

REINTERPRETATION OF THE UNIVERSITY IDEA: IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING EDUCATION



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ABSTRACT

Transformation is the order of the day in South African society. The changes have brought nursing education at universities to a crossroads situation. Various claims, investigations and demands ask for critical and directive decisions about the future of nursing education. To describe directives for the reinterpretation of nursing education at universities, the work of Professor HW Rossouw (1993) will be studied. From Rossouw's perspectives (1993), the implications for nursing education at universities will be described.

OPSOMMING

Transformasie is huidiglik aan die orde van die dag in die Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskap. Die veranderinge het verpleegkundige opleiding aan universiteite by 'n kruispad te staan gebring. Verskeie ondersoeke en eise vra om kritiese en direkte besluite aangaande die toekoms van verpleegkundige opleiding. Die werk van Professor HW Rossouw (1993) is bestudeer sodat riglyne vir die herinterpretering van die universiteitsidee beskryf kon word. Die implikasies vir verpleegkundige opleiding aan universiteite word vanuit Rossouw se oogpunt omskryf.

INTRODUCTION

Degree courses in nursing are presently being presented at eighteen different universities. Autonomous nursing colleges where diploma courses in nursing are presented, are associated with the university, within an agreement of co-operation with the specific university.

Research and teaching are the major activities at a university. It is the symbiotic relationship between teaching and research which makes the university unique (Rossouw, 1993:33). As a social institution, the university also has a relationship with the society in which it is situated. This implies that trends in society influence research and teaching at universities.

In the South African society, processes of transformation are the order of the day. The changes have brought nursing education and the university to a crossroads situation. Various claims are made in favour of community-based curricula, transcultural education and problem-based learning approaches. The repositioning of nursing education is being investigated on various levels. Demands are made in respect of the lowering of admission requirements, the abolition of academic criteria for selection, national curricula, the removal of the subject Ethos and Professional Socialisation (*Nursing News*, September 1996:7).

These claims, investigations and demands require critical and directive decisions about the future of nursing education. The purpose of this article is to describe directives for the reinterpretation of nursing education at universities. It is important that the decisions on the future of nursing

education must be considered scientifically from all perspectives. Wrong decisions of the past are still haunting nursing and nursing education today.

To describe directives for the reinterpretation of nursing education at universities, the work of Professor HW Rossouw (1993) will be studied. The implications for nursing education at universities will be described from Rossouw's (1993) perspectives.

ROSSOUW'S PERSPECTIVES

The activities at a university are directed particularly at research and teaching. The university strives, on the one hand, towards new knowledge which is acquired through research and, on the other hand, towards the transfer of existing knowledge by means of teaching. As a social institution, the university's activities are directed at the society. These activities assist people to organise a world in which to live and to establish an ethos of life in the society. In this context, the cultural activities of the university create a community. The university is subject to historical changes in the society and certain factors in the society influence the nature of the university.

In this section the focus is, firstly, on factors in the society which influence the essence of the university. Secondly, the reinterpretation of the idea of the university will be studied with reference to the influence of the contemporary society. Thirdly, the focus will be on teaching as an activity of the university.

The factors in the society which affect the nature of the university

Rossouw (1993:125) approaches the factors in the society which present challenges to research and teaching at the university from a global, continental and national perspective.

The global perspective implies a world perspective and by this Rossouw (1993:126) means the social and cultural environments as they influence the daily activities of people worldwide. The characteristic which involves major implications for teaching in general and research and teaching at university in particular, from Rossouw's perspective, are the accelerating historical changes. The accelerating rate at which events succeed one another and bring about changes in the life pattern of communities, steering it into new directions, present various challenges to the facets of research and teaching at university. This implies that universities worldwide are finding themselves in a situation of uncertainty. International recognition and cooperation are of great importance to any university. The implications of world trends will consequently influence the nature of university activities locally.

The continental perspective focuses on the continent of Africa and development and conditions on the continent which are relevant to university education and research. Rossouw's (1993:130) opinion is that modernisation is involved here rather than Africanisation. He believes that the values and structures of the First World will gradually get the upper hand over the traditional values and structures of the Third World. For Rossouw (1993:131) the dynamics of the modernisation process and modernisation as such are based on the operationalisation of knowledge. Operationalisation refers to the way in which knowledge becomes actions, where theory is applied in practice and where observations lead to operations (Rossouw, 1993:131). The way in which science leads to actions becomes the empirical indicator of modernisation. Modernisation thus has implications for teaching as well as research at universities.

