

The Neomodernism Approach: Professional Development of Baccalaureate Level Nurses

Nursing Science Quarterly
2014, Vol 27(1) 86–87
© The Author(s) 2013
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/0894318413510635
nsq.sagepub.com



Jade Burns, RN; MSN¹

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the interview report by Lee and Fawcett –“Influence of the Metaparadigm of Nursing on Professional Identity Development among RN-BSN Students” in the January 2013 edition of *Nursing Science Quarterly*. I believe that introducing the concept of a metaparadigm early on at the baccalaureate level of nursing is critical. As PhD students we are expected to be stewards of the discipline. We advance practice and the discipline by translating knowledge to improve the health of individuals, families, and the community. By designing research through such modes as observation we conduct and disseminate research through concepts, models, and theories and use these as building blocks to strengthen the science of nursing. Registered nurses and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) may be viewed as the users of this knowledge production. Yet, this top down approach where knowledge is produced by such a small minority of doctorally-prepared nurses and handed down to nurses at both the practicing and APRN levels is not sufficient (Reed, 2006). We must bridge this gap.

So where do we start? Fawcett and Lee (2012) proposed that teaching about the concepts of the metaparadigm would, “influence nurses’ understanding of what nursing is.” However, the theoretical issue presented here is the philosophical underpinnings that separate practice from nursing theory. While nurse scientists are in general agreement about the metaparadigm, they often are in disagreement about the dominant paradigms of the discipline (Monti & Tingen, 1999). An example of this is when we look at the unitary paradigm and paradigmatic plurality. This becomes an issue when teaching students at any level. Weaver and Olson (2006) stated that those who embrace the unitary paradigm approach or a single paradigm have chosen this because of the ontological and epistemological differences among the paradigms. Failure to agree often results in scientists describing different concepts (Monti & Tingen, 1999). Yet choosing the paradigmatic plurality approach or multiple paradigms is what makes nursing unique and meets the nursing demands of knowledge for practice (Weaver & Olson, 2006). In order to develop curriculum for students at the baccalaureate level, we must revisit how we can resolve the incongruence between the metaparadigm and paradigm concepts taught in nursing (Monti & Tingen, 1999). Moreover, what is the best way to prepare nursing students

in the educational environment? The goal here is to help advance the BSN student to not only think critically but to be a co-creator of knowledge, a scholar, and most importantly an intellectual professional.

Since paradigms provide the foundation for theory development and theory provides knowledge for translation, one solution may not just be to incorporate teachings about the concept of a metaparadigm, but also teaching from a neomodernism approach to generate new approaches to knowledge production. Neomodernism captures historical elements from both positivism and the postmodernism for nursing (Whall, Sinclair & Parhoo, 2006). Within neomodern thought the practitioner is not merely the knowledge consumer or user but is a knowledge producer (Reed, 2006). This perspective proposes an alternative way to learn in nursing. Scientific theory is not the only form of foundation for learning; metanarratives and other various forms of knowing are incorporated in this approach (aesthetic, empirical, and personal ways of knowing) along with diverse human experiences (Reed, 2006; Whall & Hicks, 2002).

In closing, in reading this article I was able to examine myself as a nurse and future nurse scientist and what my contribution to nursing will be. I agree with the authors, “in order to continuously develop as a profession you must have the capacity to embrace change and learn and grow from it” (Lee & Fawcett, 2012). I am curious to know what the authors think about this debate regarding the best paradigm for nursing science. Furthermore, if the use of the neomodernist approach can help champion and possibly serve as catalyst to explicate our philosophical foundations for educating nurses at the entry level (Reed, 2009)? If so, what would be the next steps to incorporate this approach? We are all eager for change. The interview stimulating this letter certainly illuminates nursing as a profession, its future, and its capacity to grow.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

¹University of Michigan School of Nursing, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

References

- Monti, E., & Tingen, M.S. (1999). Multiple paradigms of nursing science. *Advance in Nursing Science, 21*(4), 64-80
- Reed, P. (2009). Commentary on Neomodernism and evidence-based nursing: Implications for the production of nursing knowledge. *Nursing Outlook, 54*(1), 36-8
- Walker, L.O., & Avant, K. C. (2011). *Strategies for Theory Construction in Nursing*. (5th Ed.). Pearson/Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ
- Weaver, K., & Olson, J. K. (2006). Understanding paradigms used for nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 53*(4), 459-469
- Whall, A.L., & Hicks, F. (2002). The unrecognized paradigm shift in nursing: Implications, problems, and possibilities. *Nursing Outlook, 50*, 72-76/
- Whall, A.L., Sinclair, M., & Parahoo, K. (2006). A philosophical analysis of evidence- based nursing. *Nursing Outlook, 54*(1), 30-353