Patricia Benner

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Patricia Benner

• Created a theory of how nurses acquire their knowledge and expertise.
• Wrote the famous work *From Novice to Expert* in 1982 in the American Journal of Nursing.
• She believes the most important way a nurse can enhance their proficiency is through experience. “…experience is not the mere passage of time or longevity; it is the refinement of preconceived notions and theory by encountering many actual practical situations that add nuances or shades of differences to theory” (Benner, 1982, p. 407).

Benner’s Stages of Nursing Proficiency

I. Novice
II. Advanced Beginner
III. Competent Practitioner
IV. Proficient Practitioner
V. Expert Practitioner
Benner’s Theory & Evidence-Based Practice

• “Evidence-based practice provides a way to frame and address questions about how to provide the best patient care” (Pipe, Wellik, Buchda, Hansen, & Martyn, 2005).

• As nurses advance in experience level, their skills to perform evidence-based practice improve.

• Patricia Benner’s influence on nursing education has highlighted the importance of evidence-based practice. She spent a great deal of time researching different levels of competency for nurses. Coming to the conclusion that more experience and education leads to a more proficient nurse.

• Benner called for a major revamp of nursing education programs nationwide and that is exactly what is occurring. “Revamped educational programs promote clinical reasoning through situated cognition--the concept that knowing is inseparable from doing and that learning occurs in context” (Allen, 2013).
Nursing Metaparadigms according to Patricia Benner

**Person (Patient):** Benner believes that as nurses develop experience they view patients as whole parts rather than separate pieces. As Benner writes, “The holistic understanding of the proficient nurse improves his or her decision making. Decision making is now less labored since the nurse has a perspective about which of the many attributes and aspects present are the important ones” (Benner, 1982, p.405).

**Environment:** Benner’s theory is founded on experiences. The environment, or the experiences a nurse goes through, are responsible for making them more proficient. “She defined situation by the persons engaged interaction, interpretation and understanding of the situation” (Benner, 2014).
Nursing Metaparadigms according to Patricia Benner

**Health:** Benner’s theory explains that as nurses gain more experience, their skills in developing plans of care are more proficient. They are more able to develop the best plans to solve the patient’s problems. “This planning is an approach that sets the tone for the level and depth of caring and for the patient’s participation in the healing and recovery journey to achieve the expected outcomes” (White & O’Sullivan (Eds.), 2012, p. 80). Benner describes health as “…the lived experience of being healthy and ill” (Benner, 2014.)
Nursing Metaparadigms according to Patricia Benner

Nurse: Benner believes that nurses develop judgment skills and emotional maturity as they progress through the stages. “The expert nurse, with her/his enormous background of experience, has an intuitive grasp of the situation and zeros in on the accurate region of the problem without wasteful consideration of a large range of unfruitful possible problem situations” (Benner, 1982, p. 405). “She viewed nursing practice as the care and study of the lived experience of health, illness, and disease”’ (Benner, 2014).
**Benner & The Contemporary Healthcare Environment**

**Locally:** Benner’s theory affects how nursing education is carried out at the bedside. In local hospitals everywhere, teaching occurs on a daily basis. By applying Benner’s theory when educating, nurses are able to be more effectively taught for the skill level they are at. Nurses are able to judge their progress on the experience ladder, giving them a sense of achievement. Local hospitals choose employees that have a solid education and a certain level of experience. Her theory shows that more experience makes a more competent nurse. “The expert nurse, with her/his enormous background of experience, has an intuitive grasp of the situation” (Benner, 1982).

**Regionally:** Benner’s theory had a huge impact on the education of nurses in all college settings. In her book *Educating Nurses: A Call for Radical Transformation*, Benner explained the strengths and weakness in nursing education. She provided a framework for the most effective way to educate nurses. Even today, her recommendations are being used to remold nursing programs across this country and corporations are adopting her theory for a safer work place.

**Globally:** “Benner’s work is known throughout the world” (Day, 2009). Her work changed how the world views the profession of nursing. She defined that one nurse is not the same as the other. “It changed the profession's understanding of what it means to be an expert, placing this designation not on the nurse with the most highly paid or most prestigious position, but on the nurse who provided "the most exquisite nursing care" (Wandal, 2003). It demanded respect and made a place for intuition and experience within the profession and to society at large.
References


References

