

**Teaching unitary, transformative and caring healing theories in a required undergraduate
holistic nursing course: An experiential process of living the power theory.**

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to share experiential strategies to help faculty teach unitary, transformative and caring healing theories in undergraduate nursing programs. This paper was presented at the 2017 Society of Rogerian Scholars Conference in Flagstaff Arizona in response to faculty complaints that there is not enough time to teach nursing theory in a baccalaureate nursing program. The presentation described the recent experience of introducing unitary, transformative, and caring healing theoretical concepts in an undergraduate holistic nursing course that is currently required for all baccalaureate nursing students in our urban/suburban college. The presentation culminated with an experiential relaxation induction with interspersed concepts of unitary, transformative and caring healing theories. Conference participants requested copies of the induction for use in teaching nursing students theory informed holistic nursing practice. Implications for practice may be enhanced theory informed nursing for baccalaureate nurses. Please note, the relaxation induction is italicized and the author recommends reading it slowly, with tonal emphasis on the interspersed theoretical premises. In addition, it is recommended that the APA references not be shared during the induction process.

All too often faculty complain there is not enough time to teach nursing theory in a baccalaureate nursing program. This presentation will describe the recent experience at our college of introducing unitary, transformative, and caring healing theoretical concepts in undergraduate holistic nursing courses that are currently required for all baccalaureate nursing students in our urban/suburban college. In the course, “*Nurse as Healer*”, which is the second required holistic course in our curriculum, students are introduced to several health patterning modalities experientially, with an emphasis that these modalities are theory informed and creatively unfold in mutual process. All faculty teach centering, presencing, progressive relaxation, imagery, mindful meditation, therapeutic touch, gentle hand massage, aromatherapy, hypnotherapeutic suggestions, and therapeutic stories and metaphors. Interspersed in class dialogue

are concepts of the Science of Unitary Human Beings (SUHB)(Rogers, 1992; Butcher, & Malinski, 2015), Power as Knowing Participation in Change (Barrett, 2015), Health as Expanding Consciousness (Newman, 2008; Pharris2105) and caring healing (Watson 2015, Smith, 2015) theories. All faculty teaching this class have a holistic nursing practice and dialogue regularly, discussing how we are living the power theory with our students, to enrich life and to improve the course. This presentation will illustrate how it is possible, pleasurable and necessary to teach unitary, transformative caring healing theories as foundational in holistic nursing practice.

Grace, Willis, Roy and Jones (2016) reported that nursing is at a crossroad and has an “urgent social responsibility” (p.61) to better develop nursing scholars and leaders. I contend that we need to start this in undergraduate nursing education.

Fawcett (2007) emphasized that “nursing practice is based on unique nursing knowledge” (p. 98). Thorne (2014) warned we are at risk of losing our nursing identity if we do not have “clarity on what constitutes core disciplinary knowledge” (Grace et al, p. 62). Malinski (2017) emphasized we must teach nursing theory, utilize nursing theory in our research, expect nursing theory to inform our practice.

One solution could be to start seeding more knowledge of theory informed practice in all BSN programs. Of course, in an ideal world, this knowledge would also be seeded in programs preparing associate degree nurses, LPN’s, nurse’s aides and health care assistants.

For over 25 years at our college, a holistic nursing elective has been offered to introduce SUHB and holistic nursing modalities to undergraduate nursing students. Student evaluations overwhelmingly emphasized that the course

should be required for all nursing students.

After much curriculum development work, the new curriculum has been implemented with two required holistic courses.

Freshman or sophomore students take a ½ credit course entitled *Holistic Self Care*, in which they are introduced to Bohm’s (1992) dialogue process, reflective journaling, mindfulness, progressive relaxation and appreciative inquiry as they focus and work on enhancing self care and progressing toward their own self selected health goals.

Typically, the emergent themes we see in their journals are stress management, time management and work life balance. Often students reported that although they initially disliked the journaling assignment, they found it helpful, many times noticing a pattern that the first paragraph was typically focused on complaining and the 2nd or 3rd paragraph included reflection on their emerging strengths. Additionally, many reported they slept better after journaling, a

if they released their stress in their written disclosures. Faculty comments on the journals and in the dialogues include questions such as, “How does this relate to facilitating your power as knowing participation in change? How does this help enhance your awareness, your choices, your freedom to act intentionally, your involvement in creating desired change?”

The 2nd course, “*Nurse as Healer*” is a 1 credit course taken in their junior year, in which students learn and practice health patterning modalities and holistic nurse coaching in dyads. These modalities are taught as theory informed practice, in which students are facilitating their partner’s power as knowing participation in change.

Students are encouraged to help their partner grow in his/her awareness about a desired self selected health goal, explore choices that can help actualize the desired health goal, explore their freedom to act intentionally and their involvement in

creating desired health promoting change.

We encourage students to consider health as expanding consciousness, and discover what is meaningful as they engage in meaningful dialogue with their partner. In these dyad sessions, students also practice health patterning modalities. Dialogue sessions in “*Nurse as Healer*” invite the sharing of student’s experiences regarding offering health patterning modalities with their partners and with their patients in their medical surgical and psychiatric clinical experiences. Faculty emphasize every interaction is an opportunity to knowingly engage in theory informed health patterning.

In each class, faculty offer students a brief experiential induction, to support cultivating a self care practice and to facilitate deepening awareness of theory informed nursing. We are aware we are seeding this knowledge in courses with minimal credit, but we are starting to hear from other faculty that students are more

frequently providing theory informed holistic health patterning to their patients in clinicals. Of course, research is needed to discover change in these students nursing practice. For example, a study utilizing Barrett's (2015) power tool and Matas's Self Defined Health Promoting Goals tool (Larkin, 2007) would be helpful in discovering patterns of students who have received this type of education in their formative years as novice nurses. Qualitative explorations regarding health as expanding consciousness, emergent themes in journals and how health patterning experiences have been meaningful would additionally add to our understanding of how faculty can support students in facilitating evolving ontological patterns of theory informed caring, healing presencing with patients.