The national perspective focuses on the South African situation. The South African society is a multicultural society. For this reason, Rossouw (1993:134) includes the characteristic of fragmentation and the resultant estrangement as one which presents special challenges to teaching and research at universities.

Rossouw (1993:11) discusses the factors which are responsible for the situation of uncertainty within the national perspective in four categories. Each of these categories will be studied in the following section.

The institutional environment of the university

The institutional environment of the university is the first category which is responsible for the changing circumstances of the university. As a social institution, the university has a relation with other institutions and bodies which are functionally related to it. In the past decades these types of institutions have increased in type and number, which made for a more complex university environment.

Rossouw (1993:12) regards the higher degree of differentiation which has occurred in the tertiary education system as the first development in the institutional environment of the university. By this he is referring to the bigger and larger number of colleges and technikons that have been estab-

lished in addition to universities. Each of these institutions also has distinctive educational objectives, aspirations and priorities. These institutions are also in competition with the university in their claims on limited human and financial resources. This forces the university to obtain clarity on the precise nature, place and role of tertiary education. Rossouw's (1993:13) opinion is that, on account of the absence of alternative training facilities, the university had taken responsibility for various qualification programmes which did not fit within the traditional framework and objectives of university education. There should be reflection on the teaching programmes which are rather suited to alternative institutions. This, however, means that the university must obtain a clear picture of the precise place and function of the university. According to Rossouw (1993:13), the effective functioning of the university depends on better mutual understanding between the university and other tertiary educational institutions.

Secondly, the establishment of statutory research councils, such as the CSIR, HSRC and MRC, is a factor in the institutional environment of the university which competes with the research function of the university. This means that the university must obtain greater clarity on its research function. Rossouw (1993:14) believes that the university should take into account the symbiotic relationship between research and teaching at university when reflecting on the research function.

The third development in the institutional environment of universities, is related to the development of professional councils who perform a function of professionalisation. Firstly, there is a movement among the professional councils to integrate the education of candidates for such professions at the university. Rossouw (1993:15) also believes that there is a risk that the university's traditional function will thus be sacrificed and eventually become a detached federation of professional schools. For this reason, the university should obtain clarity in respect of what the relationship between pure scientific development and professional education should be within the university. The second aspect concerning the function of professionalising essentially affecting the university, is the direct and indirect influence of professional councils on the academic decisions of the university. The function of professional councils is to ensure standards of education and examination. This obviously implicates the institutional autonomy of the university in matters of academic importance. In this regard, the question which needs to be answered is to what extent and in what way the autonomy of the university can be reconciled with the normative involvement of the statutory professional bodies in the curriculum of academic study material?

Economic claims

In the second category which is responsible for the changing circumstances of the university, there are the different economic activities which have a material influence on the organisation and functioning of the university. The university has occupied a central position in the economic activities of the society for a considerable time. Through teaching and research programmes, the university largely determines the economic prosperity of the society. Knowledge arising from the research activities are applied systematically in different practices in an effort to find solutions to problems in the society. Evidence of success can be observed in various spheres, such as industry, management, social services and healthcare. This economic prosperity, made possible by the university, generates new needs which the university has to satisfy and which constantly make new claims on the university.

One of these claims is the provision of expert human power to fulfill highly specialised functions and professions. The development of universities will depend on the extent to which they react to the claims. A decision will have to be made on the weight of courses in preparation for a career compared to general scientific formation in the total teaching programmes of the university. Universities are often called to order because graduated products are not competent. In this respect, finality will have to be obtained as to whether specialised skills can really be the end product of academic teaching programmes.

A second claim made on universities is related to the advanced and specialised expertise required. To fulfill this need, the university has to create more and new opportunities for postgraduate study.

The third claim revolves around the fact that scientific and technological knowledge rapidly becomes obsolete. The need for lifelong education arises and makes demands on the university to be of service. This implies changes in academic planning, organisational structures and the teaching strategies of the university in the future.

