

# A Systematic Review of Nursing Education

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**Received date:** September 07, 2022, Manuscript No. IPJNHS-22-14943; **Editor assigned date:** September 09, 2022, PreQC No. IPJNHS-22-14943 (PQ); **Reviewed date:** September 23, 2022, QC No. IPJNHS-22-14943; **Revised date:** September 28, 2022, Manuscript No. IPJNHS-22-14943 (R); **Published date:** October 07, 2022, DOI: 10.36648/2574-2825.7.10.050

**Citation:** Bozkurt E (2022) A systematic Review of Nursing Education. J Nurs Health Stud Vol.7 No.10:050.

## Description

Nursing and nursing education have undergone striking changes over the centuries. This history reveals a constant struggle for autonomy and professionalism. There have been many influences on nursing practice in the past, including women struggle for professional acceptance and status, religion, war, technology, and societal attitudes. These factors still influence nursing today. During the past decades, the profession worked to improve its image.

## Nursing Education

Nursing education focuses on educating health care people about effective ways to deliver the health care to patients. It educates nurses about how to administer different medicines, to examine patient and to deliver best services to patients. The aim of nursing education is a development of the nursing profession. A philosophy of nursing is a statement that outlines a nurse's values, ethics, and beliefs, as well as their motivation for being part of the profession. It covers a nurse's perspective regarding their education, practice, and patient care ethics. There are many factors within the program, as well as outside the program, that can have an impact on the nursing program and its success. Sources of external influences include financial funding, rules and regulations, accreditation, availability of clinical sites, and institutional factors.

Neufer (1994) points to the incongruity that community health nurses have not been leaders in the field of environmental health, despite their early reliance on Florence Nightingale's emphasis on environment. One indicator of nursing education's emphasis (or lack of it) on environmental health is the content included in current textbooks. In her review of current texts in community health, Neufer identified no text as having all of the factors necessary to address the concepts of environmental health in nursing. She concluded that "although health professionals are becoming more aware of the public health hazards of pollution, community health nurses have not applied their skills in assessing and diagnosing related community health problems." Furthermore, because no text includes all of Neufer's factors, the conclusion follows that these environmental health content areas are not being taught in basic community health courses. Neufer emphasizes that, "the profession must grasp the challenges necessary to promote environmental health"

Nurse education consists of the theoretical and practical training provided to nurses with the purpose to prepare them for their duties as nursing care professionals. This education is provided to student nurses by experienced nurses and other medical professionals who have qualified or experienced for educational tasks, traditionally in nursing schools. Feminism is a philosophy that seeks to address inequalities associated with patriarchal norms and power imbalances that lead to oppression, disenfranchisement, and missed opportunities.

## Accreditation and Regulation

The regulation of nursing education and practice is accomplished through a number of credentialing mechanisms. Each mechanism standardizes outcomes (competencies of graduates and practicing nurses) for the assurance of safe delivery of nursing care.

Higher education programs in nursing are accredited by regional accrediting bodies as part of the larger institutional accreditation process. Additionally, schools of nursing seek accreditation from the NLN at the associate degree, diploma, baccalaureate, and master's levels. Within each state, approval for education programs is usually conferred by the state's regulatory board of nursing education content. However, no accrediting body in nursing currently considers environmental health content to be required for the receipt of accreditation.

Given this somewhat paradoxical situation, in which there is a gap between nursing education and practice, it is important to include environmental health content in as many undergraduate courses as possible. However, rather than detailing the exact environmental health content to be included in each nursing course at every level of nursing education, fairly specific guidelines are provided regarding major environmental health concepts and where these concepts might logically fit in existing nursing curricula. The advantage of this approach is that it allows nursing faculty to integrate environmental health content in an individualized manner based upon faculty expertise, available resources, and the curricular framework specific to each school of nursing.

Although professional nursing education has traditionally included the concepts of health promotion, disease prevention, health protection, risk reduction, and population-based practice in its baccalaureate nursing degree programs, the scope and depth of such concepts and content are not consistent among

programs. Commonly used nursing texts also vary in their inclusion of environmental health information. Nurses, along with physicians and pharmacists, report that the education they received regarding disease prevention was fair or poor in contrast to the excellent or good ratings of training they received regarding disease treatment or intervention

A feminist philosophy is not only gender specific it also may be used in any disempowered social structure, such as nursing or teaching. Nursing and feminism are tightly linked, as nurses work to collaborate within the paternalistic medical profession, frequently struggle to have their voices heard, and continue to be marginalized. The feminist theoretical framework was used for this study to guide research, collect data, analyze, and interpret conclusions.

Most countries offer nurse education courses that can be relevant to general nursing or to specialized areas including mental health nursing, pediatric nursing and post-operative nursing. An existential descriptive phenomenological research design provided the foundation for this study. Philosophically, a descriptive phenomenological approach aims to describe the essence of a phenomenon through a lived experience. To remain consistent with a descriptive method, the researcher spent 6 months in Jordan as a Fulbright scholar; this facilitated an opportunity to achieve a near “real picture” of the students' lived experiences. The researcher used bracketing to suspend preconceived ideas and beliefs resulting from an employment history as a nursing faculty member. This approach supports an effort to remain open to the meaning of the phenomenon, therefore allowing the researcher a deeper understanding.