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Our GOLDEN Anniversary: Guiding, Orienting, Leading, Developing, Educating, Nurturing

Growing up and beginning my nursing career in Wisconsin, one could hardly ignore the influence of Signe Skott Cooper (1921-2013), known for developing the concept of continuing nursing education in her 60-year nursing career. In order to teach nursing students, all faculty were unified statewide by the two State Board of Nursing—required continuing education courses attributed to Signe—courses that addressed curriculum development and course design, as sound today as they were in the past.

My early career work began in continuing education before moving into nursing administration and academic leadership roles. I have always believed that a key leadership trait and skill set that would define a successful leader was the ability to teach and influence others. Great leaders—and great continuing education/professional development educators—shared the GOLDEN rule together: we Guide, Orient, Lead, Develop, Educate and Nurture those for whom we are called to serve. This is as true today as it was 50 years ago, when *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing (JCEIN)* was launched. Through the work of the wise and dedicated editors who have championed this journal, the GOLDEN mantra surely is a curricular thread that binds their individual talents and abilities together.

Because I believe so strongly in education as a function of leadership and with the idea that leaders continue to evolve over a lifetime of experience, this is an opportunity to address the notion of lifelong learning. Like all good

ideas (i.e., patient-centered care, evidence-based practice, population health), sometimes great concepts lose their impact over time. As an entrée to the next 50 years, here is a refinement that I would like to offer: replace the term *lifelong learning!* Before you take this as sacrilegious, hear me out.

Lifelong learning is inevitable. The functioning human is compelled to learn through the process of living—we cannot not learn. We may not always behave in ways that project what we have learned, but the capacity is present. In its place and in Signe Skott Cooper's spirit, I advance the term of *intentional learning* throughout life as the hallmark of professional continuing education. Each nurse must own and evolve in a manner that has meaning and purpose and is relevant to the times, locations, and human and technologic advances that mark our existence. This must be intentional and not left to serendipity. Reviewing dictionary meanings, intentional learning would reflect mindfulness, show greater purpose, and consider knowledge, skills, abilities, and contextual flexibility requisite for the present and into the future. Intentional learning across the life span makes room for enriched professional identity—what it means to be a nurse and not just perform the tasks ascribed to nurses.

We know that individuals learn in different ways, as evidenced by scholars exploring cognition, affective experience, kinesiology awareness, and spirituality and mindfulness. Intentional learning across the life span can accommodate learning preferences to optimize outcomes in whatever environment the nurse is engaged in. Intentional learning enriches the relationship dynamic between the educator and learner, causing the educator to reach deeper into the learner's psyche to motivate, discover, and tap into curiosity, and to generate strategies to stretch the learner in ways that will advance the discipline, the professional, and those being served.

So, with optimism for how continuing education/professional development educators, this journal, and those who embark in intentional learning will face the future,

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I offer the GOLDEN rule on *JCEN*'s golden anniversary, with a revitalized purpose to be known as intentional learning. I conclude with the two words that Patricia Yoder-Wise, our Editor, always beseeches me and all of us to do: Lead on!

Note. Readers may access a collection of this and other 50th anniversary guest editorials, along with classic articles and American Nurses Association landmark statements, online for free during our 50th anniversary year, at <https://www.healio.com/nursing/journals/jcen/50th-anniversary-collection>.