ETHICAL ENCULTURATION: A NURSING CONCEPT FOR THE EDUCATION OF BACCALAUREATE NURSING STUDENTS

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Introduction

*E*thics and ethical decision making are crucial to the profession of nursing and the education of its practitioners. Ethics is foundational to the profession and practice of nursing (American Nurses Association [ANA], 1997). It is of the utmost importance that baccalaureate nursing programs transmit ethical values to nursing students. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) (1998) espouses that "baccalaureate graduates must be able to identify potential and actual ethical issues arising from practice and assist patients in addressing such issues; therefore, knowledge of ethics and ethical decision making is critical" (p. 14).

The importance of ethics education for nurses has been reported by numerous researchers (Aiken, 1994; Aroskar, 1994; Cameron, Crisham, & Lewis, 1993; Cassells & Redman, 1989; Corley, Selig, & Ferguson, 1993; Ericksen, 1993; Esterhuizen, 1996; Felton & Parsons, 1987; Folmar, Coughlin, Bessinger, & Sacknoff, 1997; Foster, Larson, & Loveless, 1993; Fry, 1989; Gaul, 1989; Hilbert, 1988; Hussey, 1990; Kanne, 1994; Ketefian, 1999; McAlpine, 1996; McDaniel, 1998; Sellman, 1996; Turner & Bechtel, 1998; van Hooft, 1990; Woodruff, 1985; Woods, 1999). The AACN (1999) delineates ethical principles as a broad content area for inclusion in nursing education. Integration of ethics into the nursing curriculum, whether as a freestanding required course or integration of ethics content into existing courses, is essential (Aiken, 1994; Carr, 1999; Daniel, Adams, & Smith, 1994; Gaberson, 1997; Gaul, 1989; Ketefian, 1999; Killeen, 1986; Levine-Ariff, 1990; Mysak, 1997;Nolan & Smith, 1995; Quinn, 1990; Snider, 2001) if ethical practice is to be more than a catchphrase (Thompson & Thompson, 1989). Ethics must permeate the entire curriculum (Luthar, DiBattista, & Gautschi, 1997) and culture of nursing education.

Recognizing the importance of ethics to the discipline of nursing and the need to transmit ethical values to nursing students, the concept of ethical enculturation was investigated. Ethical enculturation was entered as a search term by a combination of search procedures (key term, subject, title, and abstract). No matches were found in nursing, educational, anthropological, sociological, psychological, philosophical, theological, or business literature.

Purpose

Enculturation is believed to be a product of learning (Hagge, 1995) and a form of socialization (Newton & Newton, 1998; Prior, 1994), which arises from experience (Newton, 1999). Enculturation is not static but a dynamic process. The purpose of this paper is to initiate the development of ethical enculturation as a concept for the ethical education of baccalaureate

nursing students.

Method

Meleis' (1997) method of concept development was employed for the use of developing the concept of ethical enculturation. Meleis describes the processes of defining, differentiating, delineating antecedents and consequences, modeling, analogizing, and synthesizing as useful in concept development. Meleis' method does not specify how a literature-based analysis should be conducted. Lack of access to periodicals and limited time to obtain inter-library loans constrained the search. Searching CINAHL, ERIC, Academic Search Elite, OVID, and POEISIS derived the following search history for ethical enculturation and the related term enculturation. As mentioned previously, there were no literature matches for the term ethical enculturation. A literature search of the term enculturation in the title, abstract, subject, or as a key term yielded a total of 82 matches from the five databases. Thirty-six of the 82 matches (many were duplicate entries) were located and 30 were reviewed.

Definition

Ethical enculturation of baccalaureate nursing students is envisioned to be the permeation of ethics throughout the entire curriculum of baccalaureate nursing students and the assimilation of ethical values by these students. Typically ethics is taught by transmission, where the teacher's role is to prepare and transmit ethical content to students. Teaching ethics by enculturation presupposes teachers creating a culture of ethical thinking in the classroom (Tishman, Jay, & Perkins, 1993). Ethical enculturation is similar to the enculturation process of any cultural concept. Enculturation develops from experience, a teacher's example, and learning actions (Newton & Newton, 1998). In enculturation one acquires and assimilates the behavior patterns and values of a parent society (Ortuno, 1991). Ethical enculturation of baccalaureate nursing students entails not only the formal teaching of ethics, but also an ethical environment or an ethical culture is created for and by faculty and students. This ethical enculturation is evidenced by the inclusion of ethics in the curriculum, the articulated conceptual framework, the classroom environment, the interactions between and among faculty and students, and nursing faculty and students' interactions with patients.

