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A SURVEY STUDY TO ASCERTAIN THE CURRICULUM
STRUCTURE UTILIZED FOR THE NON-DEGREE
GRADUATE NURSE IN THE BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM.

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln,
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A SURVEY STUDY
TO ASCERTAIN THE CURRICULUM STRUCTURE UTILIZED
FOR THE NON-DEGREE GRADUATE NURSE IN
THE BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM.

by

Betty Murdock

A DISSERTATION
Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Area of Adult Education

Under the Supervision of Professor Wesley C. Meierhenry

Lincoln, Nebraska

August 1973

TITLE

A Survey Study to Ascertain the Curriculum Structure Utilized
for the Non-Degree Graduate Nurse
in the Baccalaureate Program

BY

Betty J. Murdock

APPROVED

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Chapter I

OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The technological and sociological changes of our day has necessitated this study of curriculum development for the adult learner in the field of nursing education.

In the field of adult education a body of specialized knowledge and techniques have emerged. Thorndike in a landmark study of 1928 published a report of research which disclosed that the ability of adults to learn declined very little with age.¹ Dewey emphasized the importance of adult learning as a continuing life-long process.² More recently, Neugarten correlated personality changes of the adult with the physiological changes which occur in the normal aging process and the sociological re-orientation induced by the prevalent culture pattern.³ Each contributed to the growing body of literature establishing specific characteristics of the adult learner.⁴

¹Edward Thorndike, Adult Learning (New York: MacMillan, 1928), p. 31.

²John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: MacMillan, 1920), p. 65.

³Bernice L. Neugarten and Associates, Personality in Middle and Late Life (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1964) pp. 44-113.

⁴Harry L. Miller, Teaching and Learning in Adult Education (Toronto: The MacMillan Co., 1964), pp. 1-51.

Establishment of theory for the field of adult education has been a slow process. Similar problems have been encountered within other disciplines in attempts to study individual characteristics which must be quantified in terms of the observed and verbal statements of the experimental subjects. The difficulties have not removed the usefulness of the various findings nor the necessity for continued studies in anticipation of the establishment of additional theory supported by empirical findings.

For the field of adult education, Knowles indicates that a distinctive theory of adult instruction has developed called "andragogy". Andragogy is "premised on at least four crucial assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that are different from the assumptions about the child learners on which traditional pedagogy is premised."¹ The establishment of these concepts about the adult learner within a context which suggest guidelines for implementation of curriculum based upon these adult characteristics provide a defined body of knowledge at a time it is needed by the teacher of adults. This body of material is not applied universally to the adult seeking additional learning experiences.

Thirty years ago, only one out of every eight Americans at work had been to high school. Today four out of every five of the young people of high school age attend high school.² In the

¹Malcom S. Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education (New York: Association Press, 1970), pp. 39-55.

²A. Etzioni and E. Etzioni, Social Change (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1964), p. 237.

3

United States, for those Americans who dropped out of high school before graduation, for those who were unable to utilize the background which the period in high school provided toward job skill acquisition, and for those who have found it necessary to upgrade job skills, continuation in areas of education as adults has become a necessity. Etzioni indicates that

In the American work force of thirty years ago, there were at most three college graduates for every hundred men and women at work. There are eighteen today.... On top of all this, adult education is booming.... Adult education during the last fifteen years has been growing faster in this country than college enrollment. And now, increasingly, it means advanced education for the already highly educated.... Some fifty universities - in addition to a dozen large companies and professional management associations - offer advanced management courses to successful men in the middle and upper ranks of business who usually already have college if not advanced degrees.¹

A vast number of adults who have found additional education necessary have interacted with a large number of educators in regard to their education problems. The learner often has not been ready to accept the change in his mode of thinking necessitated by additional education. The educator has not been ready to accept the change in his approach to teaching that work with adult learners necessitates.

