

**Troy State University
School of Nursing**

Organizing Framework

As a school of nursing within a state supported institution, we are committed to meeting the learning needs of students in southeast and central Alabama, thus providing education for nursing practice at three levels, Associate, Baccalaureate, and Master's, at multiple sites linked through an environment supported by traditional and emerging technologies. Although faculty function in different programs, the faculty is committed to a common philosophy of nursing and, evolving from that philosophy, a common organizational framework.

The organizational framework for the nursing curricula is based on beliefs and knowledge about the five basic concepts of humanity, environment, health, nursing, and learning. These major concepts provide a basis for decisions regarding course content and clinical learning experiences.

Humanity

An individual, the basic unit of humanity, is a biological, psychological, and sociocultural being with intrinsic worth and dignity. Holistic in nature, the individual human being interacts with the environment in meeting health needs. In this process, the individual is vulnerable to stressors yet capable of self-determination and creative change. While human beings progress through specific developmental stages throughout the lifespan, the individual's perceptions, values, and responses make each experience unique.

As a result of interaction with others, the individual participates in groups such as family, community, and society. These groups become part of the individual's environment. The individual is both susceptible to environmental influences and capable of influencing the environment.

Environment

The environment is the broader context within which the individual and the group develop, health is defined, and nursing evolves. The environment is an aggregate of all internal and external dimensions that both influence and are influenced by individuals and groups. The internal dimensions include biological, psychological, and nutritional factors, while the external dimensions include natural resources, the social-cultural system, the health care system, and the political economic system.

As an open system, both the individual and the environment interact through all dimensions. This relationship is crucial in the determination of health. The development of individuals and groups, perceptions of health and health care needs, and the utilization of the health care system are shaped by society and the greater environment.

Identification of risks to health, access to health care, and allocation of health care resources are determined by the individual, the group, and the environment through an ongoing, interactive process.

Nursing, then, through this interactive process with the environment, influences health of individuals and groups and, therefore, serves the health needs and interests of society. The environment provides the arena for nursing practice, education, and research.

Health

Health is a dynamic state that influences all aspects of an individual's life and includes the individual's adaptive responses to the environment. Values and beliefs of the individual, group, and society affect perceptions of wellness and illness and one's ability to make informed decisions about health care.

Nursing

Nursing is a goal-directed, interactive process requiring communication and collaboration within a multi-disciplinary health care system. Nurses function autonomously and also act interdependently with other health care providers to enable individuals and groups to attain their optimal states of health. Thus, nursing's contribution and obligation to society are to provide assistance with health-related needs throughout the lifespan.

As an art and a science, nursing practice requires critical thinking and decision-making based on knowledge of the human-environment system interaction. The art of nursing entails applying the outcomes of cognitive process with competent psychomotor skills and an affect of caring. The science of nursing involves application of the nursing process, specifically to include assessing the health status, deriving nursing diagnoses, formulating objectives and plans, implementing the nursing plan, and evaluating outcomes.

Because nursing exists to fulfill a societal need, the role of nursing is sanctioned by society and its parameters are defined by interaction between society and nursing. Nursing as a profession has both the right and the responsibility to monitor its role by setting and maintaining standards through legal and ethical considerations. Nursing is practiced at multiple levels depending upon the educational preparation of the nurse. All levels of nursing practice require research- and theory-based therapeutic nursing interventions with emphasis on communication, caring, ethics, cultural competence, management, and adaptation, coupled with knowledge of current issues and future trends in health care.

Learning

Learning is an individual, lifelong process that is evidenced by a change in behavior within the cognitive, affective, and/or psychomotor dimensions. The learning process involves the acquisition of facts, concepts, and theories, and results in enhancement of the individual's potential to function in a complex environment. Because each learner is a unique being, the approach to learning will vary with individual needs, abilities, and experiences.

Learning is enhanced when both teacher and learner are actively involved in pursuing, generating, and sharing knowledge in an organized setting with predetermined goals and activities. The learning environment must also support the spirit of inquiry, critical thinking, and personal accountability.

(Revised April 27, 2001)