The fourth claim is related to the nature of the research programmes of the university. The economy has a need for applied and developmental research which is directed at the solution of practical problems. From this situation, decisions must be made on the relationship between applied and pure research at the university. Similar decisions will also be related to the position and cooperation of research councils as already discussed in the previous section.

Financial restrictions

According to Rossouw (1993:18), the third factor responsible for the changing circumstances of the university is not only responsible for the uncertainty, but is also cause for serious concern about the future development of the university. Universities are currently functioning within financial restrictions and the situation is likely to continue in the future. Rossouw (1993:19) discusses a few significant consequences of financial restrictions in universities.

The university is, firstly, no longer able to offer competitive salaries in the recruitment of gifted, well-qualified people. This phenomenon is a problem in professional areas in particular. Such a situation can lead to the quality of academic standards, services and products of the university to be seriously affected in the long run.

Secondly, the financial restrictions restrict the university in the maintenance, renewal and replacement of facilities and equipment to keep abreast of the latest developments in the international academic world. The unfavourable exchange rate of the rand further aggravates this problem. If the situation continues and the university is no longer able to keep up with the supplementation of facilities and equipment, this will bring about a backlog in academic activities difficult to eliminate.

According to Rossouw (1993:19), the financial restrictions experienced by universities necessitate two types of decisions. The first decision concerns the acquisition of alternative financial resources for the universities. If tuition fees continue to increase, the accessibility of the university becomes more limited which will particularly affect people in deprived communities. Funding from the private sector brings about greater dependence on this sector and it could have far-reaching consequences for policy making and priorities in the running of the university.

The second decision relates to the process of rationalisation. Rossouw (1993:21) believes that the university should strive more than ever before for more effective planning and the elimination of overlapping. Serious self-examination is necessary on intra- as well as inter-university level.

As far as Rossouw (1993:21) is concerned, the basic norms applied in the rationalisation process are problematic. He is referring to the cost-effectiveness compared to the cultural and intellectual value of the study area. Rossouw (1993:37) is also of opinion that the process of rationalisation is desirable. To him, rationalisation not only means curtailment, phasing out and economising, but also the strive and concerted efforts to utilise the available resources of the university as effectively and efficiently as possible. That which is effective relates to the different standpoints or paradigmatic views of the university. This aspect is further elucidated in this article.

Trends in political and social realities

The university is also affected by certain trends in social relations, population development and political processes. A lot is currently written and said about these issues and Rossouw only mentions a few important aspects.

Demographic trends in the South African society reflect a large number of students from a heterogeneous structure of population groups, social and cultural background, age, financial capacity and learning needs. He believes that demographic tendencies will have far-reaching consequences in respect of student numbers and the structure of students at universities. Universities will have to reflect carefully on how they are going to accommodate new demographic realities. They will thus have to reflect on bridging courses, supporting programmes, selection procedures and selection criteria. The possibilities and problems of distance education combined with contact education need to be studied in order to make adjustments.

After a period of political isolation and boycotts new channels, opportunities and collaboration agreements with international universities have become available. The question which the university has to answer is how this new situation will be utilised?

As for the issue of affirmative action, a viable and acceptable way in which this process can be applied efficiently should be reflected within the university. Another issue which demands serious and careful reflection is the reorientation in respect of a "First or Third World" university. Universities will have to decide what this argument really means and which direction presents meaningful possibilities. If such an argument means that South African universities will take the needs of their immediate environment into consideration, such a demand for relevance would not be controversial. It would, however, be an entirely different matter if the intention is to introduce other norms, standards and methods than those internationally and historically associated with the university as an institution (Rossouw, 1993:24).

Factors of change in the society also affect research and teaching at universities. On account of the change in the institutional environment of the university, the increasing claims on responsibility towards the society, the greater financial restrictions and increasing growth in student numbers, combined with heterogeneous characteristics, the idea or paradigmatic view of the university is also changing. Within these global, continental and national factors, the idea of the university must be reinterpreted.

Reinterpretation of the idea of the university

The idea of the university is caught up in a relationship of stress between the hereditary elements of the university and the influence of the contemporary society within which the university exists. Rossouw (1993:31) regards these two poles as competitive but not necessarily irreconcilable. The idea of the university must be reinterpreted within these two poles and it will have to balance the facets of the life world as well as ethos of life in the activities of research and teaching. Rossouw (1993:32) describes five of these stress poles.

