

TEACHING NURSING STUDENTS AT KULHUDHUFFUSHI CAMPUS: A PERSONAL REFLECTION



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It was the October of 2002. I was in the General ward of Kulhudhuffushi Regional Hospital (KRH), assessing a second-semester nursing student who was loading an injection. As I watched her, she carefully withdrew 2 ml of Injection Gentamycin to a syringe in preparation for injection. She then turned to the elderly patient to whom she was preparing to give that injection. As her mentor, I was observing her every move throughout the procedure, and repeated my observation on two other students who worked during the same shift. It was my first experience as a nursing mentor – a demanding yet rewarding experience.

I started my nursing career as a student in Diploma in Nursing at the Institute of Health Sciences (IHS) of the Maldives College of Higher Education (MCHE) in June 1999 – the predecessor to the Maldives National University. After completing three years of joyful yet eventful, and life-changing studies at MCHE I graduated in August 2002. Since then, I worked at KRH as a nurse for three years – the last of which saw me as a nursing in-charge.

In 2003, I started my teaching career as a part-time lecturer in Kulhudhuffushi campus. One year later, I was granted a scholarship sponsored by MCHE. Under this scholarship, I studied Bachelor of Nursing at Flinders University in South Australia and graduated in August 2006. Following this, I

continued working in Kulhudhuffushi campus but from then as a full time Associate lecturer of Faculty of Health Sciences.

Kulhudhuffushi campus is the first and the only campus of the Maldives National University in the North of Male'. Between 2006 and 2011, Kulhudhuffushi campus offered only Advanced level in the field of nursing. In the year 2012, with an additional associate lecturer we started Diploma in Nursing in Kulhudhuffushi campus. During 2013, I got the opportunity to teach for Bachelor of Nursing courses offered by the Center for Open Learning (MNU).

Challenges were enormous throughout my career. During the first few years, Kulhudhuffushi campus did not have a nursing art laboratory. We had two normal wooden beds and a mannequin and very limited resources in order to do the practical classes. The practical classes were conducted in a corner of the theory classroom. KRH has a capacity of 50 beds with limited staff and equipment. Mentors allocated for the students were a huge challenge. Finding external lecturers to take theory classes was another problem we had always encountered. Unavailability of the necessary reference books in the library and limited number of computer systems with even slower internet connection were issues students complained about almost every day. However, we managed to cover the content of the curriculum with full cooperation, dedication and hard work of the students. With a concerted effort of the campus management and FHS Male' campus, MNU provided us with a separate room for Nursing Art laboratory with sophisticated equipment. I am proud to say that we now have 5 hospital beds, 6 mannequins and all the necessary equipment in the Nursing Art Laboratory.

One of the most interesting parts of my work is visiting the community with students. From 2010 onwards, in every semester, nursing students from FHS, Male' campus visit Kulhudhuffushi to complete their field work in the subject Community Health Nursing. Despite the challenges that I have mentioned earlier, finding time to visit my community with nursing students, talking with the members of community and educating them in different aspects of health makes me extremely delighted. Individual health teaching sessions to

members of the households, educating school children on health and conducting public health activities for the community with the students give me a sense of accomplishment, knowing that I am able to put into beneficial use the knowledge that I have learnt. I am extremely fortunate to be able to get the full support from the other associate lecturer in Kulhudhuffushi campus and staff at KRH, Island Council, and all the schools in Kulhudhuffushi and the community of Kulhudhuffushi to meet the learning needs and objectives of my students.

Eleven years of my teaching career will not be joyful without the support I have always obtained from my colleagues. The highly motivated, knowledgeable and well experienced members of FHS is a significant factor which keep me moving forward. I would like to thank them for their guidance and support throughout my career.

