Clinical reasoning has been identified as a necessary skill for practice in nursing. Multiple studies suggest that a gap exists between the education of nurses and their ability to transition into practice. In addition to possessing necessary knowledge and skills specific to the discipline of nursing, nurses must possess clinical reasoning skills to think through a situation as the patient’s condition changes. To make a clinical judgment, nurses use an analytical process that includes pattern recognition, an attribute of clinical reasoning. This analytical process of clinical reasoning is more developed in experienced nurses in contrast to novice nurses.

Newman’s theory of Health as Expanding Consciousness served as the theoretical framework to study the phenomenon of clinical reasoning. Newman’s Research as Praxis methodology was used to collect and analyze data. Individual interviews were conducted with seven participants. Together with the participants, the researcher gained an understanding of how the participants made decisions through the clinical reasoning process.

Patterns of individual participants and across participants were examined to gain an understanding of the whole pattern of clinical reasoning. The patterns of relating, knowing, and decision-making emerged in the participants and contributed to the evolving pattern of clinical reasoning. The meaning of clinical reasoning for these participants was establishing a relationship with a patient to interact and connect with them. Through formulation of a connection and trusting relationship, participants gained insights to make clinical decisions that facilitated a transformation. The evolving pattern of clinical reasoning was a maturing process over time as the participants gained insight and expanded consciousness through multiple experiences and interactions with members of the interprofessional team and the instructor.

Implications for nursing science and research include that pattern recognition by the participants in nurse-patient interaction substantiate empirical support for the Health as Expanding Consciousness theory. The findings broadened the theory to how students think in the clinical area. In both education and practice, prolonged engagement facilitates nurse-patient interaction to learn patient patterns. Collaboration with members of the interprofessional team inspires the understanding of another’s thinking process. As a result of this study the researcher broadened the application of the Health as Expanding Consciousness theory beyond clinical instruction and collaborated with a pharmacist in the development and implementation of an undergraduate nursing pharmacology course. Students gain insight into pharmacological principles from both a pharmacist and nurse perspective. Therefore students expand their consciousness and apply these principles to the clinical reasoning process when interacting with patients and administering medications.

**Abstract**

Clinical reasoning has been identified as a necessary skill for practice in nursing. Multiple studies suggest that a gap exists between the education of nurses and their ability to transition into practice. In addition to possessing necessary knowledge and skills specific to the discipline of nursing, nurses must possess clinical reasoning skills to think through a situation as the patient’s condition changes. To make a clinical judgment, nurses use an analytical process that includes pattern recognition, an attribute of clinical reasoning. This analytical process of clinical reasoning is more developed in experienced nurses in contrast to novice nurses.

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Implications for nursing science and research include that pattern recognition by the participants in nurse-patient interaction substantiate empirical support for the Health as Expanding Consciousness theory. The findings broadened the theory to how students think in the clinical area. In both education and practice, prolonged engagement facilitates nurse-patient interaction to learn patient patterns. Collaboration with members of the interprofessional team inspires the understanding of another’s thinking process. As a result of this study the researcher broadened the application of the Health as Expanding Consciousness theory beyond clinical instruction and collaborated with a pharmacist in the development and implementation of an undergraduate nursing pharmacology course. Students gain insight into pharmacological principles from both a pharmacist and nurse perspective. Therefore students expand their consciousness and apply these principles to the clinical reasoning process when interacting with patients and administering medications.

**The Evolving Pattern**
- Maturing process over time
- Decision-making process
- Career
- College choice
- Action to affect a patient outcome
- Clinical reasoning process
- Gaining insight through interactions
- Curriculum that promoted growth

**The Meaning**
- Establishing a relationship
- Form a connection in a trusting relationship
- Gain information to make a decision
- Affect a patient transformation

**Nursing Practice**
- Facilitate prolonged interaction
- Interaction of novice nurses
- Experienced nurses
- Interdisciplinary team members

**Science and Research**
- Substantiated support for HEC
- Expanded the application of HEC to study nursing education

**Nursing Education**
- Pattern recognition
- Clinical assignments
- Clinical evaluation tools

**Pattern of Knowing**
- Apply knowledge learned in multiple and varied interactions to gain insight
- Connection promoted the interaction

**Enhanced Knowledge**
- Instructors
- Preceptors
- Interdisciplinary team members

**Understand the present patient situation**
- Build knowledge for future patient interactions

**Progress through the curriculum**
- Build a body of knowledge of patterns for future interactions

**Implications**
- Science and Research
- Facilitate prolonged interaction
- Interaction of novice nurses
- Experienced nurses
- Interdisciplinary team members

**References**