Identity and relevance

The issue of traditional identity of the university and the demand of contemporary relevance are, according to Rossouw (1993:32), the two most basic poles of the stress relation in the idea of the university. Rossouw (1993:33) is of opinion that people's strive for scientific knowledge should be a central reference in the character of the university. By this he means the effort to acquire new knowledge through the process of research and to take ownership of knowledge by means of education and study. Rossouw further believes that a university cannot exist unless there is a symbiotic relation between research and teaching.

According to Rossouw (1993:34) the acquisition of scientific knowledge through study and research has intrinsic cultural value as it liberates the community from prejudice, superstition and other intellectual blockages which hamper people in their mental development. This knowledge also has instrumental value on account of its possible applications and practical value. Man utilises this knowledge to create a life world and an ethos of life. Although the functions of the university have always had intrinsic cultural and instrumental value, this has never been demanded explicitly by the environment. It is, in fact, in this regard that thinking and attitude in respect of the university are changing rapidly. The emphasis has thus shifted from a natural byproduct to a conscious demand. The university is expected to produce graduates who can apply their acquired knowledge in a useful way in society. The university is required to produce the necessary return on public funds that have been invested in the university. To describe the balance between relevance and identity, Rossouw (1993:36) states the following:

If the university should sacrifice its primary educational goal of academic expertise and intellectual creativity to the training goal of ready skills and prescriptive problem-solving techniques, it unavoidably becomes an incoherent collection of professional schools and ceases to be a centre of learning. On the other hand, if the university regards its primary research goal and scientific development as inferior to the pragmatic aids imposed upon it by outside institutions, it becomes a utilitarian knowledge industry and ceases to be a fountain of insight. (Translated.)

Rossouw (1993:36) is, therefore, of opinion that the demands of relevance cannot be ignored. To Rossouw (1993:37), relevance means to be relevant to something of importance. To maintain its identity, the university does not have to be a training school of sterile knowledge. The issue of importance to the university must not, however, be considered shortsightedly as that of useful short-term service, but rather from a bifocal perspective. By bifocal perspective Rossouw (1993:37) means the type of perspective which can at first glance, so to speak, absorb immediate practical needs into the wider and further vision of theoretical thinking.

Universality and particularity

The second stress pole is that of universal academic values of the university set against the affiliation with the characteristic social and cultural values of the environment in which the university finds itself.

Things to which the academic community attach decisive importance fall under academic values. Concepts like rationality and objectivity are important here. Tolerance and the willingness to communicate across cultural and national borders are prerequisites for the realisation of academic values. A high price is put on international judgement and standards, and on international liaison and cooperation (Rossouw, 1993:38).

On the other hand, the university is a social institution which is nurtured and functions within a community with own language, traditions, customs and aspirations, an own history, value orientation and ideals and sense of destination. To fulfill its function, the university has to affiliate with the specific social and cultural values of the supporting community (Rossouw, 1993:38).

The university does not function in isolation. As a social institution, the factors and forces in society will also affect the characteristic features of the university. If the university becomes caught up by the social and cultural values of its environment, there is the risk that its primary goal will be lost. Rossouw (1993:40) regards the following as a more acceptable alternative:

That the university will, in fact, regard and utilise its affiliation to the particular values of its socio-cultural environment as a channel and opportunity to fulfill its own universalising cultural function (research and teaching) effectively. (Translated.)

Élitism and egalitarianism

The third polar stresses the existence of the relationship between the view that the university is, on the one hand, a select corps of the privileged and, on the other hand, the view that the university is an institution for the masses (Rossouw, 1993:40).

The traditional form of élitism was based on social status, economic class and political influence. The form of élitism which is found today is rather that of talent. According to this standpoint only the best candidates are admitted to the university where a culture of striving for excellence is the order of the day.

