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## From the editor

Initially, the topic for this issue of ANS was projected as "Development of Nursing Theory." The topic was changed to "Testing of Nursing Theory" because of a predominant call by authors of previous manuscripts and by editorial reviewer comments for work that represented some sort of testing. Often this call has been for empirical testing of abstract ideas contained in nursing theories. Sometimes there have been suggestions that some other form of testing is indicated, but the form is not usually as explicit as that implied by "the empirical method." If both authors and reviewers were repeatedly asking for this type of report, the need seemed obvious. It seemed logical that an issue of ANS devoted to such reports would stimulate some actual reporting.

What was submitted would not support this logic. For the most part, articles submitted for this issue still focused on analysis, critique, and finally the now all-too-familiar call for some sort of testing, usually suggestions for empirical research. For articles that seemed to contain some form of analytic or philosophic testing, reviewers were at odds regarding whether or not the report in fact did represent "testing." Very few authors submitted articles that reported empirical testing of nursing theory.

As our description of this issue topic states explicitly, we were open to many different forms of "testing" reports. Recognizing that we need to evolve methods and approaches suited to the types of phenomena that we experience in nursing, we expected a wide diversity of type of report. We did receive articles covering a wide diversity of testing approaches. But the experience with this issue

caused me to wonder to what extent we are testing what we already have in nursing. The submissions suggest, if they are representative of the scholarly work being done in nursing, that there is still much work being done to test other disciplines' theoretical constructs, or to create something "new" in nursing.

The work of testing other disciplines' theoretical constructs that are relevant to nursing *is* important, and I certainly hope that scholars in the discipline will never cease to search for new realities. However, if these types of endeavors are in fact our focus, perhaps it is time to recognize the rhetorical nature of statements like "testing nursing theory."

Testing means, literally, requiring maximum effort or ability. If we do in fact value our own theoretical literature and believe it to be deserving of testing, then it is time to seriously embark on that course. For the discipline, this requires more than a few isolated efforts. It requires concerted, maximum effort of a substantial number of scholars in the profession.

Testing does not necessarily result in "answers." It should yield some insight that enters a realm not provided by theoretical construction alone or by theoretical critique. Published reports of theoretical testing, whether empirical, analytic, or philosophic, should raise further questions, even beyond those envisioned by the author. The questions raised should serve to stimulate maximum effort and ability in the discipline. As you read what is reported here, consider the questions and possibilities revealed for you.

—Peggy L. Chinn  
Editor