

Planning of Nursing Studies

Report of the International Conference
held at Sevres, France, in November 1956

By

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The workshop conference of the International Council of Nurses on planning of Nursing Research studies, organised by the Florence Nightingale International Foundation was held at Centre International d'Etudes Pedagogiques, Sevres, France, from 12th–24th of November, 1956. The countries represented were :—

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, U.S.A.

Conference Staff

Miss Margaret G. Arnstein, Conference Leader, Chief, Division of Nursing Resources, Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Professor Fraser Brockington, School of Preventive Medicine, Manchester University, England.

Professor Bernard G. Greenberg, Department of Biostatistics, School of Public Health, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, U.S.A.

Mme. Ariane Levy-Schoen, Attachee au Laboratoire de Psychologie Sociale, Sorbonne, Paris, France.

Staff Assistants

The following assisted the Staff :—

Miss Frances Beck, Assistant Director, F.N.I.F., London, England.

Miss Lyle Creelman, Chief, Nursing Section, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland.

Miss Fernanda Alves Diniz, Regional Nursing Officer, World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe, Geneva, Switzerland.

Miss Virginia Arnold, Nurse Consultant, Rockefeller Foundation—present for the first three days.

Mrs. McManus, Director of Nursing Education, Teacher's College, Columbia University—present for the first three days.

Miss Bridges, Secretary, International Council of Nurses—present for the last two days.

In-charge of Arrangements

Miss Ellen Broe, Director, Florence Nightingale International Foundation, (F.N.I.F.) London, England.

The tail end of a beautiful autumn welcomed us to historical France, adding another fifty, representing twenty three nations; to the streaming flow of tourists.

On Sunday, November 11th, we arrived at the conference centre at Sevres. Sevres, a small and beautiful town, is about 12 miles from the heart of Paris. Centre International d'Etudes Pedagogiques, an educational centre where an experimental school is going on, is used very frequently for all kinds of International Educational conferences. The lodging and boarding, and other conference facilities in the building are very good.

At a 'get to know' party in the evening before the first dinner, the fifty of us from the twenty-three nations became a single large family. An amazing friendship and oneness took over from the very onset, setting a stage conducive for every one to give and take the best of everything at such a conference. This resulted in a 'noisy gang' at fun and work, thinking and meditating loudly throughout the Conference—so stated, very appropriately by Miss Arnstein, the Conference Leader.

On Monday the 12th at 9-30 a.m. Miss Yvonne Hentsch, Director, Nursing Bureau, League of Red Cross Societies, Geneva, took the chair for the opening session. She welcomed and introduced the members. Mlle A. Clamageran,

President of the French Nurses' Association, gave the welcome address. Mme. Hatinguais, Inspectress General of the Centre International de'Etudes Pedagogiques, expressed her happiness in making it possible for us to meet at this great educational centre and said that she considered it a great privilege to meet nursing leaders from so many countries. Mrs. Hatinguais did many things to make our conference a happy and worthwhile one.

Mrs. McManus, explained how this conference came into being and what development is hoped from such a conference. Mrs. McManus said that she had been working on this for the last few years, looking for the money, the time, the place and the staff. She had to make several trips to International Council of Nurses' House in London, to deal with matters concerning this conference. She said that finally she could not resist the temptation of making another trip to attend the conference and to know that her dreams are fulfilled at last. She expressed her thanks to Rockefeller Foundation and the anonymous donor for giving the necessary financial aid for the Conference. She also extended her thanks to the International Council of Nurses, and Florence Nightingale International Foundation staff, the Conference staff, and the participants. The aim of the Conference is to awaken the leaders of the nursing profession throughout the world to studies and research work in the various fields of nursing, to help to educate nurses to become more critical of the literature they use, to be critical of their work and problems and to use sound and scientific methods in solving the related problems. Mrs. McManus had to leave us after three days as she had to get back to Columbia; we were very sorry to see her go.

Outline of the Conference Programme

A staff leader started the first morning by presenting an aspect of Research, which was followed by a panel consisting of the staff leaders and open discussion by all the members. The afternoon sessions were in four groups with a staff leader and an assistant staff for each

group doing demonstrations of a special project, often as a continuation of the morning work or something related to it.

The subject matter that was covered in the lecture—discussion sessions are as follows :

1. Miss Arnstein—"Philosophy, aims and objectives, problems and implications, limitations and scope, and interpretation and use of research studies."
2. Mme. Hatinguais—"Research in the Social Science Field". She pointed out the growing need of research in this field and the particular problems of research work in the social science field. She emphasized that every institution must have at least a small research faculty.
3. Professor Greenberg—"Introduction to Research". He stated that Research can be done only by those who have a *burning yearning for learning*, for it involves long periods of persistent hard work, and a lot of money.
4. Mme Levy-Schoen—"Methods of obtaining data from existing records, questionnaires, interviews or observations."
5. Professor Brockington—"The Survey method of research."
6. Professor Greenberg—"The place of Sampling in Research Design".
7. Mme Levy-Schoen—"Experimental type Research".
8. Professor Greenberg—"Descriptive Statistics".
9. Professor Brockington—"Preparation of a research proposal". Preparation of the final report of a research project.
10. Professor Brockington—"Time Studies of Nursing Activities".

