Ways of Knowing
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NRSG 802

Historical Overview
• 1950s & 1960s: How is nursing unique?
  • Theorists from other disciplines
    – Selye Adaptation Theory
    – Bowlby Attachment & Loss
    – Erikson Psychosocial Development
    – von Bertalanify General System Theory
  • Conceptual Models in Nursing (see Table 2-1 in Chinn & Kramer, pp. 43-44, 8th ed.)

Structure of Knowledge
(Fawcett, 2000)
• Metatheory (theorizing about theory)
• Metaparadigm
  – Person, Environment, Health, Nursing
• Philosophies/Epistemology (Ways of Knowing)
• Conceptual Models/Theories
  – Grand theories
  – Middle range theories
  – Practice theories

Ways of Knowing
• 1978 Barbara Carper, Advances in Nursing Science
  – Four WOK: empiric, esthetic, ethical, personal knowing
• 1983 Chinn & Kramer’s first edition
  – Distinguished between “knowing” and “knowledge”
• 1993 Munhall
  – Suggested adding “unknowing” to the WOK
• 1995 White
  – Suggested adding “sociopolitical knowing”
• 2008 C & K added “emancipatory knowing” to the original 4 WOK

Why Learn WOK?
• These are the ways we come to know in our discipline.
• Each pattern is necessary to master our discipline, yet each can not stand alone.
• They are interrelated and interdependent and provide a broadened perspective of the reality that is nursing.
Empirical Knowing

- Assumption: What we know is that which is objective and accessible through our senses: seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting
- This way of knowing asks: What is this? How does it work?
- Knowledge is created through formal research to test hypotheses
- Most consistent with modernism although C & K include qualitative research (post-modern)
- How have you used this way of knowing in your practice?

Ethical Knowing

- The “moral” component; focused on matters of obligation, what “ought” to be done, what is good and right.
- This way of knowing asks: Is this right and just? Is this responsible? Ethical dilemmas are examined by conscious deliberation into areas that can’t be tested.
- How does ethics differ from morality? Religion?
- Ethical theories: teleology, deontology, relativism, virtue ethics
- How have you used this way of knowing in your practice?

Aesthetic Knowing

- The “art” of nursing: Often not as specifically defined in nursing programs as the “science of nursing.”
- This way of knowing asks: What does this mean for everyone involved? How is it significant for everyone? This WOK is expressive, subjective for you and also can be for the patient, experiential, and sometimes can not be easily expressed in language.
- In nursing, art is both a process and product.
- How can you further develop it?
- How have you used this way of knowing in your practice?
Personal Knowing

- The inner experience of becoming a whole, aware, genuine self through experience and reflection.
- This way of knowing asks: Do I know what I do? Do I do what I know?
- This is genuineness in our interactions; valuing self and others as body-mind-spiritual wholes.
- How might you differentiate spirituality from religion or religious-ness?
- How can you further develop this way of knowing?
- How have you used this way of knowing in your practice?

Emancipatory Knowing

- The “praxis” of nursing (reflective practice)
- This looks at social, cultural, and political status quo and seeks to understand why and what might be done to change things
- This way of knowing asks: What is wrong with this picture? What is not visible? Who benefits/loses? What are the barriers to full potential for everyone?
- How can you further develop this way of knowing?
- How have you used this way of knowing in your practice?

References

- Chinn & Kramer text