

A BLUEPRINT OF CHANGING NURSING EDUCATION GLOBALLY

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Education will play an essential role in building nursing's future. It is critical to the preparation of professionals as clinical nurses, managers, educators, and researchers all over the world, and ultimately in the improvement of the quality of care that nurses provide their patients\clients. As the world itself is changing and becoming more inter-related, nursing education must assume an increasingly international perspective. Therefore, nurse educators need to continually examine and develop existing content and introduce new goals, content, and teaching methods to meet the health care needs of the people they serve.

One important way to develop new programs and instruments is through research. The international conference on Expanding Boundaries of Nursing Education Globally (held in October, 1993, in Bolzano, Italy) has stressed the need for an increase in research on nursing education. Through this document, the Scientific Committee of the Conference offers a contribution to the topic, emerging from the suggestions of all the presenters at the Conference and from several deliberations among the Committee members. This document is presented as a framework for the future. Key issues are identified, with particular attention to bridging the current gaps in research knowledge and, importantly, setting the stage for future collaboration globally. Also, it was the Committee's belief that by highlighting the successes through this Conference, goals would be identified and a foundation for the future would be built.

We hope that this document will serve as a basis for discussion in many educational and research settings and a stimulus to everyone to cooperate in undertaking and developing research projects in nursing education.

This document reports elements referring to:

- * Significant areas for development in nursing education
- * Targeted areas for nursing education research
- * Recommendations regarding research methods and instruments
- * Advancement of research roles, responsibilities, and sites
- * Policies to be pursued at local, regional, national and international levels
- * Avenues of funding
- * Recommended strategies

Significant Areas for Development in Nursing Education

Research has to be initiated to address nursing education problems where there is lack of knowledge. The Committee has identified a list of problems to serve as an impetus for research in the field. Significant areas for development include:

- Recognize the contributions of nursing to society, leading to resources and support, especially through funding for nursing education, basic, post basic, and continuing education
- Enhance the quality of nursing education, recognizing the differences in the standards and quality of nursing education around the world
- Develop and test innovative teaching mod-

els in classroom and clinical settings; evaluate the current models of teaching in relation to quality outcomes and effectiveness; enhance the ability of academic and clinical staff to influence student learning; develop model clinical staff for students to emulate

- Enhance the clinical skills of faculty\nurse educators and the teaching of clinical judgment
- Evaluate nursing conceptualizations for their curricular relevance with specific attention to the application of theory to practice in clinical settings (e.g. hospitals, homes, community agencies) and the classroom
- Focus teacher career planning on teacher preparation, including both clinical competencies and research training, and commitment to teaching as a career
- Define the advantages of educational systems for nursing education and develop new models, including the organizational aspects of the nursing schools
- Develop community-based models of education that include attention to collaborative relationships with families and communities
- Enhance awareness among nurse educators of the need for research in nursing education for advancing the knowledge of the discipline; emphasize the specific role of nurse educators in supporting research on nursing education
- Evaluate current models for curricula development, including attention to essential content and priorities for satisfying legal requirements and professional needs
- Strengthen the service and education interface in order to increase the research\practice link to educate for the future needs of society
- Evaluate components of nursing education focused on primary health care goals
- Assess the interface of nursing education with education of other health professionals; evaluate changes in nursing and effects on other health professionals
- Evaluate the social isolation of nursing students in some programs in some countries and the value of broader university-based education

- Assess continuing education needs of professional nurses for lifelong learning
- Develop models for continuing education teaching\learning

Targeted Areas for Nursing Education Research

Referring to the most urgent problems in a worldwide perspective, the areas identified as priorities for research are the following:

