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Especially for readers of good science

Emiko Yoshikawa Egry¹

It is the duty of all to repay society for its investment in public higher education, mainly of those affiliated with universities, either as faculty, students or (why not?) technical-administrative staff.

Society is rewarded in different ways: either through professional education, continuing qualification, community services or knowledge production, the latter of great social value in the nursing context.

The University of São Paulo School of Nursing is concerned with passing on its products to society, which should be adequate, compatible and of doubtless quality. That is why faculty, (undergraduate and graduate) students and technical-administrative staff unremittingly work to produce something that is important for Nursing and health.

Our specific production mode (work process) is peculiar enough to leave its marks on our products. Thus, to do research, for example, a research group should not only dedicate itself to the research problem, but also improve interpersonal relations, within a process that is knowingly hierarchical in terms of knowledge level, but totally horizontal in terms of participation and dedication.

Researching and teaching research are distinct processes, but need to be improved jointly, under penalty of impeding young researchers from fully understanding the research process. Like with the work processes to produce goods and services, subjects alienated from the research process (who neither understand the links between End, Means and Instruments and Object of work processes, nor see themselves as a fundamental link to achieve the product) turn into subjects without freedom, freedom to create, express and try out new directions and routes. It is similar to care delivery in nursing: if the care process does not contain important meanings for the caregiver and the person receiving care, little can be said about the results, despite protecting patients from hospital infections and other risks, feeding, medicating and making them comfortable, as we have done since the start of the profession, more or less sophisticatedly, depending on the time and place.

Teaching how to do research, therefore, means interacting with researchers, either in one's own or with other groups. Hence, the teaching task ends up becoming one of learning to research, as we all have to learn from other people's experiences besides our own.

On a recent visit to King's College in London, I participated in a dense seminar to discuss our research results with researchers who make us reflect profoundly on the findings: Dr. Sarah Cowley (our advisor in one of the studies) and Dr. Gillian Aston. We learned how to apprehend new empirical categories and compare our data with such a distinct political and practical health and nursing reality as in the United Kingdom.

When we teach how to do research, we also learn the codes, or what Kuhn would call the paradigms of science, in our case Nursing science. Younger scientists are sometimes tempted to create new paradigms without knowing existing ones. That is a dangerous course, at risk of reinventing the wheel...

Good science, then, is orchestrated in its own new knowledge conception: it cannot be merely candidate results for dogmas in a given area. Good Nursing science is produced within ethical (which has very little to do with consent terms) and esthetical rigor, within the intellectual rigor of fruitful cumulative reflection (which sometimes takes time, after all we are not all Einstein), in the humility of submitting result discussions to peers and in the wealth of idea and routes to move beyond.

Researchers at the University of São Paulo School of Nursing have been dedicated to good Nursing science production for decades. Not out of vanity, but because the society that sustains us has to (needs to) be rewarded.

This special issue of the Revista da Escola de Enfermagem da Universidade de São Paulo was produced by the many research groups that have dedicated themselves to research and to preparing scientific researchers.

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Due care was taken to allow the groups to express their most significant and original work, the most interesting of many ongoing studies, besides showing the cumulative nature of the produced knowledge. Department research groups working in the following sub-themes were invited to register: Women's health-disease process; Teaching and education; Assessment methods; Health assessment instruments and indicators; Care technologies and ethical, environmental and social implications and Theoretical bases of research.

The groups registered, were submitted to ad-hoc reviewers and those found mature to demonstrate part of the research groups' significant production are published in this special issue.

To close off 2009's activities, I would like to invite all readers to appreciate this special issue, dedicated to researchers and producers of good Nursing science in Brazil.