The dilemma of adult education is precisely that when people think of education, their images are taken from their own memories and from the urgent need to induce the young to take on the responsibilities and burdens of adulthood and the behavior appropriate to that status. To the extent that the adult educator, at whatever level he operates and whatever his purposes, sees clearly the special problems of teaching the already adult as special, the more effective he is likely to be. The cynicism about teaching adults one finds among some university people, as well as the indignant, sentimental

¹Etzioni, p. 237.

defensiveness once common in adult education itself, equally miss the educational point. There are considerable and valid differences between the enterprise devoted to the large and necessary task of socializing the young and that which pays attention to the learning needs of the world of adults; differences in the appropriateness of methods....¹

One of the hazards of education for the adult learner has been the educator who has memories of certain hurdles he had to jump in order to complete a particular course. Having had to overcome these hurdles in order to attain his present situation, the teacher sees them as necessary hurdles for the present learner to jump.² When assessed in light of needs, motivations, or goals of the adult learner, these hurdles may have little or no educational merit. It has become increasingly clear that as Stern and Missal state:

the adult student body is made up of several widely differing publics, many of which bear little resemblance to the typical day session undergraduate. Among them there is almost always a small group of mature people with trained minds and a breadth of specialized experience. Their motivation and eagerness for learning leads them to search for college or university-level adult programs. For such constituencies, the basic curriculum, originally planned for the young undergraduate fresh from high school, will not suffice. Even modification in content and method are not enough unless the latter are associated with a genuine effort to re-examine the aims and purposes of such disciplines and to expand and enrich the curriculum in conformity with adult needs.³

Among these millions of adults in search of additional learning experiences are many of the 559,000 non-degree graduate nurses of the

¹Henry I. Miller, Teaching and Learning in Adult Education (Toronto, Canada: The MacMillan Company, 1964), p.2.

²Theodore Caplow, The Academic Marketplace (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1958), p. 12.

³Bernard H. Stern and Ellsworth Missal, Adult Experience and College Degrees (Cleveland, Ohio: The Press of Western Reserve University, 1960) p. 11.

659,000 registered nurses¹ involved in the health care of the citizens⁵ of this nation. The multiple technological and sociological changes which have affected society at large and the health care field in specific have been instrumental in the creation of educational needs for this group of adult learners.

The 559,000 non-degree graduates were introduced to nursing through the diploma programs. These programs were primarily apprenticeship programs in which the methods expected to produce learning were observation, trial-and-error learning, and an exchange of experiences.²

In 1946, E. Brown suggested special programs should be structured for the non-degree graduate nurse to afford the student the opportunity to up-date his knowledge.³ There is evidence more non-degree graduates were granted admission to a larger number of the programs which had been developed for the education of the baccalaureate nursing student. In 1970, E. Brown reviewed the study of 1946 and suggested again that plans should be instituted for updating of educational experiences for the non-degree group of learners. It was suggested that particular attention should be directed toward planning programs around the experiential material the learner should be able to provide.⁴ Brown's repeating of the suggestion made in 1946

¹American Nurses Association (ed.), Facts About Nursing (New York: American Nurses Association, 1969), p. 10.

²Esther Lucile Brown, Nursing for the Future (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1948), p. 48.

³Esther L. Brown, p. 144.

⁴Esther L. Brown, Nursing Reconsidered (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1970, pp. 108 - 120.

in the recommendations of 1970 that programs be developed which were cognizant of the specific characteristics of the adult learner implies that little change in the educational pattern for providing additional educational experiences for the non-degree graduate nurse had occurred in the intervening twenty-five years. Perhaps as a result of Brown's earlier suggestion a challenge examination is known to have been utilized for placement of the non-degree graduate nurse within some on-going programs of nursing.¹

The sociological study of the nursing profession undertaken by the Center for Social Organization Studies, University of Chicago, found the usual approach for providing additional educational experiences for the non-degree graduate nurse has been through the coaching of the chief physician or his assistants in a hospital setting and through the non-degree graduate's own innovative efforts.² This study was supportive of Brown's recommendation that nurse educators should assume responsibility for the development of programs for the updating of educational experience for the non-degree graduate nurse.³

The summary of the small group discussions occurring at the 1971 convention for the National League of Nursing as reported in the American Journal of Nursing⁴ and literature precipitated by the

¹Marlene Kranter, "Credit for Competency," American Journal of Nursing, LXX (April, 1970), 793-798.

²Fred Davis (ed.), The Nursing Profession (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966), p. 149.

³Davis, p. 105.

⁴American Journal of Nursing, "NSNA and NLN Convene in Dallas," American Journal of Nursing, LXXI (June, 1971), 1176.

discussions (i.e., Montag and Ingles, "Debate: The Ladder' Concept of Nursing Education"¹) indicated those involved in nursing education are taking initial steps for the implementation of Brown's recommendation related to the up-dating of the educational experiences for the non-degree graduate nurse.

