

## ACTION RESEARCH FOR NURSE EDUCATORS: A MORE NOURISHING ALTERNATIVE TO EATING OUR YOUNG

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Since Florence Nightengale began professional schools of nursing, socialization in the nursing curriculum has been viewed from multiple perspectives. University-based nursing programs include a professional nursing course at the beginning of students' studies. This begins the professional development of students. A thorough overview examining the history and evolution of nursing demonstrates a gap in the socialization process and faculty's influence. In this proposed study, the researcher will examine ways in which the nursing faculty communicates with the student nurses. The question to be explored using action research is: What are the implicit and explicit behaviors nursing faculty integrate into the nursing curriculum that socialize students? This research proposal asserts that Participatory Research (PR) methods impacting the curriculum will support and empower students in this important process. Gajanayake (2001) outlined an eight-phase cycle. This will be used as a flexible template for redesigning the early professional development nursing courses. Collaboration between students and faculty will stimulate the PR method. PR will provide the structure for joint faculty and student exploration of the problem. This methodology includes:

1. Identification of a problem or need: Fewer students are choosing a career in nursing. Many nurses are leaving the profession for various reasons. Many students and nurses verbalize the lack of support throughout nursing education.
2. Reflection: Faculty members and students will be invited through focus groups and interviews to identify the impact of the socialization process.
3. Investigation: Participants will explore historical influences that have changed the face of nursing.
4. Analysis: Data gathered in the investigation phase will be used to identify the major problems and suggest possible solutions.
5. Integration: With the analysis information, participants will stimulate curriculum change by sharing and publishing this research.
6. Action Planning: In this phase, we will engage in grant writing, obtaining administrative support, and coordinating faculty input. As a result, changes in the curriculum will be created.
7. Implementation: The curriculum changes will be evaluated and analyzed.
8. Transformation: The goal of these curriculum changes is an improvement in self-confidence and self-worth in the students and the faculty. This phase will only be able to be evaluated over a period of time.

What is advocated here, then, is not merely a PR project but a curriculum "revisioning" with PR as the central pedagogical feature. As a new framework outside the traditional research conducted by nurse researchers, I am aware of possible resistance. I am hopeful that this beginning work will help to reshape and rejuvenate nursing curriculum.

Gajanayake, J. (2001). *Participatory research: A legitimate approach for knowledge validation* (unpublished manuscript). DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University.

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