The purpose of this Caring Science study is to discover the underlying ideas and ideals in caring and basic Nursing education as well as the changes in Finnish society that have influenced and shaped this type of vocational education. The research questions are: 1. How has basic Nursing education in Finland fundamentally changed during 1941 - 2007? 2. Which guiding ideas and structures can be discerned in the Swedish-language basic Nursing education in Ostrobothnia during 1957 - 2007? 3. Which ideas and ideals can be traced in the texts written by a group of student Practical Nurses during 1960-1961? The theoretical perspective of this study is evidence-based caring as well as the Caritas motive. The evidence of Caring, that which is truthful, beautiful, and good, comprises the basis for the study’s analysis of which ideals and what types of knowledge can be discerned in the various types of Nursing education.

The study has a hermeneutic approach, where the goal is to understand and interpret written text. The overall methodology is idea-historical and the method is descriptive idea analysis. The meaning in basic Nursing education’s curriculums is exposed and reflected against evidence-based caring. A more in-depth analysis and interpretation of texts written by student Practical Nurses during 1960-1961 comprises a further dimension to the search for fundamental ideas and ideals in Nursing education. Lastly, the cultural property that constitutes the meaning in the development of basic Nursing education is discussed.

The study results are presented in two parts: the development of elemental Nursing education from 1941 - 2007, with a focus on Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia during 1957 - 2007, as well as an interpretative idea analysis of fundamental ideas and ideals in Practical Nurse education during 1960 - 1961. The substance knowledge of human beings and their health can be discerned as the meaning in the earliest types of Nursing education. Through the formation of prospective carers, Nursing education is permeated with the external and internal ideal of cleanliness, to create and foster an attitude to alleviate patients’ suffering, and the importance of communion. The study’s idea-historical flashback shows the contours of an ontology and value base that still permeates the Caritative curriculum: reverence for human beings and a desire to alleviate suffering.