

LETTER

To the editor :

As an educator, clinician, and student, I am quite comfortable with nursing models and theories. I will not have a restless, sleepless night because of them. I am, however, tempted to question their value and contribution to teaching and learning. I have come across many educators who are so fed up with having models forced on them from above that their work performance is affected. Because of job security, many do not openly challenge the use of nursing theories in their particular institution.

Myrna Lindstrom's "Holistic Nursing: A Basis for Curriculum," (Fall, 1975, volume 7, no. 3) and Levine's theory of holistic nursing puzzle me. She writes: Before and during time care is given the student must consider the sources of a person's energy and how he is using it." How absurd can one get! Any nurse should know that in health or sickness the sources of a person's energy are the consumption, digestion, and utilization of food and nourishments, especially carbohydrates, not to mention oxygen intake and elimination of waste products. If animals could talk, they might be able to give us a 'lay animal's' interpretation of the source and use of energy. Students will know that from their anatomy and physiology courses. They would also know the various routes of nourishment intake.

Learning the content of a course is no easy matter and certainly motivation of the learner is of great importance. Now, students not only have to learn the course content, but also the model under which it is taught and have to constantly think of the model before and while giving care. Can we document that better learning and understanding take place when a model is used, resulting in better retention and provision of better nursing care? Can we also show that nursing taught without a model results in inferior learning, retention, and practice?

A few years ago, the problem-solving approach was the order of the day. Then it was Bertalanffy's General System Theory — almost everyone was on the band-wagon and one was an outcast if he or she were not versatile with GST. In short, are nursing educators facilitating or complicating learning by their over-whelming belief in models?

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