Toffler indicates the technological and sociological changes which have precipitated the increased need for additional learning experiences will continue at an increasing pace. For survival, those responsible for patterns of education in the field of health care will be forced to continue to update the educational process.² Brown and Davis found the formal structure for up-dating educational experiences for the non-degree graduate nurse has been in the educational structure provided for the baccalaureate student.³ Miller, Stern, and Neugarten have indicated there are characteristics of the adult learner which differ from those of the non-adult learner.⁴ Knowles has indicated these characteristics should be recognized in determining the methodology to be utilized in helping the adult learn.

¹Mildred Montag and Thelma Ingles, "Debate: The Ladder' Concept of Nursing Education," Nursing Outlook, XIX (November, 1971), p. 726.

²Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 180.

³Davis, pp. 151-175.

⁴Miller, p. 2; Stern, p.11; Neugarten, pp. 44-113.

In view of 1. the continuing impact of technological and sociological change upon the health-care field,¹ 2. the large number of non-degree graduates involved with providing health care in need of additional learning experiences,² 3. the established concepts about the characteristics of the adult learner, and their implication for helping the adult learn,³ 4. the provision of a body of knowledge and instructional techniques of value for helping the adult learn,⁴ and 5. Brown's recommendations that nurse educators should assume responsibility for the development of programs for the updating of educational experience for the non-degree graduate nurse,⁵ the current study was undertaken to determine if curriculum for the non-degree graduate nurse is being implemented utilizing the guidelines suggested by the established concepts about the characteristics of the adult learner..

¹Toffler, p. 180..

²American Nurses Association, p. 10.

³Neugarten, pp. 44-113

⁴Knowles, pp. 39-55.

⁵E. Brown, p. 48.

THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study is to ascertain the extent to which generally-held concepts about the adult learner are utilized in curriculum planning for the non-degree graduate nurse within certain current academic settings.

Delineation of Area for Study

A study of the extent to which the generally-held concepts about the adult learner are used to develop the curriculum for non-degree nurses requiring the assessment of the following:

- 1.) the orientation of the faculty member to nursing;
- 2.) the orientation of the faculty member to concepts of adult education;
- 3.) the ability of the faculty member to define the manner in which the adult learner differs from the non-adult learner;
- 4.) the perception of the faculty member of the role and value of acquired experiences of the learner; and
- 5.) the understanding of the faculty member of specific differences of the adult learner from the non-adult learner in the consideration of development of a curriculum for the non-degree graduate.

Definition of Terms

Adult learner - learner because of adulthood, maturity,
defined the participation therein.¹

Non-degree graduate nurse - a person who has completed an
acceptable program of nursing, who is thus
eligible for the Board examination for nurse
practice licensure, but who is not eligible for a
baccalaureate degree until additional work is taken in
an accredited baccalaureate nursing program.

Generic student - the student in a collegiate nursing
program. This student has had a minimal interval of
time between high school and college. The individual
has not completed a program in nursing previous to
admission.

Andragogy - the art and science of helping adults learn.²

¹Eduard C. Lindeman, The Meaning of Adult Education
(Montreal: Harvest House, 1961), p. 5.

²Malcom S. Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education
(New York: Association Press, 1970), p. 38.

Issues

The review of literature indicates that the problem to be studied has evolved from issues related to the historical development of nursing and nursing curricula, specific characteristics of the adult learner, the existence of methodology and techniques for helping the adult learn, the changing role of authority in the social structure, the present structures utilized for the educational preparation of the adult learner, and the impact of technological and sociological change upon present day institutions. To an extent that varies for each individual, the issues presented by the literature affect decisions made about curriculum development by a faculty member serving as a member of a curriculum committee.

History and Curriculum Development

In the United States, the first program of nursing officially opened in 1872 at the New England Hospital for Women and Children. The "Standard Curriculum for Nursing Schools" was published in 1917 and revised in 1927. The standards were concerned with the hours of instruction, specific course content, and bed capacity for patients in the clinical area of the hospital utilized for clinical experience. Development of nursing competency was related to the availability of clinical experience after the pattern established by the American Medical Association criteria for the

training of the medical students.¹ It is not uncommon to hear the same standard referred to in 1972 as a basis for a decision for determining the number of students who can be admitted for a particular nursing program.