- Prerequisites for admission into nursing education programs and selection procedures
- Relationship between level of nursing education and health outcomes
- Methods for educating for interpersonal relationships; use of interpersonal relationships; development of communication and collaboration skills with patients\clients, families, and other health professionals
- Evaluation of alternative clinical and laboratory settings for nursing education beyond traditional hospital settings, with particular attention to settings for primary care
- Evaluation of interface between teaching methods and student learning
- Evaluation of ways to teach values and ethics, and influence the affective domain
- Criteria for evaluating student learning of various skills and ways of knowing
- Methods of assisting students at advanced levels to assume aspects of the professional role reflecting service, education, research, and administration
- Evaluation of models for general and speciality education in nursing and their impact on the teacher role; evaluation of the effects of the education model on nursing practice
- Educational needs of advanced practitioners in nursing and educational models for their preparation; assessment of continuing education needs and methods
- Methods of teacher preparation, including the teaching of research at all levels within nursing education
- Methods and tools for conducting nursing education research, with particular attention

to the international or cross-cultural dimensions

- Experiments with the use of different forms of information technology to support effectiveness and efficiency of nursing education
- Identification of methods to improve the use of information technology to support nursing education research
- Development of models for research on re-entry education and model programs for re-entering students

Recommendations Regarding Research Methods and Instruments

The development of nursing in all the world's countries is producing patterns of knowledge with some common features. However, some potential innovations for nursing education still remain at local levels and have no diffusion outside the countries' borders. The dialectics among cultural diversities and national customs could be an important approach to improving the standards for nursing education in the next decade. Multisite, replication and cross-cultural research permits increases in the generalization of scientific findings and, at the same time, reduces national diversities. Thus, the transferability of research findings to practice in different cultural settings needs to be better explored. Multinational collaboration on nursing education research should be one of the most important goals for the near future.

The Committee recommends an eclectic approach to research, therefore a wide range of research methods have to be used, according to the phenomena to be studied. Both a quantitative and qualitative methods are recommended to achieve integration between them. In some complex research projects triangulation can be useful. Referring to some of the points cited as trends, some examples are given in order to stress the importance of the different methods. In order to describe specific national educational models and their peculiarities, historical research can be useful. Through such study, one can find out which circumstances and events in the past have influenced nursing education. In a cognitive sense history can be used for predicting the future. And studies on earlier methods to teach nursing skills could, perhaps, reveal long forgotten useful techniques.

To face the challenge of a multi-ethnic society, nursing schools in many countries must become more culturally diverse in their student and faculty composition. Cross-cultural comparative research and ethnographic research also have to be supported to explore cultural attitudes and values and their impact on the educational process.

Much effort needs to be devoted to inquiry into the development and impact of the intrinsic didactic act in different settings and circumstances; experimental and quasi-experimental methods are mostly required for this purpose. Finally, in research projects, attention has to be given to the methods themselves to better understand their potential in the educational research field and, perhaps, find new ones. Critical review of the literature, including meta-analysis, has to be increased.

The aim of all education, including nursing education, is to influence change of human behavior in a specific direction. In the case of nursing education, the aim is behavior exhibited by the learner that is congruous with behavior expected of a person providing nursing care in the context of a particular health care setting. Since outcomes of education are reflected in human behavior, the methods used to study a system of nursing education, its processes and outcomes, as well as the concepts important to nursing education, will therefore be based on data reflected in the behavior of the learner (student or practicing nurse) and the teacher of nursing. Tools for the study of their behavior, both verbal and nonverbal, can be grouped into interactional research tools and tools that use nonverbal techniques for the collection of data.

Interactional research tools are based on interactions between the researcher and subjects, direct verbalization or via a questionnaire, and thus are "ideational" and considered more intrusive than the nonverbal techniques of participant and nonparticipant observation, historical research, record reviews, etc. Various alternative nonverbal techniques exist for observing relevant phenomena in nursing education. The suggested tools are not a complete inventory. The researcher, therefore, should constantly be alert to the possibilities of developing new modes of collecting relevant data that best answer the research questions. Examples of instruments that could be used include questionnaires, observation, checklists, interview schedules, and diaries. Particular attention must be paid to the validity and form of the instruments, because these are used in different cultural groups.

Advancement of Research Roles, Responsibilities and Sites

Even if the development of education is the ethical responsibility of every nurse, people directly involved in the field have a greater investment in its advancement. The single faculty member and the researcher have additional responsibilities beyond carrying out their own research projects, teaching from a research basis, and expecting students to reflect a research-based practice. The nurse educators must also promote research on education and stimulate subjects and institutions to fund research.

Professional organizations are expected to put as much energy as possible into promoting this specific kind of research, because investing in the future of education.

tion is the main road to improving nursing service and, consequently, the status of nursing in society and the recognition of nurses' contributions to health.