The opposite pole of this élitism is the promotion of equality of all people. This involves equal opportunities and access to the advantages of the university for everyone. The extreme form of this pole would imply the abolition of all admission criteria, with a resultant lowering of standards. The lowering of standards is necessary to prevent the so-called *revolving door* phenomenon. This means that candidates who are admitted to the university are pushed out just as quickly because they do not meet the set requirements. Frustrations which accompany such treatment could have far-reaching consequences. A second form of egalitarianism is criticism against the admission requirements which discriminate against people in deprived communities. This form of egalitarianism requires a relaxation of the admission requirements for this group of people and the provision of supporting and bridging programmes to overcome the backlogs. The third form of egalitarianism advocates

greater diversity within the university system. The idea is to fulfill various needs within the syllabi and programmes. It is known as the *cafeteria* approach. Individuals can integrate in the programmes and syllabi according to their own abilities and needs.

Rossouw (1993:43) mentions that it is important that the strive towards greater accessibility will take into account factors such as affordability, demand for human resource development in the community and availability of funds.

Autonomy and restriction

The fourth stress pole which affects reflection on the idea of the university is that of institutional autonomy and the indispensable reality of various restrictions to which the university is subjected. Institutional autonomy refers to the freedom and right of the university to exercise the final say in respect of qualification requirements, admission requirements, selection of personnel, contents of syllabi and programmes, choice of research problems and directions and the spending of funds. This autonomy is justified from the standpoint that only those who possess academic expertise can decide on standards.

It currently appears that the society wants to restrict the autonomy of the university to an increasing degree. Explicit demands are made for public accountability in respect of the spending of public funds. There is an increasing insistence on the part of the authorities on rationalisation and external accreditation for the maintenance of standards. There are, in fact, demands that students should be channelled according to the needs of the national economy and that it should not be left to the free choice of the individuals (Rossouw, 1993:47).

Absolute autonomy is not feasible. The society that finances the university by means of public as well as private donations, makes the university dependent and subject to certain restrictions. It makes the university accountable for specific responsibilities. There is, however, an academic autonomy which is essential to the university for the integrity of scientific practise and which must not be restricted (Rossouw, 1993:48). Academic autonomy refers to aspects of research and teaching at the university. Such autonomy is essentially accompanied by a specific liability.

Community and corporation

The last polar stress relationship refers to the type of organisation which the university represents. On the one hand, the university is a community of people who are bound by a common aspiration, values and attitude. On the other side, the university also has a corporate character. These two poles reflect different organisational models. Rossouw (1993:52) is of opinion that there is currently a remarkable move towards the second pole.

The management approach of the university as a community is characterised by a type of ownership with committees as functioning units. On the other hand, the university has a corporate character in that it manages public funds received by means of subsidies. The relationship between the corporate-orientated characteristic of the university and the university as a community can be one of stress. Rossouw (1993:51) sees a moment of stress as the possibility that the university is regarded as an instrument of the state whose sole purpose is to serve the interests of the state. In extreme cases the state can be prescriptive in respect of the functions, objectives and standards of the university and, in fact,

use means at its disposal to enforce these prescriptions. Rossouw (1993:51) is of opinion that the university as a community has the responsibility to pursue not only the type of knowledge which can mediate technical and organisational power, but also knowledge which can promote critical insight in prevailing social and moral values.

The university and education

Rossouw (1993:125) is of opinion that all teaching at universities must include the following facets: intellectual, institutional and professional development.

Intellectual development

The first facet of university education is that of intellectual development. By this Rossouw (1993:125) means that every thinking discipline has an own methodology, problem statement, developmental dynamics and logic development. Within this facet, university education is aimed at teaching people to think, ask questions and find answers in the correct way. The ideal includes broad exposure to ideas, standpoints and knowledge contents in order to become rounded off intellectually. Through intellectual development, the primary goal is realised within the particular values of the university.

To keep abreast of changes in society the ability to adapt, in order to accommodate the unforeseen without any disruption, is required. To stay in command requires a cognition of norms as well as critical distinction skills. According to Rossouw (1987:3) the secret of scientific thinking and the academic spirit of university education lie in a combination of these skills. Rossouw believes that genuine academic thinking is vested in this balance between cognition of norms and critical distinction skills. To meet the challenge of change, those who are responsible for planning and executing the educational task, must ensure that the syllabi and the style of presentation are aimed at teaching and promoting the cognitive and intellectual skills of genuine academic thinking (Rossouw, 1987:3).