Differentiation of Terms

Ethical

  Often the terms ethics and morals are used interchangeably. Simply stated, ethics is defined as the "reasons why" and morals as the "shoulds and oughts" (Thompson & Thompson, 1989). Ethical knowing is reflected in everyday incidents, in decisions of what to say and what not to say. It is dependent upon what one believes is good and right (Chinn & Kramer, 1999).

Enculturation

Enculturation is a process through which individuals learn what counts in a particular discipline (Newton & Newton, 1998). A literature search of five databases revealed articles referencing

and/or describing the concept of enculturation from the following disciplines: anthropology, art, counseling, education, English, mathematics, nursing, psychology, science, sociology, and theology. The majority of the articles (eighteen of the thirty reviewed) only referenced enculturation, providing no descriptions or further elucidations of the concept. Articles that advance further understanding of the concept of enculturation are from the disciplines of anthropology, education, English, psychology, and science. Only two articles, from anthropology and education, researched enculturation; the other articles are descriptive or opinion pieces. Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, Washienko, Walter, & Dyer (1996) note that few researchers have studied enculturation.

Merten (1999) concluded from his research of enculturation into secrecy among junior high school girls that enculturation happens in and through a particular phenomenon. Enculturation is to internalize a culture's propositions as personal beliefs (Merten). Merten asserts "just as what one is enculturated into becomes natural and right, so too do the unrecognized meanings that shape and accompany what is being learned" (p.114).

Identification and knowledge of an ethnic minority culture happens through the process of enculturation (Zimmerman et al., 1996). Enculturation is "considered a lifelong learning experience in which cultural awareness and understanding develops" (Zimmerman et al., p. 296). Enculturation is a process of socialization (Prior, 1994). Prior (1994) suggests that the graduate student's written work and the responses of the student's professor and peers are primary disciplinary enculturation activities. A product of enculturation is language (Hagge, 1995; Prior, 1995). "Learning to write proficiently…is largely a matter of enculturation into the linguistic conventions of a particular disciplinary discourse community" (Hagge, p. 440). The language one uses will be indicative of the effect of enculturation of a particular discipline. It is especially important for authors of fundamental disciplinary texts to be sensitive to following disciplinary communicative norms (Hagge).

The relevancy of a domain is learned through enculturation and is mostly an informal process (Newton, 1999). Enculturation is not seen simply as an issue of transmission of knowledge of a particular discipline or culture (Prior, 1995). Enculturation is a two-way negotiation where all participants are members of the community and the community is an open, dynamic body (Prior, 1995). Enculturation is an interactive process between people (Bishop, 1988). The teacher and the learners are all participants in the social environment that fosters enculturation of a particular construct. Authentic practice of a particular disciplinary field results from enculturation (Roth, 2001). Enculturation comes from experience. Newton's research provides support for the belief that teachers can expedite the enculturation process of students in a particular discipline by consciously shaping the experiences provided for students.

The culture of the classroom can assist in the enculturation process. Tishman et al. (1993) note enculturation occurs in the classroom environment regardless so that teachers need to direct what is enculturated. Teaching by enculturation is intentional and involves the teacher's behavioral messages, the classroom's physical space, the tenor of classroom interactions, and the exhibited expectations and standards (Tishman et al.). Tishman et al. provide guidelines for teaching by enculturation:

It is useful to think of enculturation as occurring in three mutually reinforcing ways: through cultural exemplars, cultural interactions, and direct instruction in cultural knowledge and activities. These three aspects of enculturation – exemplars, interaction, and instruction – suggest three straightforward guidelines for organizing teaching: For each thinking disposition one aims to enculturate, one wants to (a) provide exemplars of the disposition; (b) encourage and orchestrate student-student and teacher-student interactions involving the disposition, and (c) directly teach the disposition. (p.150)

Teachers are viewed as the enculturators and the enculturation process as purposeful and goal-directed (Bishop, 1988).

