EDITORIAL

Broadening the Dialogue: A Challenge for Us All

Last August *CJNR* hosted the annual meeting of the International Academy of Nursing Editors (INANE) in Montreal. This was the 29th time that editors and publishers of nursing journals had come together to discuss the latest trends in publishing, share information, impart wisdom, and discuss the challenges entailed in disseminating knowledge in order to promote best publishing practices.

When nursing editors joined forces to form INANE in 1981, terms such as globalization, the Internet, e-mail, evidence-based practice, and social media had not yet entered our lexicon. We had never heard of, let alone considered, the effects on publishing of impact factors, e-journals, open access, self-plagiarism, copyright, interactive multimedia communications, or the global health-care community. These phenomena have caused a revolution in the publishing world and will continue to shape the evolution and transformation of nursing publishing worldwide.

The August 2012 meeting in Montreal proved to be a resounding success as the aforementioned topics were explored. The papers presented the first day of the conference, at the morning session moderated by Marion Broome, editor of *Nursing Outlook,* set the tone for the event. The first two contributions were presented by renowned editors and scholars. Sally Thorne, editor of *Nursing Inquiry,* and Peggy L. Chinn, founder and editor of *Advances in Nursing Science,* offered position papers exploring the issue of what makes for a global conversation that accounts for different theoretical orientations, diverse points of view, and a range of experiences. As gatekeepers of what gets published, knowingly or unknowingly, we editors all too often select manuscripts that are biased in favour of Western ideas and the dominant medical discourse. To broaden the dialogue, the program planning committee invited the editors of three international journals to comment on these position papers: Patricia D'Antonio of *Nursing History Review,* Joel Mancia of *Revista Enfermagem em Foco do COFEN* [Nursing in Focus: Journal of the Federal Council of Nurses (Brazil)], and Maureen Shawn Kennedy of the *American Journal of Nursing.*

The conference participants applauded these presentations as groundbreaking. The next two days saw repeated requests to have them made available to all participants. As hosts of the event, *CJNR*'s editors thought,

why not make these papers available to the wider community by pub-
lishing them in a forthcoming issue of the Journal?

These papers are gifts. When I first heard the presentations and when
I later had an opportunity to read them, I realized that there are ideas
here that extend far beyond the realm of editors. The insights and
wisdom in these contributions are relevant for clinicians, educators,
nursing leaders, policy-makers, and researchers.

Everett Rogers (2003), author of the "bible" on diffusion of new
innovations, identifies the first stage of change as awareness of the inno-
vation. In this case, we need to become aware of our assumptions, atti-
tudes, beliefs, worldviews, and practices, as a first step towards broadening
the dialogue. The papers you are about to read ask us to stand in front of
a mirror and look at ourselves and into ourselves. Thorne asks us to listen
to our conversations steeped in postcolonial influence and Chinn asks us
to examine the "centres" from which we operate. However, the problem
with mirrors is that once we step away the image disappears; it is as if it
never existed. We, as editors and as readers, are being asked to stay a
while, linger in front of the mirror long enough to absorb what we see
in front of us. We are being asked to reflect on how — or whether — we
embrace the ideas and experiences of others. We are being asked to pose
difficult questions to ourselves, in order to unwrap and reveal what we
think, feel, and do, rather than what we *think* we think, what we *think* we
feel, and what we *think* we do. We are being asked to consider our deci-
sions and practices by examining the underlying assumptions about how
they were reached. We are being asked to consider how we engage in the
global conversation.

Although these questions were originally put to editors, they need to
be put to each of us and considered from each of our respective posi-
tions. For example, as clinicians we need to think about how we advocate
for patients who differ from those at the "centre" or from the norm. We
need to consider how we might broaden the dominant medical,
problem-based, deficit-based illness discourse, to include nursing conver-
sations about strengths, personhood, health, and healing. We need to con-
sider how we might extend our reach beyond illness care and embrace
the "health" in health care.

As leaders and managers we need to consider our role in transform-
ing systems — first at the staff level, then at the unit level, program level,
institutional level, and beyond. What role do we see for ourselves? Are we
reacting to decisions made by others, or are we part of the group of
architects who shape the conversation with an eye to creating a new
landscape comprising values and visions that put people first and
empower them to take greater control over their lives? How can we
influence policy in order to bring a different voice, fresh perspectives, a

different lens to the table, driven primarily by humanistic values rather than economic considerations? How do we create space for staff and colleagues who hold different perspectives?

As educators, how are we challenged by the ideas raised in these papers to consider our curricula, our programs, and our interactions with students? How are decisions made with respect to curriculum and the proportion of time devoted to nursing content? What messages do we give to students about embracing cultural diversity, and how do we encourage thinking outside the "centre"? How do we shape a unique nursing identity, as distinct from a medical one, embodied in the person who will call her/himself a nurse?

As researchers, how do we broaden the discussion to include design methodologies underpinned by different, non-Western worldviews, so as to answer questions that our current designs cannot adequately address and generate ideas and knowledge that are more relevant for the user and that differ from our current "centres"?

These papers ask us to stand before a mirror, pause, and take stock. Each author has assumed the role of guide by raising thought-provoking issues and posing critical questions. By examining these issues and considering these questions, we can embark on the slow process of transformation — reflecting on our values, uncovering our assumptions and biases, and analyzing the bases that have guided our decisions. They ask us to step outside our comfort zone and imagine, dream, and create a vision of what *could be,* rather than what *is,* in this new global world of ours. What the authors ask of us requires thought, integrity, courage, and commitment. In the process of such reflections we will be transforming ourselves. We can begin to broaden the dialogue by having a conversation first with ourselves, then with our friends and colleagues, then with others. We invite you to read these papers, share them, and enter into discussion and debate.

Any innovation begins with an idea. But ideas are only the first step towards transformation. "Ideas won't keep," wrote the renowned mathematician, philosopher and educator Alfred North Whitehead. "Something must be done about them" (http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Alfred_North_Whitehead). We at *CJNR* are proud to have done something by publishing these important papers and continuing the conversation in the hope of broadening the dialogue.

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Editor-in-Chief Emeritus

References

Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th ed.). New York: Free Press.