Disclosure of no affiliations with research, work or products that we mention. Disclosure of no contractual relationships with works mentioned.

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Evolution of Expertise
Among Critical Care Nurses

Sigma Theta Tau International
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Learning Objectives

- Describe cognitive patterns of assessment and decision-making for the expert critical care nurse that are not based on intuition, but rather theoretical and experiential knowledge.

- Discuss contextual expectations and experiences that have a direct impact on professional aptitude and the development of expertise.
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine and explore the critical care nurse’s personal perceptions of expertise, expert performance and the transition to from novice to expert performer in clinical practice.
METHODOLOGY

**Grounded Theory** qualitative design
  - Provides an organized approach to capture social processes in context.
  - Useful tool when developing theory to explain human behavior

**Data Collection**
  - In-depth Interviews
  - Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria
    - Nationally recognized critical care certification
    - > Seven years experience
PURPOSEFUL SAMPLING

Demographics of Sample
DATA COLLECTION

AUDIO-RECORDED INTERVIEWS

OBSERVATIONS
CODING & ANALYSIS OF DATA

- In Vivo Coding
  - Initial coding
  - Line-by-line verbatim coding

Reading for common themes.
Describe or define the emerging themes.
Re-read transcripts.

![Figure 4.5 Codes by Definition](image)
SUMMATION OF FINDINGS

• The major themes identified in this study strongly support experience and knowledge as the foundation of expertise and therefore expert performance.

• This researcher proposes that the expert nurse demonstrates “tacit” knowledge rather than “intuitive” or perceptive behavior.
RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Self-Actualization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100% of the Participants</td>
<td>78% of the Participants</td>
<td>60% of the Participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Experience**
  - Nature of the experience is vital
    - Diversity
    - Intensity/Quality
    - Duration
  - Expert performance evolves over time
  - Requires dedicated practice and experience.

- **Knowledge**
  - Critical Reasoning
  - Learning is both implicit and explicit in nature.
  - Learning is contextually grounded.
  - Rooted in action and commitment.

- **Self-Actualization**
  - Personal presence/engaging
  - Life-long learner/thirst for knowledge
EXPERIENCE AND DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCES

The analysis of data suggested that: a) experience in its most elemental form was/is the foundational component in the nurses ascent to expert status; b) clinical experience shaped and molded the expert defining their practice; and c) the intensity of the experience served to push the limits of understanding to expand current boundaries of understanding.
EXPERIENCE AND DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCES

- **Experience**
  - The defining element in the development of the expert nurse and expertise within clinical performance
  - Predicates all other considerations.
  - Connects theory and concept to practice.
  - The more relevant the actual experience, the more meaningful to the individual.
  - The higher the intensity and diversity of the actual experience the more relevant to learning and understanding.
KNOWLEDGE AND CRITICAL REASONING

Data analysis suggested a strong relationship between knowledge and experience that gave significant implication to the fact that the two themes were interdependent and self-perpetuating as one builds upon the other.
Data analysis suggests thinking at this level is:

- Conceptual and broad
- Salient concepts are quickly noticed without focusing on specific details
- Both a conscious and an unconscious thought process
- Continuously evolving and developing
- Assessments, judgements and decisions are quick, accurate and automatic.
Self-Actualization

- Life-long-Learner
- Self-Confident
- Engage
- Re-Assurance
- Adult-Learner
- Look-Up
- Presence
- Cool

- Literature
- Comfortable
- Education
- Engaged
- Involved
- Seek
- Respected
- On-going
- Research
- Self-Motivated
- Committed
- Initiative
- Assets
- Positive
- Calm
- Collected

- Know-What-To-Do
- Seek-Opportunities
- Ask
- Questions
- Question
- Watch
- Learner
- Read
- New
- Listen
- Everyday
- Learn
SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Personal Presence

The expert critical care nurse’s presence and interaction in a crisis situation was one of self-confidence and re-assurance.

• Bring calm and order to otherwise chaotic situations.
• De-escalate emotionally charged situations.
• Promote a cohesive productive team approach to patient care
• Promote and optimize the team’s collective potential.
SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Life-Long Learner

Expanding the individual’s knowledge base and breadth of understanding are invaluable assets for clinical excellence and professional growth.

• Proactive motivated student of lifelong learning in the pursuit of clinical excellence.
• On-going
• Evolving
ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

- **Intuition** was not an emergent theme.
  - Mentioned one time

Diagram 4.9: Benner’s Novice to Expert Theory (Benner, 2001)
Intuition is to weak and broad undermining the significance of the expert nurse’s contribution.

Tacit is stronger, more reflective of the expert nurse’s contribution to patient care.
CONCLUSIONS

• Strong relationship between knowledge and experience.
  • The two have a direct positive correlational relationship that binds them inferring that you cannot have one without the other.
  • The more relevant the actual experience, the more meaningful to the individual.
  • The higher the intensity and diversity of the actual experience the more relevant to learning and understanding.
  • Expert performance evolves over time.
• Knowledge and experience are the foundational elements of clinical expertise.
• Expertise cannot be achieved without experience.
• Requires self-actualization to achieve.
IMPLICATIONS

Develop authentic learning experiences to maximize learning opportunities

• Model expert performance as the benchmark for practice standard
• Authentic repetitive learning experiences
• Adaptive, Goal oriented, focused
  • Push boundaries of current knowledge
  • Enhance understanding and comprehension
• On-going over time

Expedite on-boarding of new employees.

• Structured on-boarding process
• Continual feedback
• Clear expectations
IMPLICATIONS

Support staff development and continuing education
  • Structured continuing education process
  • Adaptive, goal-oriented
  • Ongoing

Improve staff retention rates
  • Continuous, specific feedback
  • Authentic repetitive learning experiences
  • Adaptive, Goal oriented, focused
IMPLICATIONS

Improved patient outcomes

• Model expert performance as the benchmark for practice standard
• Authentic repetitive learning experiences
• Adaptive, Goal oriented, focused
  • Push boundaries of current knowledge
  • Enhance understanding and comprehension
REFERENCES


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