Indoctrination

Enculturation is viewed as a developmental growth process (Haydu, 1973). It is not the same as indoctrination (Roth, 2001). Indoctrination encourages unshakeable and uncritical acceptance (Hussey, 1990). The person who undergoes change due to enculturation is less aware of what goes on than the person who experiences change due to indoctrination. The change that results from enculturation is more spontaneous than the change that occurs from indoctrination. These change processes often bring about satisfactory culture membership (Haydu).

Ethical Climate, Ethical Culture *and Ethical Environment*

There is a lack of delineation of the terms ethical climate, ethical culture, and ethical environment; often these terms are used interchangeably to refer to the same phenomenon (Olson, 1995). Seven research studies were reviewed, six of them studied the phenomenon of ethical climate and one looked at the concept of ethical environment.

Business and nursing have dominated the literature in the research field of ethical climate. Ethical climate refers to the personality of an organization (Olson, 1995). An ethical climate consists of a shared perception of what is ethically correct behavior (Bartels, Harrick, Martell, & Strickland, 1998; Deshpande, 1996; Joseph & Deshpande, 1997; Menzel, 1995) and a manifestation of organizational culture (Bartels et al.; Meaney, 1999; Menzel; Olson). Ethical climate is the "stable, psychologically meaningful perceptions members of organizations hold concerning ethical procedures and policies existing in their organizations and organizational subunits" (Wimbush, Shepard, & Markham, 1997, p. 1705). An organization's ethical climate is an indicator of its behavior when confronted with difficult health and safety decisions regarding its employees, the public, and the environment (Birkner & Birkner, 2000).

  It is believed that very different types of ethical behavior will be exhibited dependent upon the dimension of ethical climate variance (Wimbush et al., 1997). In a national study of retail jewelry employees, Wimbush et al. found a relationship between ethical climate and behavior is partially supported. Suggesting that an employee's behavior is influenced by the workplace climate or environment, Bartels et al.'s (1998) study provided empirical support for the belief that ethical climate is a predictor of the severity of ethical problems within human resource management. Organizations with stronger ethical climates were more likely to be successful in

dealing with ethical issues (Bartels et al.). Ethical climate and seriousness of ethical problems were predictive of success in dealing with ethical problems (Bartels et al.). The nature of ethical dilemmas is often determined by the structure of the organization (Blake & Guare, 1997). It is believed that organizations with stronger ethical climates communicate their ethical norms clearly. Organizational members when confronted with an ethical dilemma are able to rely upon the norms and know how to respond to the moral issue as the organization would (Bartels et al.).

The link between good ethics and keeping good employees is quantified in Smith's (2000) nationwide study of workers 18 years and older from organizations of at least 50 employees. Employees who identified themselves as committed and planning to stay with the organization for at least two more years were labeled "truly loyal." Fifty-five percent of "truly loyal" employees are convinced they work in an ethical environment compared to only nine percent of those who consider their work climate as unethical are "truly loyal" to their organization (Smith). This finding indicates that loyal employees prefer to work in an ethical environment. Sims and Keon (1997) also found subjects were less likely to leave their present employment if their preference for an ethical work climate matched their present ethical work climate. Managers may enhance job satisfaction by influencing an organization's ethical climate according to a research study on the impact of ethical climate on the job satisfaction of nurses at one hospital (Joseph & Deshpande, 1997). The ethical climate is a manifestation of the influence of organizational policies and practices on the employee's ethical behavior and beliefs (Olson, 1998). Employees, regardless of discipline or organizational employment, are most satisfied in their job when the employee's ethical values has a high level of compatibility with those of their employing organization.

A convenience sample of city managers, deputy city managers, and assistant city managers from two large states showed a linkage between a manager's characterization of his/her local ethical environment and the manager's ethical self-esteem (Menzel, 1995). High ethical self-esteem correlates with a high ethical assessment of the workplace, municipal officeholders, and the community. Menzel suggests higher ethical self-esteem conditions one's ethical assessment of the workplace. A strong foundation for an ethical community climate could be built by strengthening the ethical self-esteem of managers and municipal leaders.

