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## Triggers in Our Pursuit of Continuing Nursing Education

I believe the value of continuing nursing education is formed deep within the nurse's journey. Along our career paths, many triggers and circumstances can generate sparks, whether it might be family, faculty, colleagues, role models, a need for further academic education, a new clinical interest, or even living in a state that has mandatory requirements. Then, whatever is ignited hopefully inspires a personal commitment that will be projected outward throughout our own professional service. For me, it has been mentoring, sharing (publishing), and policy development.

I truly value my career path and the many nurses who have guided (and pushed) me forward, whether in various clinical units or a series of staff development positions, as well as faculty positions. While living in Alaska, I had the opportunity to be part of an Health Resources & Services Administration grant focused on developing nontraditional continuing education for more than 4,000 nurses living in a state twice the size of Texas and, at that time, with four time zones. What wonderful challenges! Our grant evaluator, Signe Cooper (WI), was an exceptional mentor in her own quiet, knowledgeable, innovative way, while always demonstrating how to be an inspirational, self-directed learner! She watched us as we achieved our grant objectives, then would say "Where are you going to publish about that?" quickly adding the necessary confidence and needed assistance. Personally, she wrote seven books and more than 75 articles in her lifetime, likely a major contribution to her being recognized by the American Academy

of Nursing as a Living Legend. State, national, and international professional organization involvement was also important to her. There, I observed some of the robust, trail-blazing pioneers of continuing nursing education in action including Merle Heick (IA), Joyce Hoover (TX), Helen Tobin (OH), Pat Yoder-Wise (CO), Audrey Spector (GA), Belinda Puetz (IN), Dorothy Coye (MI), Dorothy del Bueno (PA), Elda Popiel (CO), Alice Kuramoto (WA), and Ruth Cravens (WA). They certainly embedded my values of continuing nursing education.

This week, I returned from a nursing reunion where for 2 days I listened (and also participated) to stories from my classmates about "the good olde days." Yet, after a while I couldn't help thinking what was good for us 55 years ago certainly does not apply as much anymore. Time moves forward and the technology/knowledge explosion continues. How can those of us as continuing educators make an impact? Who can you mentor? How will you meet the persistent professional challenges using continuing education? Are you ready? The first editor of *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, Dorothy Hutchison, in a March/April 1976 editorial, ended her Mission of Continuing Education discussion with:

Study all alternative methods.  
Chart your course, but don't expect smooth sailing.  
Batten down the hatches.  
Use all relevant navigational aids.  
Steady at the helm...  
Damn the torpedoes...  
And full speed ahead. (p. 6)

*Note. Readers may access Dorothy Hutchison's editorial online for free during our 50th anniversary year.*

### REFERENCE

Hutchison, D.J. (1976). A mission for continuing educators. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 7(2), 5-6. Retrieved from <https://www.healio.com/nursing/journals/jcen/1976-3-7-2/%7B0ab95b31-b5fc-4485-9c63-d53f68fe87e2%7D/a-mission-for-continuing-educators>

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