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## From the Editor

In the past it has been alleged that nursing has misdirected its emphasis on nursing education and student learning. While numerous articles have appeared on this topic in leading nursing journals, there has been a paucity of serious research contributing to the knowledge concerning the process of education in nursing and the effects of educational approaches on the practice of nursing. The articles received for review for this issue reflect this lack. Only a few of the numerous articles submitted for publication contained research reports. The articles accepted for publication in this issue reflect a shift in the thinking concerning nursing education. There is now a deliberate effort to use theories in analysis of problems and formulation of proposals for nursing education. There are also efforts toward examining the processes and content of nursing education programs in terms of concepts and theories related to nursing.

Based on several recent experiences with nursing faculty and nursing education programs, I am concerned that nursing educators have not begun to incorporate the advances made in theory development in nursing into curricula leading to the first professional degree. If graduates of nursing education programs are exposed to nursing models and theories, it is usually at the graduate level. Unless a nursing faculty has completed such a program in recent years, they may not be familiar with the theoretical constructs that have appeared in the literature. Therefore undergraduate students are often unable to learn the basic concepts of the discipline. This is a serious problem for a discipline that is aspiring to achieve professional status in practice and to develop a body of knowledge derived from the scholarly thinking and work of members of the discipline. In order to develop as either a practitioner or a scholar in any field, years of conceptual development in the methods, concepts, theories, and ways of thinking inherent to the discipline need to be part of the personal history of members of the discipline.

Yet young nursing students remain relatively uneducated in nursing theory and thought.

I believe that several steps can be taken by individual nursing educators and by groups of nursing faculty to remedy this problem. First, nurse faculty can become thoroughly familiar with the models and conceptual frameworks that have recently been developed for nursing. This process involves not only knowing the basic content of nursing models and frameworks but also being able to use the terminology, apply the thinking to problems in nursing, and understand the underlying assumptions and philosophy. As this process is mastered by individual educators and groups of faculty, the curricula of nursing education programs can be carefully examined in terms of the nursing models and theories. Then changes in curricular approaches can be made consistent with the basic concepts of the discipline.

Each level of nursing education can make a significant contribution to the future development of nursing science. A clear understanding of the role of each level can assist faculty in determining the types of curricular adjustments needed for each educational program. The highest priority is to introduce students enrolled in undergraduate programs (or other first professional degree programs) to the models and theoretical frameworks that have been developed in the discipline and to educate students to use these in the practice of nursing. The goal is to produce a generation of nurses who "think nursing." As nursing's body of knowledge becomes more clearly articulated, the extent to which medicine and other areas of knowledge are taught can be identified. Graduates of first professional degree programs designed to teach nursing's theories, philosophy, and knowledge will be equipped with the most current basic approaches in nursing as a foundation for maturing in the practice of nursing and for developing additional nursing theory and research.

The master's level curriculum needs to

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build on the basic foundation of understanding and use nursing theories and models. This viewpoint is in contrast to the currently predominant approach that provides a basic introduction more appropriate for the first professional degree. The next logical stage in the development of advanced practitioners is to begin to analyze and test selected concepts and propositions that derive from nursing models and theoretical formulations now published or being developed by nursing faculty. Testing of these concepts and propositions includes both clinical trials and formal research.

Finally, doctoral programs in nursing hold significant promise for developing advanced skill in research and theory development, with individual students extending the boundaries of theory and research that currently exist in the discipline. As doctoral programs in nurs-

ing are more clearly focused on the concepts and problems of the discipline rather than the application of borrowed methods and theories from other disciplines, the potential for developing nursing's knowledge is significantly enhanced.

I hope that this issue of ANS will be valuable not only for nursing educators and students, but also to nurses engaged in various forms of practice. Each of the articles, while primarily addressing problems and concepts in nursing education, has implications for nursing practice. I need to hear from you, the reader, about your work, thinking, and response to these articles. Your reactions, coming from other perspectives, will contribute to the collective development of nursing.

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*Editor*