
EDITORIAL

New Knowledge Required for Nursing Practice in a Dynamic and Changing Society

**Nuevos conocimientos que exige la práctica de enfermería
en una sociedad dinámica y cambiante**

**Novos conhecimentos exigidos pela prática de enfermagem
em uma sociedade dinâmica e mutável**

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KEYWORDS (SOURCE: DECS)

Nursing; science, technology and society; knowledge management; professional training; professional practice; professional training; information and communications technology; ICT.

PALABRAS CLAVE (FUENTE: DECS)

Enfermería; ciencia, tecnología y sociedad; gestión del conocimiento; práctica profesional; ejercicio profesional; capacitación profesional; tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación; TIC.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE (FONTE: DECS)

Enfermagem; ciência, tecnologia e sociedade; gestão do conhecimento; educação profissionalizante; capacitação profissional; prática profissional; novas tecnologias de informação e comunicação; NTIC.

DOI: 10.5294/aqui.2019.19.1.1

To reference this article / Para citar este artículo / Para citar este artigo

Boude OR. New Knowledge Required for Nursing Practice in a Dynamic and Changing Society. *Aquichan*; 19(1): e1911. DOI: 10.5294/aqui.2019.19.1.1

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It is no secret to anyone that today's society is undergoing a process of transformation in all its spheres. As many authors have pointed out, that transformation has changed the way citizens interact, relate, communicate, work and learn (1, 2). It is a process that requires citizens who have new skills and abilities that not only allow them to be an active part of society, but also to manipulate, transform and generate knowledge, to learn constantly, to select appropriate information, to encode and decode messages in different audiovisual languages, and to adapt to rapid social and cultural changes (3, 4).

All of this has sparked a revolution in different areas of society, including education, which has not been immune to this phenomenon, as a number of authors have observed. Such is the case that every day there are more parents, students and academics who agree in saying that education is in crisis. The reasons behind this assertion stem from the thinking expressed by Jaques Delors in his work *Education Holds a Treasure* (5), which indicates that education has been one of the few sectors where no changes have occurred in the last one hundred years, and that this has generated a discrepancy between the expectations of students and parents as to what the educational process should be and what actually goes on in the classroom.

However, the problem is even more complex when we take a look at higher education, since the research done by labor observatories worldwide tends to agree that there is a huge difference between the skills and abilities students develop during their professional training process and those they actually need in the workplace. This is because universities are focused more on developing disciplinary skills in students than on fostering soft skills such as teamwork, decision-making, digital competence or communication skills.

In response to this situation, companies have begun to create their own universities - the so-called *corporate universities* - so as to enable their employees to develop the skills the organization needs, specifically those that make one company totally different from another, even though they offer the same products and services. And, although this phenomenon now occurs more often with companies in the service sector, banking and finance, it is rapidly being implemented in more economic sectors, including the field of health.

When looking at the teaching-learning processes that are being used currently to train future nursing professionals, one sees

they are facilitated increasingly by technology. However, we must be extremely careful in this regard since, in many cases, the desire to mediate these processes technologically results in tools being employed that are not the most appropriate for either the context or the educational practices in which they are implemented. This problem creates an additional difficulty that students must overcome.

For that reason, before outfitting a learning environment with processes for technological mediation or facilitation, teachers must analyze the characteristics of the context in question, the technological abilities of their students, the skills to be developed, and the real benefits to be obtained by incorporating a particular technology. In the end, teachers must select the technology that is most relevant and appropriate, according to the objectives in question.

As expressed in the Technology, Pedagogy and Content Knowledge (TPACK) model, every nursing teacher now must have technological, pedagogical and disciplinary knowledge of the area he or she directs, so as to incorporate information and communication technology (ICT) appropriately into the training process. However, research shows that most teachers lack the pedagogical and technological knowledge that allows them to incorporate ICT into training processes, even when that technology includes only the use of mobile devices. Although this is one of the few ICT tools that both teachers and students know how to use, the skills each of them have developed in that respect are vastly different. While teachers use mobile devices to access e-mail and to make use of instant messaging, students use them for almost anything (6).

Unlike what happens in other occupational areas, being a nursing professional implies not only a great willingness to serve, but also having the skills and ability needed to coach individuals, families and communities during their adaptation to chronic health conditions and with regard to the support they require to facilitate discharge processes, among others. All of this occurs in a dynamic and changing world permeated and transformed by ICT, one where there are different notions about how this training process should be carried out, through technological mediation, between the nursing professional, the patient, caregivers and families. It also is important to bear in mind the expectations of clinics, hospitals and other health services concerning the use and utility of ICT in patient care and follow-up.

For all these reasons, nursing professionals must be trained not only to acquire the essential disciplinary skills, but also to obtain the technological skills that will allow them to manage and

systematize their processes, to communicate better with their patients, and to be up-to-date on search, selection, evaluation and classification processes for clinical cases.

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