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Cultural and Clinical Travel Immersion Experience: Healthcare in Sweden

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Introduction
• Goal: increase student understanding of Swedish culture, health care system, OT and NSG practice.
• 12 day trip, summer 2012, grant-funded.
• 21 OT and nursing students, staff, and faculty.
• Stockholm, Gothenburg, Vidar Clinic.
• Visited clinics, classrooms and health care sites.
• OT and Nursing Depts.- Sahlgrenska Academy.

Planning Process
• Part of internationalization initiative at DUC.
• Site visit, summer 2011 with DUC faculty.
• One unit course: Clinical and Cultural Immersion: Sweden.
• Three pre-trip meetings for logistics, discussions.
• Assigned readings re: Swedish culture, healthcare system.
• Email “pen pals”: DUC and SA OT students.

Trip Itinerary
• Started in Stockholm; two days of cultural immersion.
• Observation and interview guide.
• Daily gatherings to discuss, debrief.
• Train to Gothenburg for four days.
• Return to Stockholm for two days.
• Some students extended trip in Europe.

Clinical Site Visits
• Hogsbo Sjukusro: Neuro-rehabilitation clinic.
• Lergoskgatan: Mental health community clinic.
• Vision Bo Aldre: Healthy aging demo house.
• Smart Rehab: Injured worker rehabilitation program.
• Ostra Sjukhuset: Children’s hospital and play therapy center.
• Vidar Clinic: Alternative/palliative care.

Sahlgrenska Academy
• Dr. Kajsa Eklund, OT Dept. Chair, host.
• Presentations on faculty research- healthy aging.
• Faculty and student escorts to clinical sites.
• Potluck dinner (OT activity!) at Kajsa’s home.
• Separate program for nursing students.

Student Reflections
“ It was the perfect combination of learning and fun.”
“Everyone rides bicycles and seem happy and healthy”.
“The people I met love their health care system.”
“Swedish practice truly reflects the definitions and roots of OT.”
“Crafts are used in all clinical setting, and are of high quality.”
“ People here know more about our healthcare system than we do!”
“I am more confident I can travel abroad again on my own.”

Next Steps
• Develop cooperative faculty/student exchange agreement between DUC and SA.
• Dr. Kajsa Eklund residency at DUC, spring 2014, presenting healthy aging research.
• Develop other international exchange opportunities in Africa, Mexico, Europe.