A "Curriculum Guide for Schools of Nursing" published in 1937 replaced the earlier suggested curriculum pattern. Of the 1937 "Curriculum Guide" Amy Francis Brown has said, "it probably represented the best thinking concerning nursing of the time. One of the more serious lacks of the study which was to have such wide influence was the absence of a clearly stated philosophy."² Brown suggested in 1960 that an updated guide needed to be published.³ A new guide has not been produced. The guideline of 1937 apparently remain in use in 1972. Brown further indicated that only a small portion of faculty members who worked with curriculum planning as late as 1960 were equipped to use a sound methodology.⁴

General education, defined as "that part of a student's total education that prepares him to live rather than just to make a living"⁵ was not present in the earlier period of nursing development.

¹National League of Nursing Education, A Curriculum For Schools of Nursing. A Report prepared by the Committee on Education of the National League of Nursing Education. (New York: National League of Nursing Education, 1932), p. 21.

²Amy Francis Brown, Curriculum Development (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1960), p. 6.

³Amy Francis Brown, p. 38.

⁴Amy Francis Brown, p. 37.

⁵W. Paul Stickler and others, General Education: A University Program in Action (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, 1950), p. 8.

Utilization of general education in curriculum development was further impeded by the restrictive laws or regulations in many states of the United States. These laws impose difficulties in licensing the nurse who has not had a designated number of days of experience in performing certain tasks.

Esther Lucile Brown indicated in "Nursing for the Future" published in 1946 that the system of the preparation of nurses to care for the sick was primarily that of apprenticeship preparation.¹ Knowles writing in the 1960 "Handbook for Adult Education" indicated that apprenticeship training as a method expected to bring about learning can be assumed to have consisted of observations, trial and error learning, and exchange of experience.² Assessing the pattern for education in the nursing programs in the United States, Davis indicates in writings of 1966 that "despite a long-term decrease in diploma-granting hospital schools of nursing (there were 874 in 1962) they still out-number collegiate schools by almost five to one."³ Based on Brown's and Davis' findings, the method expected to bring about learning can be assumed to be that of apprenticeship.

Gwynn found in studies of teacher education

the kind of preparation received by the teacher-candidate or the teacher in service practically predetermines whether the teacher will take an active and intelligent part in curriculum improvement; though this is a broad statement, evidence from the studies... tends to confirm it.⁴

¹ Esther Lucile Brown, p. 48.

² Malcom S. Knowles (ed.), Handbook of Adult Education in the United States (Washington, D. C.: Adult Education Association, 1960), p.7.

³ Davis, p. 149.

⁴ Minor Gwynn, Curriculum Principles and Social Trend (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1948), p. 47.

On this basis, it could be anticipated that a very large group of the adult learners in nursing, the 559,000 non-degree graduate nurses who have completed apprenticeship programs will teach much as they were taught. If they were expected to learn from random, unexamined experience, they will likely expect those they must teach to learn from random and unexamined experiences.

The sociological and technological changes occurring at an increasing tempo affect all aspects of the health care field. For the non-degree graduate nurse, the apprenticeship method of learning may no longer be the most effective method of learning to be utilized for the up-dating of knowledge essential for improved health care. It could be anticipated that special methods and approaches found relevant for enhancing learning for adult learners could generally be utilized effectively for the non-degree graduate nurse.

The historical development of nursing programs which has resulted in the diploma-granting hospital schools of nursing out-numbering the collegiate schools¹ has resulted in the non-degree graduate nurse who is in need of additional learning experiences being employed in institutions without established formats for providing additional educational learning activities for the individual no longer classed as a student. Utilizing an approach to program planning by determining the adult interests may find ready acceptance in this structure populated by adult learners. Having once determined the interests for which programs may need to be planned, it could be anticipated further planning would be along lines utilizing the

¹Davis, p. 149.

methods of adult education relevant for enhancing the learning of the adult learner. These methods are of a type which could be implemented in the institutional setting in which the non-degree graduate nurse is employed.

To date, implementation of additional learning experiences have largely been seen as the responsibility of educational institutions external to the hospital structure. It could be anticipated that exposure to methodology other than that of the apprenticeship type approach to learning would move curriculum development along the lines recommended by E. Brown in Nursing Reconsidered.¹

Origin of Curriculum Pattern

Five of every six registered nurses were thrust as adolescents into a highly technical program without a basis for general education as a foundation.² Bridgman indicated the purpose for supplementary programs for the non-degree graduate nurse should be to bring such nurses to the level attained by the present day basic Collegiate program graduate.³ This level was interpreted to mean the acquisition of academic hours in general education courses and the addition of the clinical content of nursing courses which had been developed on a scientific basis as required for the generic student.

