as an introduction to community health nursing
- Expand on the current geocaching activity by inviting community agencies to partner with us by having an actual “cache” or “treasure” for students to find at the agency that may include a question students need to answer before they are provided with the next address they need to find
- Diversify to include intersectoral locations and link to health promotion
- Continue to explore new ways to engage students in community health nursing

Questions?

A black smartphone is centered in the image. The screen is a solid blue color with the words "Thank you" written in white, sans-serif font. The phone's home button and dock are visible at the bottom. The background is split: the top half is a teal color with a diagonal line pattern, and the bottom half is solid black.

Thank
you