

Is Technological Competency Considered Caring?



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“As a model of professional practice that guides the process of nursing, technological competency as caring is the proficient use of technology for the singular purpose of knowing the person as whole and complete from moment to moment.”

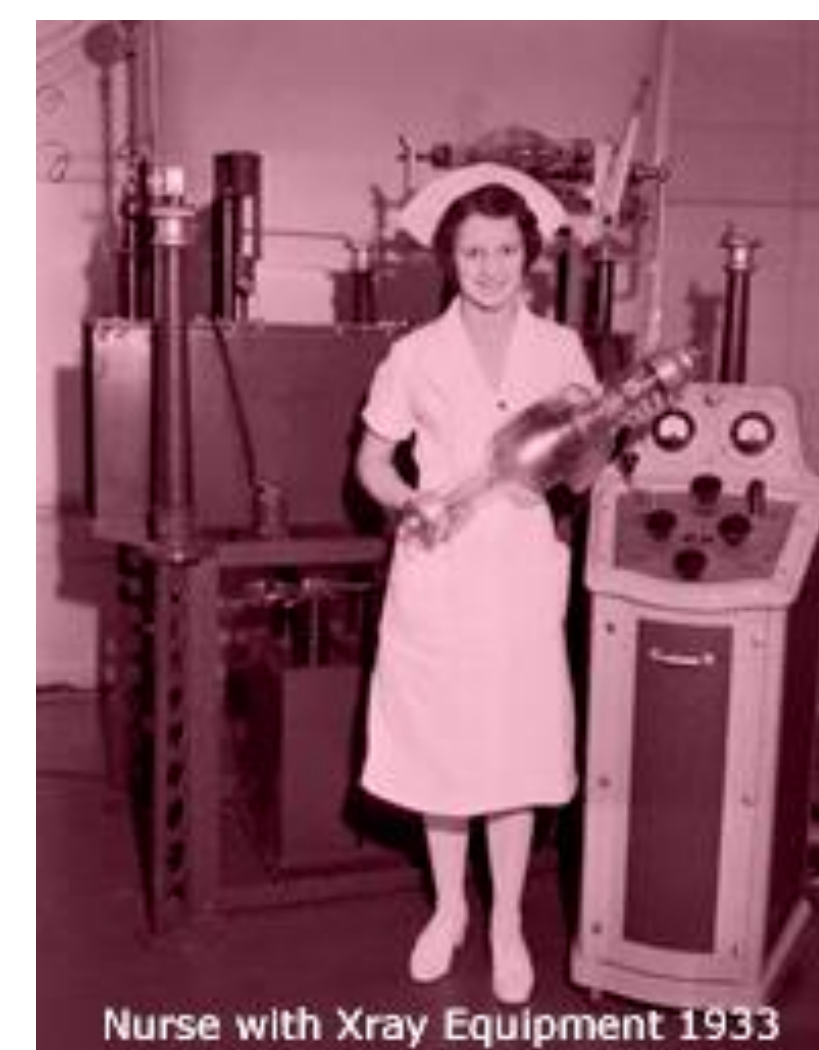
Locsin, 2005, pg 118

TECHNOLOGY IN NURSING

Technology has long been a focus of attention in nursing literature. Dock and Stewart (1925) identified a process of nursing practice development that was related directly to change in medicine and technology. They claimed that nurses were beginning to specialize in various forms of therapeutics – x-ray, electrical treatment, hydrotherapy, massage, and so on.

Competency with technology demands that nurses are not only able to use technology safely but also engage fully with human experiences, lives, and the needs of individuals, families, groups, and society. (Locsin 1998, Ray 1987, 2001).

