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**BEING-IN-BECOMING: A GROUNDED THEORY  
OF TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN  
NURSING EDUCATION**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in  
Nursing at Massey University.**

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this grounded theory study was to identify, describe, and generate a theoretical explanation of what it means to be a nurse educator in New Zealand in the 1990's and to be free to explore individual experiences within a broader social context. Sixteen participants from three Schools of Nursing in New Zealand were interviewed over a period of four months and a total of 36 hours of tape recorded data were collected. Constant comparative analysis of data eventuated in the identification of four conceptual categories named as *being a teacher*, *settling down*, *finding a place*, and *coping with change*. These conceptual categories were drawn together in the core category which was termed *being-in-becoming*.

*Being-in-becoming* in the context of this study means that the person is the nurse teacher simply because that person has taken on the work of a teacher. But in being a teacher the person is adapting, changing, and learning how to become a teacher. *Being-in-becoming* is a process which is on-going, never ending, and constantly changing. The essence of this study is that the teacher's experience of *being-in-becoming* is particularly influenced by personal development and the way the person comes to "know" about the world of nursing education which is also intimately connected to the way nursing curriculum is defined, and experienced by individual teachers.

These findings have implications for nursing education where there is a need for recognition of the teacher's concerns, background meanings, and problems which influence a person's experience of being a nurse educator. The expectation that feelings should be "managed" so therefore can be ignored is inconsistent in a group which claims caring to be the essence of nursing practice. Also, educational organisations need to reconsider their demands when excessive workloads are constantly cited as a major problem for workers. The organisation has the responsibility to acknowledge the human experience of those who work within the organisation, and undertake to respond in ways which can improve the situation for all concerned.

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