

International Health Education and the Health Education and Injury Prevention Course and Conference

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Abstract

This paper describes the ongoing efforts of three universities, the University of South Florida, the University of Cologne (Germany), and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, to work collaboratively to promote international health education and research. Through a formal inter-institutional faculty-student exchange agreement between two of the institutions (USF, UCG), inter-institutional faculty appointments (USF, UCG, SIU-C), partnering in collaborative course programming (USF, UCG, SIU-C), and the hosting of a mini-conference for participating faculty and students (UCG), these institutions are carrying out a rich experience to enhance professional preparation and continuing education for health educators.

International Health Education

The opportunity to learn about the practice of health education and promotion and injury prevention across nations' borders is not a programmatic element common to all professional preparation programs. In 1997, administrators and other faculty from the University of South Florida (USF) and the University of Cologne (UCG) formalized an agreement for collaborative education and research between their respective institutions. The program commenced with the visit of 3 faculty and 10 students from USF to Cologne in the spring of 1997 for a series of seminars concerning health education and promotion. Beginning in the fall of 1997, and in each fall semester thereafter, one or more students from the University of Cologne have become visiting scholars for a period of four months at the USF College of Public Health. In 1998, the Department of Health Education and Recreation of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIU-C) became a third partner in the spring seminars in Cologne. With the joint participation of USF, UCG, and SIU-C, the *First Health Education and Injury Prevention Partnership Course and Conference* was created in 1998.

The *Third* such course and conference involving the three institutions was held in Cologne from May 27 to June 5, 2000. The program of study examines the manifestation of the health education competencies in the Federal Republic of Germany. In addition, the application of health education and injury prevention in various settings is studied through a series of field trips and site visits. Sites include official government agencies (e.g., the Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung [BzgA] also known as the Federal Center for Health Education), industrial and other workplace settings (e.g., Bayer, Madaus Pharmaceuticals, Ford

Motor Center for Prevention and Rehabilitation), insurance companies (e.g., AOK, IKK, BKK, etc.) that have represented different classifications of German workers since the political era of Bismarck when Germany established a nationalized system of health insurance, specialized centers for women's health studies (e.g., Feministisches Frauengesundheitszentrum Hagazussa [Feminists' Women's Health Center]), health promotion and rehabilitation centers (e.g., Bensberg RehabilitationsKlinik), and University of Cologne-based health research centers (e.g., Institute for History of Medicine and Ethics, Institute of Medical Statistics, Informatics, and Epidemiology, Research Group in Primary Medicine, Health Education Research Unit). The course also includes a two-day mini-conference that provides students and faculty from the participating institutions to deliver oral presentations before an international audience. The theme of the 2000 conference was focused on women's health and injury issues and ethics applied to the practice of health education research and practice.

Some of these conference papers have been prepared in written form and appear here in the *International Electronic Journal of Health Education*. In the first paper, *BzgA Tasks and Objectives*, personnel of the **Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung** identify the specific role of this German organization in the creation and dissemination of health-promoting messages, and the overall creation of a preventive health agenda. This paper is followed by one prepared by **Langness and Klein** who use a translated abridged version of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to compare German and American students use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. The paper by **Calvo** looks at the impact of breast cancer in Germany and the United States, with a focus on the

role of health education in promoting screening and early detection. In their work, **Perrin, Matthews, Carter and Perry-Casler** provide a comparative overview of the status of prenatal care around the world. **Ritzel, Klein, Ackermann and Easter** examine the high rate of occurrence of hip fractures among the elderly as a consequence of osteoporosis, a health issue pertinent to the aging populations of both Germany and the United States, and one that disproportionately affects women in both countries. In their contributed work, **Daley and Noland** offer preliminary findings from concurrent studies of American college women, and indicate the presence of intimate partner violence in both community colleges and universities. Though comparable data specific to this type of violence among German college women are not available, these authors stress the need for gathering gender-specific violence data in the future. In her paper, **Osman** describes the history and development of the doctrine of informed consent, emanating in part, from activities that took place in Germany during the era of the Third Reich, and the concurrent human violations taking place in the United States in such infamous studies as those at Tuskegee. In their original data-based paper, **Sarvela, Sagrestano, Mizan, Kittleson, and Rowald** examine the potential of the church to influence prevention practices with respect to HIV/AIDS. In her paper, **Rapp** outlines simple-to-employ strategies as a "mother's guide" for promoting drug-free youth. **Merritt, Kuppin and Wolper** present a provocative review of postpartum depression, examining the cultural aspects of its causes and treatments, focusing especially on the contrasting styles of the United States and Germany. **Ritzel, Beasley, Flynn, and Liefer** discuss another issue common to aging societies, the risk of various injuries to elderly women in the home environment. Finally, **McDermott and McCormack Brown** provide a review of the history and current status of tobacco use among women in Germany, examining the role of social policies during the era of the Third Reich and other factors for their influence on current levels of smoking.

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