

Sub-theme: Quality Nursing Education: Everyone's Concern

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"Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young." - Henry Ford

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." - Nelson Mandela

"Education can be the difference between a life of grinding poverty and the potential for a full and secure one." (Mandela & Graca, 2002; Fender & Wang, 2003; World Bank Group, 2005).

There is a broad agreement that in the process of evolution of modern societies, education was a crucially important input into the development of the nations, the individuals and communities that comprised them. Education is believed to endow workers with cognitive skills that draw a premium in the labour market by converting innate talents into cognitive skills.

Concepts of Quality Education

- One of the means to achieve 'quality education' is through 'quality teaching'.
- Quality is described as the "totality of the features and characteristics of a product or a service that bears on its ability to satisfy needs. It is the fitness for the intended use" (Green, 1999).
- Quality of an education system has usually been defined by the performance of its students and graduates - the output.
- In practice, however, because inputs into teaching are generally easier to measure than output, quality has been gauged by inputs.
- It is however better to measure quality from both output and input.
- Quality education is therefore the education that:
 - enhances cognitive achievement
 - prepares students to become responsible citizens
 - instills attitudes and values relevant to modern society; and
 - accommodates modern market-oriented skills to traditional home - based values and needs.

Young people want solid education, where curriculum and teaching methods are up to date. Education need to be adapted to the reality of the 21st

century and to the needs of the society.

Nursing Education

Society as a whole is going through many significant changes, and all of them influence nursing education and health care. Nursing care is becoming more complex, and the role of the registered nurse is more demanding requiring nurses to be active participants in health care decisions. Nurses need to be effective and efficient in understanding how societal, educational, and health care changes influence health outcomes. Our knowledge, thinking, and a broad array of skills all are critical to the kind of nursing care we provide, and they influence how we respond to changes in patients, families, and communities in times of need. Nurse educators must be vigilant in learning these changes and integrating them into the curriculum. Students also need to be aware of evolving trends and issues and learn how they influence learning and practice.

Goals of Quality Education

- Produce the high level manpower for all sectors of national life through imparting of skills and knowledge.
- Generate advanced knowledge and innovations through research and to be able to translate or adapt them to local and national situations.
- Provide public service through the expanded extra-mural or extension work and consultancy services.
- Develop the intellectual capacities of students to understand their local and national environment objectively and appreciate to develop the same.
- Promote the development of an indigenous scientific and technical capacity needed for tackling the problems of development.
- Equip the students with the knowledge, skills,

and attitudes to enable them to join the world of work as useful members of their communities and the nation at large, especially through being:

- Committed to, and ready for community and national service voluntarily or when mobilised to do so.
- Nationally conscious, tolerant of others and willing to work anywhere with the fellow nationals.
- Productive individuals with the positive attitudes towards personal, community and national development as well as believing in the dignity of labour and displaying a willingness to be involved in productive practical work.

Thus, the role of qualitative nursing education is central to the creation of the intellectual capacity on which knowledge production and utilisation depend, and the promotion of the life-long learning practices necessary to update individual knowledge and skills and lead to development of the competent nurse.

Quality Nursing Education: Everyone's Concern

Nursing education is dynamic. Throughout the history of nursing education the nursing education programmes offered have been a direct reflection of social, political, and economic trends and issues. Nursing leaders and nurses have responded to changing needs by offering a variety of nursing programmes. A consistent theme throughout all of the changes in nursing education has been the presence of nursing leaders who diligently investigated the state of nursing education and advocated for reforms to improve the delivery of health care through quality nursing education.

At the core of nursing lies incredible historical will to ensure quality and safety for patients. To assure competencies in patient-centred care, teamwork and collaboration, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, safety, and informatics to new graduate, all nursing education must embrace the need for change. These competencies cannot be mastered through a didactic approach nor developed in a single course or web-based module. Every clinical instructor will have to engage differently with the inter-professional team on patient care units where they are teaching. Teaching methods like simulation include components that address the competencies required for qualitative and safe nursing practice.

The millennium has become the metaphor for the extraordinary challenges and opportunities

available to the nursing profession and to those academic institutions responsible for preparing the next generation of nurses. Signal change is all around us, defining not only what we teach, but also how we teach our students. Transformations taking place in nursing and nursing education have been driven by major socioeconomic factors, as well as by developments in health care delivery and professional issues unique to nursing.

