
From the editor

RESEARCH INNOVATIONS: A CONTRADICTION OF TERMS?

In all of my past education with respect to the research process, the idea of innovation has not had a strong emphasis. Even more notable is that I cannot claim to have integrated this idea in my own teaching of the research process. In fact, the emphasis that I have taken, and that research texts reflect, is a rigid adherence to rules of conduct that assure a sound result, judged by predetermined criteria for excellence. These same criteria also assure a tightly contained system of conceptualization and conduct that effectively renders many possibilities for innovation illegitimate.

Certainly there is room for creativity with respect to implementation of the process, and lip service is given to various irregularities that sometimes emerge in the context of disciplined work. However, I have yet to see sections of texts or topics on course outlines devoted to research innovations that might challenge some of these predetermined standards of conduct. In fact, in most discussions of nursing research to which I have been party, the supposed intent to render judgment seems to convert behaviorally into "judgmentalness," effectively stifling the slightest tendency to consider new or "aberrant" possibilities as having some value for achieving collective research goals in nursing.

The next time you have an occasion to hear or read about a research project that is something out of the ordinary, try asking questions

with the intent of hearing possibilities, not preformed answers. Ask:

- "What limits does this stretch for nursing?"
- "How can I stretch my own preconceived limits?"
- "What possibilities might this approach create?"
- "How could this approach move beyond what I now understand?"
- "What new doors does this open?"

If you consider possibilities along these lines, it does not mean that you have to sacrifice every standard of excellence you have ever known. Your standards of excellence might be put to a test of viability, and they will prevail to the extent that they can accommodate new insights and valuable possibilities.

I am aware that ANS has earned a reputation for taking risks with what we publish, and that we publish some work that is considered controversial by many. We also have earned a reputation for excellence, while pushing the limits of what might be possible and thus creating new possibilities for the future. While ANS has been an avenue, it is the support of the nursing community that has forged the path and made possible the journal's existence. Together we can envision innovations for the future and begin to create the means to bring new possibilities into existence.

—*Peggy L. Chinn, RN, PhD, FAAN*
Editor