The most appropriate settings for promoting, organizing, and managing educational research are universities/institutions of higher education and research institutes. They can provide methodological expertise and appropriate technical resources to be used in the projects. In addition, they can have a broader view than one of just a single phenomenon and can develop research project networks.

Sites for carrying out research include all traditional and current educational settings and potential new sites; the following are just a few examples: classrooms, skills laboratories, clinical placement areas, patients' homes, and community services.

Policies to be Pursued at Local, Regional, National, and International Levels

In order to increase the attention paid to the issue it is proposed that recommendations be advanced at multiple levels within various groups. Nurse educators involved in research can assume the responsibility for raising the level of awareness and delineating specific policies. Individual actions are required, but are not sufficient in themselves. At local, regional, national and international levels formal policies have to be promoted. Referring to their specific responsibilities, institutions should be strongly encouraged to write resolutions on the issue. The following are presented as examples:

- Resolutions passed by professional organizations (ICN and national associations)
- Official bodies' statements of support; e.g., WHO, Union Council of Europe, and other international organizations with health duties.
- Individual nations through policy making bodies.

Avenues of Funding

A range of avenues for funding must be explored, including those that have not previously been exposed to such endeavors. It will be paramount that nurse educators determine specific relationships of the research to the goals of potential funding agencies or institutions and, at the same time, influence the priorities of the funding agencies. The following are examples of potential sources of support:

- Health boards/ministries/departments, international and national governmental organizations, nursing associations

- Multinational corporations, especially those with health interests, including health care technology, pharmaceutical, and computing industries

- Foundations (Rockefeller, Kellogg, etc.), family and charitable foundations

Recommended Strategies

An effort must be initiated to identify and initiate a multiplicity of strategies. The following are examples of strategies:

- Public information campaigns to highlight research findings, inside and outside the professional field

- Creation of an information system for sharing progress (telematics)
- Use of computers and other technology in order to carry out research and share research (e.g. through electronic mail)

- Development and/or expansion of retrieval systems that include nursing classification: e.g. the Metathesaurus of the Unified Medical Language System (ULMS) developed through the National Library of Medicine in the United States

- Dissemination of information regarding methodologies and findings

- Develop conferences and other methods of sharing information to exchange ideas and experiences relevant to nursing education research

- Increase the exchange of research through international nursing journals

- Submit proposals that have multiple sites and multiple countries involved

- Strengthen the research component of the curricula at all levels

- Introduce research in teacher's curriculum to prepare a critical mass of nurse educators who are prepared to teach from a research basis and conduct research; develop continuing-education programs in research for existing teachers

- Introduce sessions on nursing education research during research conferences

Conclusions

This document is a framework for the future; it will be effective only if nurses will address the cited problems and develop research projects. Many strategies have been identified; it is now up to every nurse, researcher, teacher, faculty, executive, director, and dean of schools of nursing, to realize these strategies. There will be many obstacles to achieving these goals. The global context is not an easy one, and the global and national economies present challenges at a time when health demands are increasing and health care delivery is changing. There must be a stronger role for nurses and nursing in the delivery of health care, particularly in relation to primary health care and community-based home care. Education is the most important tool we have; however, its development is strongly connected with research. Therefore research projects have to be increased.

Looking to the future, we look toward globalization. We must develop not just local or national research projects, but also international projects on nursing education research. International cooperation can value the single experience and enrich the common knowledge. We must be aware of one thing: working together requires specific skills, which include understanding cultural diversity, learning from every approach and experience, and developing an attitude of not just "bringing something to," but also "learning something from." This is the great challenge. Through research in education, nursing worldwide can change, and everyone has to contribute to this change.

People attending the conference at Bolzano, Italy, came from 36 countries, and this document incorporates many of their suggestions. The hope is that these suggestions will be spread out to more and more people in more and more countries, helping them to start a network of worldwide research cooperation.

Footnote:

This document will appear as the first chapter in a book "Expanding Boundaries on Nursing Education Research Globally" to be published in 1994 by Springer Publishing Company. Included in the book will be the key papers presented at the Bolzano Conference in October, 1993.