Here are 10 trends to watch, described in terms of their impact on nursing education:

1. Changing Demographics and Increasing Diversity
2. Technological Explosion
3. Globalisation of the World Economy and Society
4. The Era of the Educated Consumer, Alternative Therapies and Genomics, and Palliative Care.
5. Shift to Population-Based Care and the Increasing Complexity of Patient Care
6. The Cost of Health Care and the Challenge of Managed Care
7. Impact of Health Policy and Regulation
8. The Growing Need for Interdisciplinary Education for Collaborative Practice
9. The Current Nursing Shortage/Opportunities for Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development
10. Significant Advances in Nursing Science and Research.

Due to advances in public health and clinical care, the average life span is increasing rapidly. By 2020, more than 20 percent of the population will be 65 and older, with those over 85 constituting the fastest growing age group. Greater life expectancy of individuals with chronic and acute conditions will challenge the health care system's ability to provide efficient and effective continuing care. Significant increases in the diversity of the population affect the nature and the prevalence of illness and disease, requiring changes in practice that reflect and respect diverse values and beliefs. Disparities in morbidity, mortality, and access to care among population sectors have increased, even as socioeconomic and other factors have led to increased violence and substance abuse. Nursing practice, education, and research must embrace and respond to these changing demographics, and nurses must focus on spiritual health, as well as the physical and psychosocial

health of the population. Student demographics are also changing.

Role of Nursing Education in Realising a Transformed Health Care System

The role can be a significant one, but only if we are willing to re-examine our current nursing education models. To produce nurses prepared to practice in reformed health care environments, we can no longer educate our nursing students using the traditional educational practices that we have long embraced. There exists no substantive evidence to suggest that our traditional means of clinical education in nursing and other health professions are particularly effective in developing clinical reasoning, so it is an opportune time to closely examine our educational practices and create new learning paradigms that are grounded in evidence.

I believe we need to focus on four priority areas in order to achieve meaningful transformation in our nursing education models:

1. building faculty capacity;
2. designing new models of clinical education;
3. developing innovative models of academic/practice collaboration; and
4. advancing the science of nursing education through research.

Guidelines to Achieve Quality Teaching and Quality Learning

- Teaching is defined as an art of changing the brain, not in terms of controlling the brain but rather creating conditions that lead to change the learner's brain (Zull, 2002).
- Quality teaching leads to quality learning and therefore quality behavioural change.
- Therefore the decisive criterion for 'quality of teaching' is 'quality of learning' reflected in its tangible results, i.e. 'quality of behavioural change'.
- During the last century the focus was on knowledge but now the focus is on competencies. Therefore the role of the teacher is no longer just to transfer knowledge but to build the capacity of knowledge creation.
- Teachers are being asked to shift to quality teaching to provide 'deep learning' and quality education.
- Teachers need to focus more on students' 'active learning' and on their development of 'prob-

lem solving' skills.

- Teaching must be made 'learning-centred' where the focus is on learning and real needs of the students that are derived from the market and citizenship requirements.
- These real needs must be translated into: appropriate curricula; developmental experiences such as changes in technology and in the national and world economies that are creating increasing demands on employees to become knowledgeable workers, problem solvers and keeping pace with rapid market changes.
- Teaching through the use of student's experiences by applying experimental/practical methods and developing curricula based on local experiences and needs is vital.
- The teacher's role should be that of giving clear, simple and relevant clues to help to guide the student to discover the information required or generate the knowledge making teaching to be 'learner-centred' than 'teacher-centred'. The teachers' main task is to create conditions that will encourage and stimulate learning, thus helping students to develop their own initiatives and abilities to think critically.
- Quality and effective teaching will result from: setting a clear idea of the goal to be accomplished; adjusting to learners' needs and styles; using challenging experiences of the learners where the learners' abilities and energies are used to perform tasks; encouraging self direction and setting a climate of warmth and trust and prophecy, i.e. aiming at achieving success.
- Teaching/learning process involves assessment, which is expected to improve the whole process. In education, assessment is the process by which one attempts to measure the quality and quantity of learning and teaching using various assessment techniques such as: Assignments; Projects; Continuous Assessment; Final Examinations (objective tests, essay questions, structured questions, reviews, reports, viva- voce, open book); Standardized tests.

Way Forward to Quality Nursing Education

- The senior leaders should set directions and create student-focused, learning-oriented climate, clear and visible values and high expectations.
- The directions, values and expectations should balance the needs of the stakeholders.
- The Learning environment should be reinforced

through aligning with community.