The Group Work

1. Demonstration of errors of observation.

Purpose of the demonstration was to illustrate the importance of controlling all possible variables to get the most accurate result from the observation.

Problem chosen was to find out the average body temperature of our group.

Procedure. Each one of us was given a Fahrenheit mouth thermometer and asked to take our temperature keeping the thermometer in the mouth for one minute. We were instructed to hand over the thermometer to the next person for reading and recording.

N.B. : We were not to see our own temperatures.

On finishing these two steps we were asked to repeat the same. This time the reading and recording was to be done by another person.

The two recorded temperatures of each person were tabulated on a blackboard. The two readings showed marked differences in most of the persons. The readings of all the persons ranged from 96°F to 101°F.

Note. We knew of no one unwell in the group at that time. (We felt rather small when we saw such a great discrepancy in the temperatures taken by experienced graduate nurses. Of course we were soon assured by the leader that this is his usual experience with doctors and other professional groups).

In discussing the reasons for the variations we realized that it was necessary to control the many variables such as :—

1. The position of the thermometer in the mouth.
2. The level and the slant at which the thermometers are read.
3. The defect in the vision of the observers.
4. Accuracy of the thermometers.
5. Proper shaking down of the thermometers.
6. Accuracy in recording.

We did not proceed with demonstration as it had served the purpose.

2. Demonstration of errors of perception and demonstration of observer error :

Purpose of the demonstration was to illustrate the importance of proper preparation of the observers.

Procedure. A movie showing the effect on children of hospitalization and separation from parents, was shown.

We were to record the observations we made on the behavior of the child when the child was alone and when the child was with the mother. A number of us read our recordings for the group and we made the following general remarks about the recordings.

1. Some of the recordings were mostly interpretations of behavior, *e.g.* (a) Child was sad. (b) The child gave attention to Teddy bear as the child itself was emotionally satisfied when the mother was there.
2. Some had many more items than others.
3. A few recorded just the behaviors as they observed.
4. Different people paid significance to different behaviors.

By this, we realized that the observers must be instructed clearly and specifically what exactly they should observe and record, to be objective and to avoid interpretation at the initial stage and to consider whether previous experience of the observers will be of advantage or disadvantage for the study.

3. Reviewing, criticising and revising questionnaires used before.

This was done in our small groups.

Purpose of this project was to give us some insight in to the art of asking questions.

Procedure. A questionnaire, that was used 10 years ago by a director of post-graduate nursing education to obtain information regarding the public health experience of student nurses, was studied and analyzed by the groups who arrived at the following conclusions:

1. The kind of information needed was not clearly specified.
2. Many questions were very ambiguous.
3. There were evidences of personal attack on the public health supervisor.

We spent only one afternoon on each of the above three projects, but 3 afternoons on the next one.

4. Criticising a patient care study that is being done at present.

Purpose was to introduce us to a research design.

The Problem : Patients and staff of "X" hospital in America complain that they do not have enough nurses.

Note : This hospital is an average hospital and has more nurses than most of the average hospitals. The Nursing Administrators find no obvious reasons for the complaint. The study is being done on request of the Director of Nursing Service.

When the problem was presented to our group we asked for further data such as the various education programmes, the qualification and experience of the nurses, the kind of work they are expected to do, and the standard of nursing care in this hospital when compared to other hospitals. But we were simply told that we have to go ahead with the data that was given.

Procedure : In our discussion we decided that it is necessary :—

1. To find out the basis and the kind of complaints and that these can be found out by a questionnaire. It was also decided that we must run a trial open-end questionnaire on fifty patients and staff so that we may use the information thus obtained to decide on the number and kind of questions to be formulated for the real study. To our surprise we were told that the same steps were taken by the people who are doing the actual study and we were given the actual responses from the patients to work on.

2. We wrote the complaints one by one on small cards and shuffled them to categorize the complaints.

3. We tallied the complaints to get a quantitative measure of the complaints.

4. Next step was to formulate the actual questions, which we did not do ; but we were given the questionnaire that was actually used for the study and the quantitative measure of the complaints.

We were told that many complaints revealing administrative faults such as lack of physical facilities and equipment

have already been corrected by the administration because the Director of Nursing Service was able to convince the hospital administration better with the study report.

At this moment we showed anxiety in relation to the use of the quantitative measures derived, for getting the answer to the question of nursing staff inadequacy. We did not work any further on this project.

It was decided that we would spend some time with some of the problems the participants presented.

5. Working on participants' problems.

We worked on our own problems for one whole day and the next morning each group presented the work reported to the whole group which was followed by open discussion.

Examples of problems presented by the participants.

1. What are the factors that influence candidates to enter in the nursing profession ?

2. What are the factors that influence graduate nurses to remain in the profession for a considerable period of time.

3. What is the proper proportion of auxiliary nursing staff to professional nursing staff in the hospital nursing service ?

4. What is the value of a University degree in nursing ?

5. Do patients prefer case assignment or functional assignment ?

6. How do we improve care of patients through a closer relationship between the community and the hospital ?

7. What should be the relationship between the hospital group and public health nursing ?

The participants found the group extremely interesting and valuable. We were only sorry that we could not have more of them. The leaders were willing to make the necessary changes in the programme to meet the needs of the participants.

By the end of Conference, we unanimously felt that the essential step that we

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