Attention needs to be focused on ethics in the everyday life of organizations. It is important for all people to receive ethics training. Ethics training and education could make a significant contribution towards building and maintaining an ethical climate (Camunas, 1994; Corley & Raines, 1993; Deshpande, 1996; Maier-Lorentz, 2000; Menzel, 1995). Nursing literature suggests that nurses must become knowledgeable regarding ethics and ethical principles (Camunas; Corley & Raines). Ethical climate is enhanced when all members of the health care team are taught the process of ethical decision making and managers receive training for facilitating and enhancing their support of those encountering an ethical dilemma (Camunas). Community dialogue around ethical issues enhances understanding of the ethical dilemmas inherent in corporate life (Banning, 1997). A community that engages in dialogue is viewed as moral because the dialogue expands perspectives and facilitation of mutual understanding (Cooper, 1991). The ethical climate on a college campus, according to Banning, is promoted when there is debate of the ethical issues and an exposure to a diversity of attitudes. An environment that encourages debate and communication is an attribute of an ethical climate

(Gallagher, 1998).

The creation and maintenance of an environment in which it is comfortable to ask questions is crucial to developing an ethical climate. An ethical climate decreases the severity of ethical problems (Bartels et al., 1998) and thus the potential for whistleblowers (Gunsalus, 1998). The overall ethical climate is an important aspect of any organizational environment for responding to complaints. Problems in the organization are dealt with honestly and promptly in an ethical climate (Gunsalus).

There should be safe ways for employees to seek and receive help in attempting to resolve problems of their own. Those being appealed to for help need to have given some explicit thought to the types of problems that might arise (Gunsalus). Ethical decision making skills must be part of the arsenal of problem-solving skills for managers.

An ethical climate is manifested in observable forms (Banning, 1997). The presence of an ethical code can be an outward and visible sign of an organization's ethical climate. Many businesses have recently adopted an ethical code or professional code in their attempts to develop an ethical climate (Deshpande, 1996; Doig & Wilson, 1998) and improve the ethical responses of organizational members (Bartels et al., 1998; "Talking About Ethics", 1999). Codes are a hallmark of professionalism and evidence publicly the priorities and values of the profession (Castles, 1978; McDaniel, 1998). The presence of an ethical code does not insure the actions of the organization's members will be ethical but the code can have an effect on the openness of the organization that will ultimately lead to increased ethical behavior (Doig & Wilson). Doig and Wilson suggest "the use of codes to define an ethical environment or culture, and their effective implementation, must be as part of a learning process that requires both inculcation, reinforcement and measurement" (pp. 146-147).

The Code of Ethics for Nurses is a guide for nurses to use in resolving ethical dilemmas and provides boundaries for professional conduct. This ethics code "makes explicit the primary goals, value and obligations of the profession" (ANA, 1997, p.1). The enunciated standards of the profession of nursing are declared in the Code of Ethics. In an attempt to define accountability and establish the ethical boundaries of professional nursing, the ANA prepared a Code for Nurses in 1950. Revisions to the nursing ethics code have been made as responsibilities of the health care system have changed (the latest revisions were adopted in June 2001 by the membership of the ANA). The ANA's Code of Ethics for Nurses (ANA, 2001) is the authoritative document for nurses in regards to ethical and professional conduct. The Code of Ethics for Nurses is not only important in the creation and maintenance of an ethical climate for nurses but is needed for nurses to fulfill their responsibility in clinical practice according to Esterhuizen (1996). If the values posited in the Code of Ethics are upheld, then the nurse's conduct will be both professionally and ethically correct.

Delineation of Antecedents

The principle antecedents of the concept of ethical enculturation of baccalaureate nursing students are those aspects of the educational environment that led to the permeation of ethics throughout the curriculum and the assimilation of ethical values by the nursing students.

Therefore, the ethical practices of the faculty, the ethical climate, the inclusion of ethics in the articulated conceptual framework and the curriculum, and ethical interactions between and among faculty and students are all necessary conditions for the ethical enculturation of baccalaureate nursing students.

Both the message and the messenger are equally important in the teaching of ethics (Luthar et al., 1997; Sullivan & Brown, 1991). Faculty must model ethical decisions in their work with students if students are to develop ethical reasoning (Blimling, 1998; Wehrwein, 1996). The example set by faculty teaches students more about ethical behavior, thus promulgating ethical enculturation, than any one teaching technique (Dulton, 2001; Luthar et al.). Nursing students, according to Nylund and Lindholm's (1999) research, expect ethical behavior and an evident ethical attitude in their clinical supervisors. Interactions between faculty and students should reflect the ethical dimension that students are to adopt in their relationship with their future patients (Nylund & Lindholm).