¹E. Brown, p. 84.

²Amy Francis Brown, p. 62.

³Margaret Bridgman, Collegiate Education for Nursing (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1953), p. 127.

Program implementation for the non-degree graduate has followed the guidelines developed by Bridgman and covered in detail in Collegiate Education for Nursing. These guidelines indicated "emphasis should be placed on the fact that a sound basic collegiate school is the logical place for graduates of a hospital school to receive the necessary guidance and instruction for further educational experiences."¹ Davis found a "striking inner consistency in the baccalaureate programs by the way of organization, curriculum, and philosophical outlook...."² Literature review of the "American Journal of Nursing" from 1930 to 1972 reveals no indication of why it was determined the 'logical' place for graduates of the hospital school programs to continue the obtaining of additional educational experiences should be within the baccalaureate program structures nor why the end objective for every non-degree graduate nurse student enrolled should be that of attaining a level of preparation comparable with the basic collegiate program graduate.

Brand compared graduates of basic baccalaureate programs and a baccalaureate program for registered nurses. The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups in knowledge of nursing skills and attitude patterns. The study did not measure a comparable group of non-degree graduate nurse students prior to the completion of course content with the baccalaureate graduates. The additional academic and clinical work may have not improved knowledge of nursing skills and attitude patterns for the registered

¹Bridgman, p. 127

²Davis, p. 84.

nurse group measured.¹

There are two different groups of learners who are granted baccalaureate degrees. The generic student completes requirements over a four year period to become a graduate nurse with a baccalaureate degree. The non-degree graduate nurse enrolled as a student completes a program in nursing and is a graduate nurse at the time entrance is gained to the program structured to allow the completion of the requirements for obtaining a baccalaureate degree.

Studies of the Two Groups of Learners

McManus indicates most of the research and writing by nursing faculty members and graduate students in nursing has been about curriculum development and student experience in undergraduate nursing schools.² Studies available about non-degree graduate nurse students are meager. Thurston and Brunclick studied the relationship of personality to achievement in nursing education with inconclusive results.³ Meadow and Edelson studied age and marital status for a practical nursing group. They concluded that the older student may be slightly better as a risk to finish work undertaken than the younger student admitted to nursing.⁴

¹Vera Brand, "Graduates of a Basic Baccalaureate Program and of a Baccalaureate Program for Registered Nurses Compared," Nursing Research, XVI (Fall, 1967), 347.

²R. Louise McManus, "Nursing Research," The American Journal of Nursing, LXI (April, 1961), 76-79.

³John Thurston and Helen Brunclick, "The Relationship of Personality to Achievement in Nursing Education," Nursing Research, XXIV, (Summer, 1965), 203.

⁴Lloyd Meadow and Ruth Edelson, "Age and Marital Status," Nursing Outlook, XI 9April, 1963), 289.

Studies conducted for suggestions of curriculum change are usually in terms of the on-going programs or for the accomplishment of the requirements imposed by accrediting bodies, state licensure boards, and consultants. This situation in research and program development exists, according to Davis, due to the alliance of nursing with education rather than with other disciplines.¹

Specific Characteristics of the Adult Learner

Numerous studies have been conducted of the characteristics which differentiate the adult learner from the non-adult learner. Most if not all probably have some relationship to this study. Of particular interest is Neugarten's discussion of personality as a set or process which has a course of growth and change from earliest childhood through old age. The adult personality is seen as continuous but not identical with the personality of the child and the adolescent.² Havighurst compliments the study of Neugarten by the illustration of the changes in developmental tasks during the early adulthood, middle ages, and later maturity. These transition points would support a developmental period for the adult in the sense childhood and adolescence is known to have. For a satisfactory learning experience for the adult to occur, understanding of the developmental period in relationship to the point at which he may be the more teachable is prerequisite.³ Bloom in an exhaustive study of

¹Davis, p. 85.

²Neugarten, pp. 44-113.

³Robert J. Havighurst, Developmental Tasks and Education (New York: David McKay Co., 1961), pp. 72-98.