

Cultural Change And Nursing Education

ANTHROPOLOGISTS and sociologists have offered many and varied definitions of the concept of culture, and the concepts of cultural order, cultural process and cultural goals all very profound and very technical. Anthropologist Franz Boas says : "Culture embraces the total environment that man has in anyway affected. What he has fashioned with his hands, what he learns from others to do so that he may be accepted by them. what he and they have organized in the form of institutions so that they may live together. What he creates and celebrates to honour himself, his fellows and his world—all these and much more falls within the meaning of this concept."

Edward B. Tylor defines culture thus : "Culture or civilization is that complete whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of society.

Education and Culture

Education derives its meaning and energy from the surrounding environment of things and of man. Every society starting from the primitive to the modern world has created some kind of education programme and has determined the condition under which it is allowed to function.

To be sure, large groups of population are even today deprived of formal schooling. However, that is not to say that their population are being deprived of education. They still receive prolonged acquaintance with the practices in the skill, habits, beliefs, traditions, and values of the respective groups into which they are born and which established the rules and routine that they must learn to obey and utilize.

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Every educational endeavour has always been and continues to be the servant, the agent and the product of its natural and human environment. The inferences, therefore, are (a) Education is determined by the tribe, the community or the state and its central function is, therefore, to teach the young how to conform with and adjust to the tribe, the community or the state ; (b) Education often plays a creative role in modifying and even reconstructing the environment from which it is derived. Education today has to re-

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examine its whole conventional structure and to reconsider new ways of (1) ordering its subject matter (in educational terms consider the content of curriculum) (2) Engaging in the process by which they are taught and learned. (3) Formulating the purposes of school society (the philosophy of education).

The continuing increase in our population, the exodus of the people from rural to urban areas and the growth of medical education give stress on community nursing and indicate the need for a drastic change in the approach of teaching of public health nursing in schools.

All teaching and learning requires that the young students be sensitized, first of all in the life of human beings around them. Instead of beginning with lectures, reading assignments and similar conventional tasks, they should set out to look, listen, examine and experience, returning to the class room mainly for sharing impressions, asking and being asked questions, receiving stimulation and guidance from those in charge. As they become more alert, books and lectures should gradually be utilized as resource through which to clarify and deepen understanding of what they have observed.

Secondly we will have to include extensive pre-service supervised practice of public health nursing in rural areas in our curriculum. On graduation, higher than average salaries should be paid to nurses who are recruited to work in rural areas. Houses will have to be built for them and their families and husband and wife teams should be encouraged to work in rural areas.

Problem-solving method

In our content and methods of teaching in schools of nursing we can no longer afford to be subject matter-oriented or procedure-oriented. What we teach today may be obsolete even before the student passes out of the nursing school. And when she goes out into the work situation she may never be called upon to do some of the procedures taught to her. What we have to develop is the scientific process of thinking in our students—make them think in terms of why and what form of every action they take in providing care to the patient. This thought process is what is going to help her to adjust to the fast changing situation. We have to give the students thorough grinding in the use of problem solving method because this is what they will be faced with in the work situation.

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Need For Change

Some of the needs that stand out for nursing education in terms of cultural change are :

(i) In nursing education there is need to develop potentialities in learners for creative expression. There are limited opportunities for nurses to learn the arts. Students must be given more time, more simple materials and more guidance from teachers in music, graphic arts and dramatic arts. This could be integrated into any of the subjects such as preparation of Audiovisual aids for health, dramatizing health education in school health programmes, giving them an opportunity to organise the annual drama and entertainment as a co-curricular activity.

(ii) There is need to give students wider opportunity to participate in planning and carrying out learning experience. Behavioural scientists say that where the person is involved in an activity and in the process of making decisions, they tend to adhere to the decisions they make. We need the kind of learning that excites students interest and support rather than the kind that turns them against education.

(iii) There is need to deal more extensively with controversial issues in class-room. The objective is to teach them to view the controversy objectively—the pros and cons of the subject, and then come to their own conclusions.

(iv) There is need to construct more and better library facilities.

(v) There is need for organised in-service education in nursing to help nurses bring their knowledge up-to-date. It is necessary to impress upon the nurses that learning is a continuous process and that they cannot afford to stop reading and studying once they have received their diplomas or degree in hand.

(vi) There is need to intensify the knowledge and use of community resources by the nurses, on behalf of their patients.

(vii) We need to come up with better ways of evaluating the process and product of learning.

(viii) There is need to maintain cumulative records which should accompany students through all stages of advancement. It should not contain just grades and health record but evidence of personality development, strength and weaknesses in skills and other accomplishments and general information from teachers and counsellors.

In nursing education our schools of nursing seem to be simply "drifting along" not realizing that the younger generation is undergoing severe, often hidden, strains and stresses as it endeavour to readjust to a culture influx. Counselling and guidance programmes in every school of Nursing is a must and it must be the responsibility of a person qualified in this area.

B. G. Dawson—(Contd. from page 187)

Nursing personnel also usually constitute the largest proportion of the hospital staff, so it is always the nurse who fills the gap, she feels her responsibility for the welfare of the patients.

The answer could be centralised services with messenger system throughout the hospital, e.g. laundry, diets, drugs, stores, and central sterile service.

(D) NEED FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR NURSING PERSONNEL

In service education for the nursing staff is developed usually around four areas of personnel needs. These are :

(i) their needs for an introduction to their jobs (orientation); (ii) for training in both the manual and behavioral skills associated with their jobs (skill training e.g., any new machines, etc.); (iii) for development of leadership and management abilities; (iv) for continuing investigation of the real potentialities of their jobs. I would like to suggest for the future that a new position be created of "In-service Coordinator" in hospitals as is the case in many other countries, instead of expecting nursing administrators to plan this service.

Also, at State level, provision should be made for money and special leave for nursing personnel to attend refresher courses, workshops and conferences.

(E) THE PLACE OF THE NURSE IN THE PLANNING OF NURSING SERVICES

I close by suggesting a patient-centered approach to nursing for tomorrow. Progressive nursing care is one approach that offers much promise and its central theme is the organisation of facilities, services, and staff around the medical and nursing needs of patients.

The progressive patient care concept is applicable to any organised means of providing health care as long as the focus is on the needs of the individual patient.

The general hospital of the future may become a Community Health Centre. This may involve not only internal organisation of hospital patient care services but also evaluation and coordination of the complex of community health services of which the hospital is an important part.

As I have said earlier, there are five elements which comprise the progressive patient care concept : **intensive care, intermediate care, self care, long-term care and home-care.**