

---

# From the editor

## THE LONGER VIEW

When *Advances in Nursing Science* was first published in 1978, there were very few publications that were then viewed as “nursing theory” literature. Now, over 17 years later, nursing has a theoretical and research literature that has developed in quality, volume, and scope. The appearance this year of the *ANS Classics* series, which contains reprints of selected articles that have appeared since the first issue, marks the important contribution that this journal has made to the development of nursing knowledge.

There are substantive ways in which articles published in any journal contribute to the knowledge of the discipline, providing a starting point for other work to follow. Over the years, *ANS* topics have reflected both the content, or the nature, of the discipline, as well as the evolving methods by which the discipline develops knowledge. In another important way, what has been published in the literature, often in *ANS*, shapes the nature of the discourse of the discipline—defining what is admissible for debate, what is important for students and scholars of the discipline to think about, and what shifts in thinking are needed to move into new realms of theory and knowledge. Building on the idea of the carrier bag theory presented by Maeve,<sup>1</sup> I call this discourse the “carrier” of the development of substantive knowledge in the discipline.

An example that is particularly pertinent to the current time is the debate surrounding

nursing’s focus on the individual as client and possibilities for a shift in focus to communities, groups, or cultures as the client. Without persistent challenge to and growth of this debate, theory might not move far beyond the focus on the individual, because in the Western culture in which modern nursing care has evolved, any possible perspective outside that of the individual is barely imaginable. Literature can quietly persist in setting before the collective members of the discipline various arguments that advocate an alternative view. Gradually it becomes more possible to imagine, and then to act on, the development of knowledge that gives the discipline the methods, tools, and mental images with which to work in relation to communities and groups.

We stand in a moment in history that holds great opportunity for nursing as a discipline. This issue of *ANS* (17:3) reflects the growth of the discipline in terms of both the substance and the carriers of knowledge development in nursing. I anticipate that this and future issues of the journal will continue the tradition of providing the discipline with a provocative and stimulating springboard from which to debate, to consider alternatives, and to imagine new possibilities for the future.

## REFERENCE

1. Maeve MK. The carrier bag theory of nursing practice. *ANS*. 1994;16(4):9–22.

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