Below is a sample of an induction that is offered in class, to emphasize self care, holistic, unitary and transformative

nursing care as theory informed practice. Please feel free to join in.

“Typically, I invite people to close their eyes or lower them to a point on the floor, so you can focus inward. Feel free to begin by inviting a mindful, contemplative awareness, paying attention, on purpose, to right now, without judgment. You can pay attention to your breath, the rhythm of inhalation and exhalation, perhaps noticing the temperature of the air as it moves in the nostrils during inhalation and the temperature of the air as you breathe out through your nostrils. Just notice, without judgment, the present moment, right now.

And you can feel free to go deep with your breath and allow relaxation to wash through you, perhaps starting at the top of your head, the relaxation can gently proceed, down the back of your head, your eyes, jaw muscles, vertebrae of your neck, relaxing more deeply with each breath, feeling more comfortable. And this can support you, ease your experience, while you absorb more knowledge. You can enjoy using multiple ways of knowing, Carper's empirics, aesthetics, ethical, and personal ways of knowing (1978), Chinn and Kramer's emancipatory knowing as ethics in action, praxis, the integration of knowing,

being and doing, engaging in action for social justice (2011). Simultaneously, that relaxation can proceed, right shoulder, left shoulder, right arm, left arm progressively with each breath, feeling more comfortable, you can go deeper with your breath, allowing the relaxation to support you in deepening awareness of Munhall's (1993) unknowing as a way of knowing, open, ongoing receptivity to more information, opening up to multiple possibilities and creative discoveries with each encounter with patients, with colleagues, with self, as theory informed practice. And you can remember Martha Rogers Science of Unitary Human Beings (Rogers, 1992; Butcher & Malinski, 2015), that we are energy fields in mutual process with the environmental field, that the whole is different than the sum of the parts and you can tell nothing about the nature of water by looking at hydrogen or oxygen in isolation. This is emergence from Flatland, practicing nursing and living life pandimensionally. Simultaneously, the relaxation can proceed with each breath, softening muscle fibers around the vertebrae of the back, chest muscles, upper back, lower back, relaxing more deeply. Living Elizabeth Barrett's power theory more knowingly, patterning ourselves as energy fields to promote health

and well being in mutual process, with our awareness, choices, freedom to act intentionally and involvement in facilitating desired change. Enjoying the process of living the theories more deeply.

You can continue to attend to the rhythm of your breathing and deepen your comfort as you reflect on Margaret Newman's theory of Health as Expanding Consciousness, and discover what is meaningful for your patients and what is meaningful for you (Newman, 2008; Pharris, 2015). Consider Richard Cowling's (2000) process of facilitating healing by appreciating pattern, pattern appreciation, how can you engage in appreciating patterns of patients, rather than solely focusing on their problems, how might this mutual process change your relationship ontologically, so all individuals can mutually benefit? How can you approach another, as Smith emphasized, with "gratitude, enjoyment and appreciation"? (Smith, 2015, p. 512). Your breath can support you and deepen the relaxation, the relaxation can proceed, down the lower back, the buttocks, right thigh, left thigh, feeling more comfortable, memorizing this experience. You can remember Janet Quinn's (1992) article, the nurse holding sacred space, we can be the

healing environment, with our centering, presencing, suspending judgment, establishing an intention for facilitating the highest good, living therapeutic touch. Remember Parse's "living true presence" (Parse, 2015, p.270) and the powerful healing potentials of lingering presence, where the therapeutic benefit continues after you leave the room, and unconditional love. Going deeper with your breath, more and more relaxed while more deeply integrating this knowledge. You can remember Jean Watson's Theory of Human Caring, creating models that "deepen authentic caring-healing practices for self and others" (Watson, 2015, p.322), and that caring science is sacred science. Watson emphasized ontological caring competencies and that caring healing modalities are as critical in our health care system as technological caring competencies. You can continue to go deeper with your breath, and reflect how you are knowingly changing the field to promote eudaimonistic health as ever evolving well being for all. Mary Alice Donius, our former dean, described nursing as caring healing, through altruism, compassion and empathy with the intention of healing body mind spirit. Marlene Smith (2015) described her theory of unitary caring and theoretically linked Rogers's

science of unitary human beings, Newman's theory of health as expanding consciousness and Watson's theory of transpersonal caring, emphasizing manifesting intentions with actions that create healing environments, while preserving dignity, humanity and reverence for personhood. (Smith, 2015, p. 513). Growing therapeutic possibilities. So with the awareness of your breath, you can reflect on living the theories to enrich life, and relax the muscles of your feet, feeling a deep supportive connection with the earth, each step forward.

Please take good care of yourselves as you take care of others. This is our moral and ethical imperative.

You can feel free to memorize this experience, know it is available as a learned phenomena whenever you want it whenever you need it. It can support your learning, retrieving and living unitary, transformative and caring healing theories. It can amplify your enjoyment of nursing, pandimensionally, as theory informed practice.

So feel free to take a few minutes of clock time, to memorize this experience, know it is available to you, whenever you want it, whenever you need, you can retrieve it with your breath, your intention, in

whatever way it supports you healthfully, helpfully. And then, in a few minutes of nonlinear time, you can feel free to begin to orient to this room, taking with you the comfort you have created, orienting with a sense of refreshment, alertness and

energized calm. Please feel free to give yourself thanks and receive my thanks as well, in mutual process.

Thank you.

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