The ethical climate influences the ethical decision making abilities of organizational participants (Camunas, 1994) and the quality of ethical practice (Ketefian, 1999). The environment matters for teaching ethics (Swenson & Rothstein, 1996) and an ethical climate is prerequisite for enculturation of ethics. The inclusion of ethics in the conceptual framework supports and encourages an ethical climate.

Consequences

The consequences of ethical enculturation of baccalaureate nursing students are the outcomes, effects, or conditions that occur because of ethical enculturation. The results of ethical enculturation of baccalaureate nursing students include: ethical nursing practitioners (as students and as licensed personnel), socialization into the professional role, the ethical climate and ethical education is strengthened, and the ability to make ethical decisions is improved.

Modeling

Modeling according to Meleis (1997) is "the process of defining and identifying exemplars to illustrate some aspect of the concept" (p.218). An exemplary model of ethical enculturation, which illustrates the concept in its entirety, is provided by a description of Utopia University Department of Nursing.

The Department of Nursing (DON) at Utopia University built its conceptual framework using the concept of ethical enculturation. The DON serves approximately 200 nursing majors offering a baccalaureate nursing degree. The faculty as a whole embraces the idea of enculturating their baccalaureate nursing students ethically. Faculty and students alike interact between and among themselves ethically. Carolyn Mahon, MSN, RN teaches the sophomore Introduction to Professional Nursing class. The Introduction to Professional Nursing is the first nursing course nursing majors take.

Carolyn is an enthusiastic instructor who easily shares her love for and of nursing with her students. Students are introduced to the concept of ethics the first day of class both as a topic of

discussion and as a way of life. Carolyn greets her students warmly, shares her course syllabi, and establishes the ethical tone for the class. Students are encouraged to raise questions and pursue dialogue with faculty and other students regarding course concepts, including ethics. Often the discussion in Carolyn's class considers the nurse's professional role in the workplace and in the community. When disagreements occur during discussion, Carolyn facilitates the students to use their growing communication skills.

The ethical climate that is apparent in Carolyn's class is pervasive of all nursing classes. There is a collegiality that exists between and among students and faculty. The topic of ethics is not left only for the faculty that teaches the required ethics class but is discussed, as appropriate, in all nursing courses. Clinical instructors use the many ethical situations that arise during clinical rotations to help the students improve their own ethical decision making skills. Often clinical conferences are designed to allow for the students to wrestle and discuss as a group how to practice ethically.

Analogizing

Analogizing allows a concept under development to be viewed from a better understood concept. Ethical enculturation is similar to the process of enculturation of new members of a culture or group. Ethical enculturation of baccalaureate nursing students is analogous to the induction new Duke University students experience at Cameron Indoor Stadium. The atmosphere at Cameron is different than the atmosphere found at other stadiums. There is no apathy among the student body as the students stand throughout the Duke basketball games often in heat excess of 90 degrees. The love of the students for the basketball team and for the game of basketball is evident to the observer. There is a fervency, an energy, among the student body.

Students have the best seats in the house, as they are the ones seated courtside. As the athletes are introduced at center court the Duke students often will shout humorous sayings at the opposing team players. At times, these sayings are taunts aimed at the inappropriate or goofy behaviors of the opposing team. Once, when an opposing player was indicted for stealing underwear, the Duke students shook Hanes underwear as the player was introduced. However, when an opposing coach was convicted on his second offense of driving under the influence of alcohol, the students stood silently as the coach was introduced; no taunting occurred. No official or authority at Duke silenced the students; the students apparently policed themselves. Students appear to know when it is and when it is not okay to taunt. The students are not taught or lectured how to behave at Cameron; the enculturation into being a "Cameron crazy" happens. New students to Duke often come to Cameron to see the basketball team out of curiosity because the team is nationally ranked but will return just to be part of the community that exists at Cameron. Many graduate students come to Duke with an allegiance to their alma mater team and after experiencing a Cameron basketball game will desire further enculturation into "Cameron craziness".

Synthesizing

Ethical enculturation, as developed by this author, is the permeation of ethics throughout the entire curriculum and educational process of baccalaureate nursing students and the assimilation

of ethical values by these students. Further refinement of ethical enculturation, as a nursing concept, is warranted. Research using both qualitative and quantitative approaches should enhance understanding of ethical enculturation as a concept and help lead to development of a measurement instrument for ethical enculturation.

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