

From the Editor-in-Chief

Creativity Core to the rEvolution of Education

“The challenge now is to transform education systems into something better suited to the real needs of the 21st century. At the heart of this transformation there has to be a radically different view of human intelligence and of creativity” (Robinson 2011: p. 14)

Although nursing education in Canada has undergone marked changes over the last 50 years, with the advent of technology mediated approaches to teaching, learning, and healthcare delivery, it essential and of some urgency to dramatically rethink the foci and methods of undergraduate nursing education now. Whether health promotion, maintenance or restoration, the healthcare needs of a predominantly older Canadian demographic have shifted. Similarly the locus and modes of care delivery are continuing to devolve from the bastions of hospital care to home and community-based care supported by inter-professional teams of clinicians with ever broadening scopes of practice. Thus nurses' work and the nature of practice environments are rapidly evolving such that the requisite skills and knowledge of practitioners may be sadly lacking in our new graduates. Not to mention that the undergraduate student of today is inclined to want to learn in ways different from the predominant enduring methods provisioned by our academic institutions. As the rethinking of nursing education unfolds, the creativity element of leadership will be essential to our collective success.

In previous issues of *CJNL*, authors have highlighted the key recommendations arising from the CNA's National Expert Commission (Villeneuve and Mildon, 2013a; 2013b). In relation to nursing education, the commission specifically underscored the importance of collaboration among professional associations, educators, scientists, unions, and employers to reach "consensus on the scientific knowledge, education, competencies and skill sets demanded of effective 21st century registered nurses." They noted that "curricula are out of date and out of step with the transformations" that lay ahead in healthcare, and issued a call to make radical changes in healthcare education including new topics and teaching methods (CNA 2012: 45). Another call to action which is inextricably connected to any revamp of content and techniques is the need to escalate the use of technology – in their words: "Learning to take full advantage of technology should be just as important a part of education and employer orientation as learning about medications" (2012: 46).

Subsequent to the release of the commission's report was the constitution of a think tank to address the future of nursing education in Canada. A report of those deliberations has also been tabled (MacMillan 2013) and the key directives synthesized for our readership (MacMillan and Gurnham 2013). Of particular note was a clarion call for a national review of nursing education, the likes of which has not been undertaken since 1965. In this issue, Baker provides us with a synopsis of some significant milestones in Canadian nursing education including the outcomes of previous landmark studies. Pilj-Zeiber and colleagues provide an historical perspective on what the shift to baccalaureate education has meant for contemporary nursing practice in Canada. They posit that debates about the value of education versus service, professional versus vocational identity, and theoretical versus practical knowledge persist in the midst of concerns regarding the misalignment of education and practice.

Regardless of these debates, let's be sure not to exclude the target of our intentions in the discussion. We are seeing a new kind of learner with different needs, capabilities and resources; our students are products of a technology-mediated society and as such have very different expectations. Days of the "sage on the stage" are no longer acceptable; being the "guide on the side" is the order of the day (King 1993). In rethinking nursing education it is equally essential to challenge pedagogical techniques and traditions in order to be effective and responsive to the needs of the new generation of student nurse. Personally the experience of trying new methods in the classroom and online (e.g., flipped classroom, wikis, MOOCs, Peer Scholar[®] – these are yours' to explore) can be profoundly rewarding if not an opportunity to overturn one's entrenched views of teaching and learning. While not at all discomfited by technology, presently designing an online graduate course on leadership and administration has

presented this academic with some interesting possibilities. While lamenting the loss of “the classroom” on the one hand, the demand for creativity in designing an online learning space that incorporates effective elements of student engagement and creates a community of learning is kind of fun. The old dog can learn new tricks.

As Sir Ken Robinson (2011) wrote: “the role of a creative leader is not to have all the ideas; it’s to create a culture where everyone can have ideas and feel that they’re valued.” Let’s get creative together!



Lynn M. Nagle, RN, PhD
Editor-in-Chief

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