
From the Editor

INVITATION TO DIALOGUE ON NURSING ESSENTIALS

The topic of this issue of *ANS* came about from a very lively discussion at the annual meeting of the Advisory Board. Part of that discussion came as we were exploring some of the factors that have led nursing down a path of increasing medicalization, and general decline in emphasis and valuing of nursing's own knowledge and essential focus. Those of us in that discussion had no firm answers or reasons for the trends that seem to undermine what many believe to be benchmarks of the essentials of nursing practice. And we wondered what might emerge from a call for articles that focuses on nursing essentials.

The discourse in nursing concerning nursing essentials has been appearing in subtle ways for decades. Sometimes, it lurks within discussions variously labeled as what is unique to nursing, why nursing is or is not a profession, why nursing and nurses are relatively undervalued, and of course in discussions of nursing's paradigm or foundational concepts, and the all-too-frequent question: what is nursing? Many of these discussions or explorations place nursing in a derivative position, meaning that what constitutes or defines nursing is derived from what nursing is not, or what nursing is in relation to another discipline, particularly medicine.

The struggle to move to a professional self-definition, apart from a derivative definition, is not easy in a culture that has defined women and women's work as derivative to the identity and work of men. But I believe, as evidenced by the articles that appear in this issue of *ANS*, that nurse scholars have begun to find solid ground for this kind of authentic professional identity, apart from comparative or derivative explanations.

The discourse that the articles herein call for is not a simplistic discourse. You will indeed find many of the concepts and ideas that have prevailed over time. But the characteristic that I find most interesting in this dialogue is a deeper level of discussion that brings together the insights of practice and theory, education, scholarship, and practice. The concepts are moving in a more mid, or situated direction and yet at the same time characterize much of what is common and foundational to nursing.

It is my hope that the content of this issue of the journal will prompt you to continue the discourse. I look forward to many more general discussions about the nature of nursing that are founded in authentic and foundational ideas and values that advance nursing knowledge and the practice of nursing.

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