
From the editor

THINGS TO FEAR

Having eyes, but not seeing beauty;
having ears, but not hearing music;
having minds, but not perceiving truth,
having hearts that are never moved
and therefore never set on fire
These are the things to fear. . . .¹

These words are quoted by Kuroyanagi-san from her noted teacher Sosaku Kobayashi as a tribute to the educational wisdom that he brought to schooling in Japan in the pre-World War II years. Kuroyanagi-san tells her story of being expelled from first grade for failing to conform to the behavioral expectations of her teachers. Her mother wisely recognized her daughter's potential and found Kobayashi-san's alternative school, making a dramatic difference in her daughter's educational experience. Kuroyanagi-san is now a noted figure in Japanese television.

As I read her moving and inspirational biographical account, I wondered how many nursing students experience what Kobayashi-san has identified as the things to fear. Nurses work every day with dynamics of human experience that should set our hearts on fire, that reveal the deepest truths of human experience. And yet, in my own experience as a nursing student, I was taught to deny these things. Likewise, the "scientific" tradition of objectivity certainly conveys an overriding message of denial.

Bevis and Watson² have identified three sources from which an urgent need for a change in nursing education arises. Each of these three sources also imply the shifts that we might begin to make:

- *The need for education accessibility.* The prescribed curricula and learning experiences in much of nursing education, like that encountered by Kuroyanagi-san in first grade, deny the unique, changing, and complex life circumstances of many current and potential nursing students. More often than not, when the realities of students' lives interfere with our "perfect" plan, or when they do not fit our molds, we blame the student. It is time to

create approaches in nursing education that are responsive to diversity, and that honor diversity.

- *The need for congruence in nursing.* Nurse educators can no longer afford to teach theories of nursing and theories of caring in our classrooms, while acting otherwise in our relationships with one another and with students. When the words and actions of teachers do not match, we teach something that denies the realities of our words.

- *Current social and health care needs of the population.* The typical content-oriented curricula of most nursing schools today are clearly inadequate to prepare the practitioner of the future to address the growing medical care crisis, the demands of growing complexity, or information overload. Our current curricula are inadequate to prepare the people who may become the architects for a true health care system.

I submit that we need curricula that foster thoughtful reflection and action toward transforming the world. We need curricula that plant the seeds of agency and empowerment. We need curricula that give the tools for forming meaningful human connections, with one another and with people we serve. We need curricula, most of all, that will set our hearts on fire.

The articles in this issue of *ANS* (14:3) add significantly to a growing body of literature that will guide these transformations. I welcome each reader's thoughtful consideration, reflection, and response.

REFERENCES

1. Kuroyanagi T; Britton D, trans. *Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Window*. New York, NY: Kodansha International; 1981.
2. Bevis, EO, Watson J. *Toward a Caring Curriculum: A New Pedagogy for Nursing*. New York, NY: The National League for Nursing; 1989.

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