Qualitative multi-method study to explore the relevance of Benner’s ‘novice to expert’ nursing theory in contemporary post-registration wound care higher education

Munro, Jane

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A qualitative multi-method study to explore the relevance of Benner’s ‘novice to expert’ nursing theory in contemporary post-registration wound care higher education. Jane Munro. EdD Candidate.

Current cost of NHS wound management (£5.3 billion p.a.)
unwarranted patient wound care inequality

Benner’s 1984 ‘novice to expert’ general nursing theory and its set learning and teaching strategies at each of its five stages portrays an uninterrupted and time limited path of knowledge and competence acquisition. It has been the preferred choice to inform wound care curriculum design. Yet, significant debate now exists over optimal curriculum design to realise expertise. Standardisation is favoured, incorporating ever more diverse complex topics to accommodate ever increasing multidisciplinary involvement in wound care e.g. podiatrists & physiotherapists.

However, literature clearly shows extensive UK variation in extent of education, knowledge, experience, competency, job description and grade, suggesting Benner’s linear progression is not relevant. Wound care practitioners are thus left professionally compromised. Revising the theory to account for developments in 1) policy, (ii) clinical practice and (iii) student participation in curriculum design found in the literature will more accurately represent wound care provision to inform educators and definitively represent student experience. Generating a more informed approach to curriculum delivery will ultimately improve patient care and drive down costs.

Phase 1 CDA (Greckhamer[8] & Fairclough[9])

- Monitor and adjust processes as they solve problems
- Don’t seek too much guidance as the subject/situation permits
- Be willing to take risks and search for more alternatives
- Defar judgment, overcome negative self-talk, build on other ideas

Benner’s theory will now be developed at University of the West of Scotland to reflect thesis findings. Curriculum design will also be improved using B-Eb package to develop to the best ‘answer’ and one subject to constraints, to assist professional accountability.

Reference:
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