Institutional development

According to Rossouw (1993:125), the second facet of university education is institutional preparation. Saying this, he emphasizes the fact that, although university education is an academic activity, the university cannot separate itself from the institution within which the receiver of education must live and work. Within this facet the university must take into account the demands of the organisational structure, the value orientation and the internal and external institutional relationship with the society within which the university graduate must find a home and provide guidance. Through institutional development, the university takes into account relevant values and demands of society and accounts for the way in which public funds have been invested.

The contemporary society also makes demands on the institutional preparation of the university student. The modern life world is based to an increasing degree on scientific information. There is a greater demand for high-level human resources. This issue should not just be approached quantitatively by processing more and more students via the process of university education. It should also be approached qualitatively by emphasizing the quality of human resources which are produced. The university candidate must not be provided only with knowledge which empowers the organisation of a life world. Knowledge to handle the increasing ethical responsibility caused by modernisation must also form part of the equipment of the university candidate.

As part of the institutionalised preparation of the university candidate, the fragmented society which gives rise to polarisation and stress, must be taken into account. Rossouw (1993:136) states that, in the preparation of the student, it is essential that students become acquainted with the life world and ethos of life of other groups in the South African society.

Professional development

The third facet of university education on which Rossouw focuses, is professional preparation. By this he implies training for specific requirements of a career or profession. Within the facet of university education, the university candidate should acquire certain skills, codes of behaviour and conduct. This facet of university training is, according to Rossouw (1993:125), important in order to perform professional activities in such a way that they meet the expectations of the interested society.

The rapid change makes demands in respect of the professional development of the university candidate. This means that professional expertise becomes obsolete sooner and that it is inadequate to handle new and unforeseen situations. The functioning of the practitioner is subject to a continuous process of adaptation and reorientation to meet the demands of the rapid change that is taking place. The teaching approach of the university candidate must reinforce an attitude of lifelong learning. This implies lifelong accompaniment of the practitioner as well. In the professional development, an attitude of openness, adjustment and constant search for new knowledge and skills must be promoted for the successful utilisation of continued education (Rossouw, 1993:127). The teaching approach will, in fact, have to facilitate access to, critical consideration and processing of knowledge contents (Rossouw, 1987:4).

Rossouw (1993:133) is of opinion that, on account of the process of increasing social differentiation, the modernisation process will also present challenges to the professional development of the university candidate. The effect of differentiation and specialisation is that man's needs are divergent. To meet these demands, there must be increasing specialisation in respect of professional training to make provision for variety.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING EDUCATION

From Rossouw's perspectives (1993) the following directives for the reinterpretation of nursing education at universities can be described. Rossouw's view of the reinterpretation of the university is a balance between hereditary elements and the influences of contemporary society. The first aspect is not negotiable, according to Rossouw (1993), as it is the essence of the university.

- * As far as Rossouw (1993) is concerned, the symbiotic relationship between research and teaching is a condition for the existence of the university. This implies that nursing education at universities must, on the one hand, strive towards new knowledge which can be acquired by research and theory development and, on the other hand, the transfer of existing knowledge by means of teaching. Research and theory development takes place in an extremely limited way outside the university. It is thus entirely in the hands of nursing education at universities to expand the science of nursing in South Africa. On the one hand, research thus appears to be a condition for the survival of nursing education at university. If the research outputs of Departments of Nur-

sing fail to meet the standards of one publication per academic per year, the right of future existence of Departments of Nursing is questioned.