- The improvement of teaching requires not only the synergy with other University strategic processes (research and outreach) but also the co-ordination with support processes (managerial, administrative, financial, etc.).
- Therefore better quality of teaching and learning could be achieved through the improvement of the following support activities:
 - Establishment and gradual implementation of standards of provision for the full range of non salary inputs to teaching and research;
 - Supplying libraries either multiple copies of basic text books, as well as supplementary books and periodicals is the highest priority closely followed by supplying laboratories and workshops with consumables and material needed for equipment maintenance and repair.
 - University teachers are privileged in that they plan the curriculum, propose the teaching methods and make choices of the optimum number of text books and other teaching materials. Thus they should advise the Authority accordingly as guided by the benchmarks set by the National Council.
 - Recruiting entry level teachers i.e. lecturer onwards as per INC norms.
 - Encouraging staff training and hiring visiting professors for fulfilling educational requirements.
 - There is need to carry out research that focuses on improving quality of nursing education for various nursing programmes.
 - Long-term efforts to upgrade the academic qualifications of the staff essential. Formal Postgraduate training in Masters and Doctoral Programmes is an essential part of this effort. But in addition, Post Doctorial Fellowships, faculty exchanges, collaborative research and other professional links with foreign or sister Universities that will help the academic staff be exposed to new developments in research and curriculum and even new methodologies in their field.
 - Sabbatical leaves and other professional leaves are encouraged for academic growth.
 - In-service or continued education be arranged for the staff through short courses, public lectures, seminars, newsletters and educational journals.

- University teachers should be able to carry out research and involve their students in the research such that by actively participating in the research process (as either participants or co-investigators); undergraduate students may come to have a better appreciation of a scholarly inquiry.

- Establishment of programmes - and in some cases, centres of excellence for postgraduate education and research to concentrate staff and resources into critical mass.

Summary

Nursing education must partner with the health care industry to develop innovative short- and long-term solutions that address the nursing shortage, including aggressive student recruitment and the initiation of an intense media/marketing campaign. The public image of the nursing role must be revitalised to change outdated perceptions. The need for more sophisticated nursing management and leadership to respond to the clinical, organisational, and fiscal challenges faced by the health care industry has not gone unrecognised. Nurse managers and executives require clinical experience and strong communication skills as well as business acumen and knowledge of financial and personnel management, organisational theory, and negotiation.

With the nursing labour budget constituting a significant proportion of total spending, and cost overruns, in acute care hospitals, long-term care facilities, and home care agencies, nursing management is too often found to be lacking in fundamental decision science and fiscal knowledge. A great need exists for educational support for experienced nurses to be developed into nurse executives, prepared to work competently alongside their business colleagues.

Nursing schools are called on to expand their core and continuing education programmes to address these needs. Rapidly evolving technology, increasing clinical complexity in many patient care settings, advances in treatment, and the emergence of new diseases are all factors contributing to the increased need for a strong emphasis on critical thinking and lifelong learning among professional nurses. Further, new clinical roles, the need for managerial and executive talent, the imperative to retain nurses in active practice over longer careers, and the desire by practicing nurses to move up the economic ladder lead to the demand for continuing education and career mobility and development.

Schools of nursing have many of the core resources

needed to deliver continuing professional education and can provide appropriate courses efficiently and effectively. Affiliation with schools by nurses in active practice may lead to an increase in enrolment for advanced degrees. Health care and health-related organisations may serve as institutional partners in sponsoring such programme offerings, which would contribute to their relevance, increased participation, and lower costs.

However, the challenges associated with advancing the research agenda in nursing are complex and varied. Schools / Colleges of nursing are not sufficiently focused on the scholarship and science of nursing as top priorities, and, although graduate degrees in nursing have become more common, doctorally prepared nursing professionals are not being produced in large enough numbers to meet the growing need. In addition, there is a need for enhanced mentorship for new researchers to strengthen skills and capacity to conduct meaningful nursing research.

Constraints in Improving Quality Education

- The tendency to address pre-defined challenges and to generalise them

- Fragmented interventions
- Impatience with comprehensive diagnostics that should precede and accompany quality improvement interventions

Conclusion

Beyond 2013 - Where do we go from here? Rethinking quality of education: how do the various aspects of quality relate to each other? Pedagogical methods, assessment of and for learning, 21st century skills, etc. At the dawn of the 21st century and the long-awaited new millennium, nurse educators face a rapidly changing health care landscape, shifting student and patient demographics, an explosion of technology, and the globalisation of health care, in addition to a myriad of everyday challenges. As we position ourselves to meet today's challenges and tomorrow's, we must understand the drivers affecting nursing. To quote Peter Drucker in *Managing for the Future*, "It is not necessary to be clairvoyant to know the future; it is only necessary to clearly interpret what has already happened and then project forward the likely consequences of those happenings" (Truman Talley Books, 1992).



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