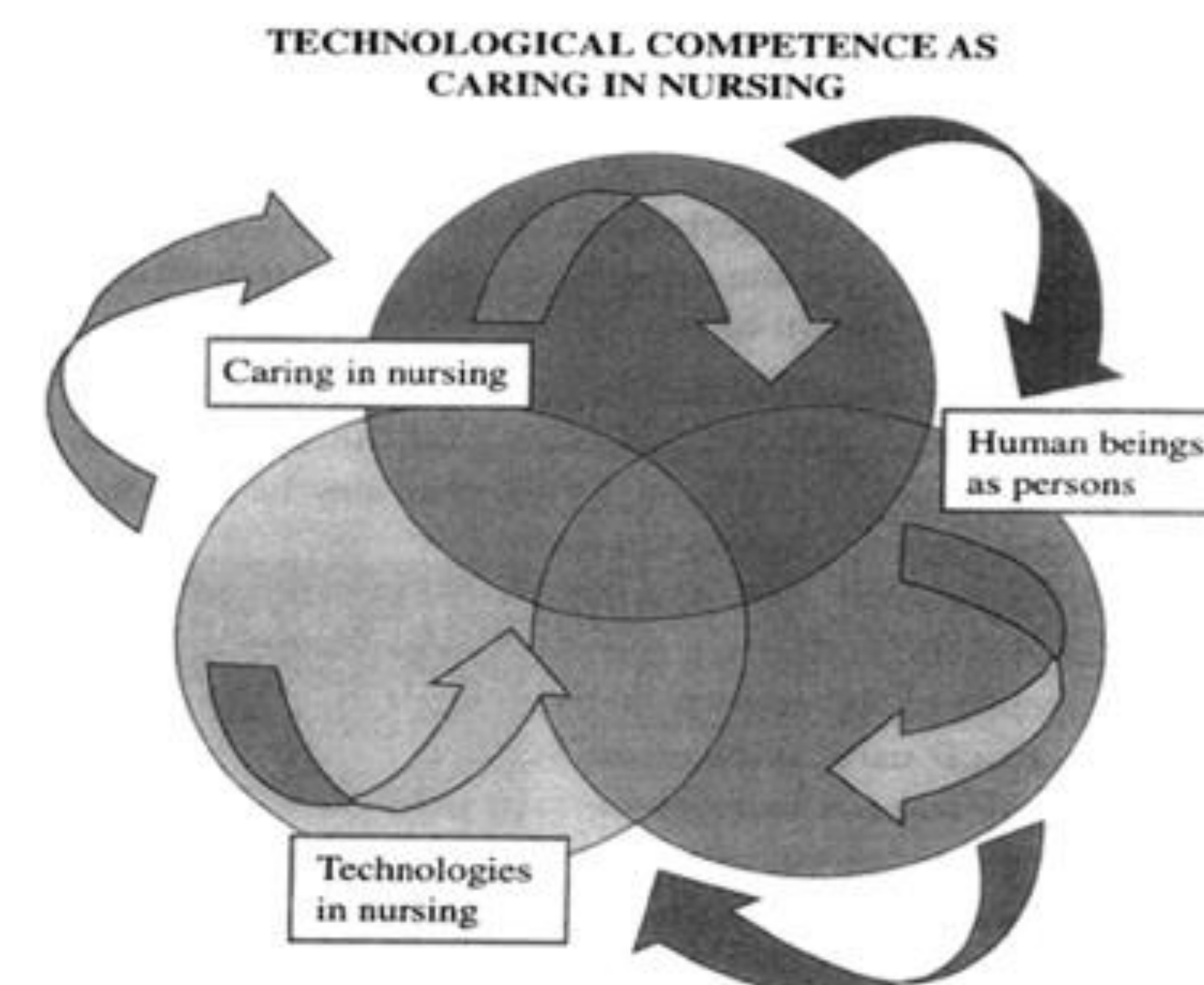
The practice of nursing in the 21st century is typified by expressions of technological competency.



THE CONCEPTION OF TECHNOLOGICAL COMPETENCY AS AN EXPRESSION OF CARING IN NURSING INFORMS A PRACTICE OF NURSING AS MORE THAN TECHNOLOGICAL EXPERTISE – IT FOSTERS THE VALUE OF COMPETENCY WITH TECHNOLOGY AS AN EXPERTISE OF PRACTICE GENERATED FROM A SCIENCE-BASED, KNOWLEDGEABLE, AND COMPASSIONATE PRACTICE

TECHNOLOGICAL COMPETENCY

Competency with technology is the skilled demonstration of intentional, deliberate, and authentic activities by experienced nurses who practice in environments requiring technological expertise. (Locsin, 2005)



In Locsin's model (2005), multidirectional arrows signify motions indicating ongoing advancement and continuous revelations of information achieved through technologies in nursing, all about human beings who are whole, dynamic, and unpredictable. Expanding technologies in nursing are ever-changing, and ceaselessly demanding, while caring in nursing is the substantive body of knowledge that drives the practice of knowing persons as whole and integrating technological competency as nursing.

REFERENCES

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The creation of the robo-nurse – a complex piece of machinery that, in human fashion, is made to perform technical nurse activities such as taking a person's temperature (Gutierrez, 2000) – perpetuates the image of “nurse” as referring to the performance of tasks. The robo-nurse simply facilitates completion of tasks for people. This persistent image of nursing as accomplishing tasks undeniably makes the nurse appear to be an automaton (Locsin, 2000).

TECHNOLOGY AS CARING

Locsin (2001) stated:

Technological competency demonstrated from a perspective not grounded in nursing is the ultimate impersonation of a nurse: *simply being technologically competent is not nursing*. Nursing occurs in situations when technologies are exercised proficiently with the authentic intention to know patients fully as persons who are in the process of living and growing in caring (Boykin & Schoenhofer, 1993). When viewed from this nursing perspective, technological competency as an expression of caring is truly nursing (p. 94).

The current emphasis on technologic competency for quality nursing practice and dependence upon machine technology has achieved a distinction that is significant to the practice of nursing. To fully care within this increasingly sophisticated world, nurses seem to recognize that technologic proficiency is a desirable attribute – not a substitute for caring but an enhancement of caring.

Machine technology can bring a patient closer to nurses because it enhances their knowledge of the person being cared for.

Neighbors and Eldred (1993) emphasize that nurses must be able to address the complexity of nursing and develop technologic skills to keep pace with the rapid development of new technologies in healthcare. For some, competence with machines and equipment in technologically demanding environments is the ultimate expression of caring and nursing and technologic incompetence is equivalent to not caring.

The competent exhibition of technology as caring is perceived as nursing practice if grounded on a perspective of nursing; otherwise it is simply the practice of technological competency.

BECAUSE THE PRACTICE OF NURSING IS DOMINATED BY TECHNOLOGY, CARING IN NURSING IS SIMULTANEOUSLY REVEALED TO BE THE HARMONIOUS COEXISTENCE BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY AND CARING (LOCSIN, 2005)