- * Rossouw (1993:126) states that international recognition and cooperation are of great importance to all universities. The era of forced isolation as a result of sanctions against the apartheid policy is something of the past. To be competitive is a further condition for international recognition and cooperation in respect of nursing education at universities. When decisions are made on the future of nursing education at universities, care must be taken not to jeopardise the ability to compete, thus sacrificing international cooperation and recognition. The degree of competition for nursing education at universities is related to the quality of research and teaching and, by implication, also the quality of the products (students) that are produced. This implies that nursing departments must evaluate the professional competency of the newly graduated student in a trustworthy manner.
- * Rossouw (1993:134) regards the multicultural nature of the South African society as one of the special challenges to research and teaching at universities. Transcultural education and cultural sensitivity are two important principles which need to be operationalised in nursing education. Rossouw (1993:130) is of opinion that the values and structures of the First World will gradually get the upper hand over the traditional values and structures of the Third World. Rossouw also believes that the traditional values of the Third World will not be able to resist the power of the scientific First World. There will thus be talk of modernisation rather than Africanisation.
- * The establishment of other tertiary educational institutions requires reflection on the part of the university regarding which teaching programmes belong in alternative institutions (Rossouw, 1993:13). It has already been argued that it is essential for the expansion of the science of nursing and health services in South Africa that the university must have a nursing education component. It also appears to be a generally accepted principle that nursing education should take place at tertiary educational institutions. It must, however, be reflected whether other tertiary educational institutions, such as technikons, can meet the educational needs of nursing education on college level more effectively. It would probably allow nursing departments at universities more time to be involved in research, which is their exclusive and primary function.
- * Society demands advanced and specialised expertise. To fulfill this need, new and more opportunities should be created for postgraduate nursing study. Relevant postgraduate courses must be introduced to meet the needs of the community.
- * The rate at which knowledge becomes obsolete, on the one hand, and the development of new knowledge, on the other hand, require alternative learning approaches in nursing education. Such learning approaches will have to bring about an attitude of lifelong learning in every practitioner. To meet the challenges of change, those who are responsible for

the planning and execution of the nursing education task must ensure that the syllabi and the style of presentation are directed at teaching and promoting cognitive and intellectual skills of genuine academic thinking. Models in alternative strategies to facilitate critical-analytical and reflective thinking will have to be developed. These models must be culturally sensitive. Reflection will have to take place in respect of a relevant nursing education philosophy which will achieve this goal.

* Explicit demands are made on the university to produce a professionally competent product. This does not, however, mean that academic expertise and intellectual creativity must be sacrificed. Intellectual development is still one of the essential facets of nursing education at universities. It does, however, imply that nursing education at universities should take the relevant values and needs of the South African society into account. Institutional preparation is the second essential facet of nursing education at universities. In the preparation of the students, it is important that they must become acquainted with the life world and values of other groups in the South African society.

* The third facet of university education is professional development. The facet of nursing education at universities is important to ensure that nursing takes place in such a way that the expectations of the interested society are met. Within this facet of nursing education the student has to acquire certain skills and codes of conduct. It appears that the demands of certain groups in favour of the removal of the subject Ethos are contrary to this. It does not, however, mean that the values which are taught in the subject Ethos can be revised.

* Rationalisation in nursing education should involve aspirations and concerted efforts to utilise the available resources in nursing education efficaciously and to make them as effective as possible.

* Affirmative action must take place in a feasible and acceptable way within nursing education at universities, without lowering the essence and standard of teaching and research at university. Affirmative action should be a short-term effort to correct irregularities of the past without becoming irregular once again.

* In order to handle the new demographic realities of South Africa in nursing education, there must be a so-called "cafeteria" approach. The idea is to meet the different needs within syllabi and programmes. Individuals can then become integrated in the programmes and syllabi according to their own needs and abilities. Alternative teaching approaches, support systems and bridging courses can help to manage the related problems. Combinations of distance education and contact education will have to be experimented with.

* Selection criteria will have to be revised to eliminate discrimination. The abolition of selection criteria will imply a lowering of standards in education and will thus not be recommended. Admission requirements must also take into account the affordability and demand for human power (personnel).

* Interference with the autonomy of nursing education at university would be unacceptable if it interferes with the integrity of research and teaching at universities. The setting of guidelines by the professional association or by a national curriculum would be acceptable if it is not so prescriptive as to interfere with the integrity of teaching and research.

Although these directives apply to nursing education at universities, some of the principles can also be applied to decisions made by the existing nursing colleges on the issue of nursing education.

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IN MEMORIAM

It is with sadness that we take notice of the passing away in December 1996 of prof. T.G. Mashaba.

She was the head of the Nursing Department at the University of Zululand.

Prof. Mashaba is well-known in nursing circles and she contributed to the high standards set for nursing education, practice and research. She also served as a reviewer for HEALTH SA GESONDHEID. We will miss her as a person and professional.

Rest in Peace.

The Editorial Committee.