



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Precision Vision: Empowering Innovation and Well-being

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Some things are inevitable, like taxes, death, and change. Change can be challenging. However, there are strategies that can be implemented to help transition through change. One of these strategies is innovation. It can be a tool leading to positive outcomes and change. Innovation can be a process which translates an idea or thought into a way to satisfy unmet needs or expectations. This creative process provides agility in resolving critical problems.

Think about the recent critical need for personal protective equipment and the response of many university schools of engineering using their 3D printers to create face shields, or the thousands who cranked up their sewing machines to create cloth masks with pockets where HEPA filters could be inserted. These activities demonstrate innovative solutions to unmet needs resulting in positive change.

Translating Evidence into Practice

Currently, it takes approximately 17 years for evidence to be translated into practice changes.¹ Yes, that is correct, 17 years! That is, indeed, a shocking amount of time for new knowledge to be translated. When reading the literature about barriers to this translation of evidence into healthcare organizations and nursing care, one of the interesting limitations impeding the pace of change is simply end users (e.g., bedside clinicians) were not included in the research studies that generated the evidence. This results in a translation gap.

This chasm must be bridged before the evidence can be applied by the bedside clinicians. This bridging usually comes in the form of nursing innovation. One way to accomplish this bridging is through quality improvement projects to test the innovations at various stages. This process gives the implementors the flexibility to refine the translation process as needed to create a good fit for their unit and nursing practice. A good example of this is nurses' implementation of the ICU liberation bundles for decreasing delirium and postoperative cognitive decline. Nurses in cardiovascular ICUs struggled with the early ambulation part of the bundle within the recommended time frames for early ambulation, with many patients still on ventilators or even balloon pumps.² By empowering innovation, these nurses implemented a multidisciplinary approach to early ambulation and successfully implemented this practice change.

ASPAN's Innovation for its 39th National Conference

Many times, this creative process of innovation is hidden. There may not be an awareness of it even occurring. However, it is happening every day. Here is an example. In the face of the coronavirus pandemic, ASPAN canceled its 39th National Conference. This left many vital processes the organization depends upon, incomplete or undone. This includes the Representative Assembly, the Board of Directors' meetings and strategic planning session, all of which usually occur during national conference and are vital to ASPAN as an organization.

Of these, the most challenging to lead without a face-to-face meeting was the strategic planning session. Historically, this is accomplished in a day-long, in-person meeting led by a strategic planner or coach. This was not feasible in the current environment. A search of the literature revealed many instruments and tools used by other industries (business, engineering, and quality/process improvement) to accomplish group strategic planning. These instruments were synthesized into multiple surveys. Between the several surveys and multiple lively facilitator-led discussions using technology, a new strategic plan was born from an innovative process.

Opportunities to Learn Innovation Skills

Creative thinking, innovation, flexibility, and adaptability are skills which can be learned or strengthened with regular use. The first step is to embrace change, to open the mind to new ideas or concepts, to believe the world is full of endless possibilities. With intention and practice, these possibilities become more apparent. There is a beautiful line from poet Anaïs Nin demonstrating this: "... the day came that the risk of remaining tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to bloom."³

There are several free of charge education opportunities available to help one bloom in creative thinking or innovation. Coursera, an online "college" offers several creative thinking and innovation classes. These can be found at: <https://www.coursera.org/courses?query=creative%20thinking>

Alternatively, the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing) is offering a free online design thinking course intended for nurses. The Director of Innovation and Co-Principal Investigator of Design Thinking for Health, Mary Leary, MSN, MPH, RN, states: "Innovation is not just one thing. It includes technology and medical devices, but also the methodologies we use to solve complex health problems, the systems and processes we create, and how we communicate with our patients, their families, and the broader public."⁴

The Penn Nursing education for design thinking can be found at: <https://designthinkingforhealth.org/>

A Final Thought

While the words innovation and invention are often used interchangeably, there actually are distinct differences. An invention is the result of a creating something new. However, this new item may or may not be innovative, it may just be the newest mousetrap in the history of 300 years of mouse traps. The concept of a new "use" of an idea is innovation and results in revolutionary changes to the previously existing process or solution. So, I challenge you to learn more about innovation, look for it within your institution and your unit. Empower your potential to become a nurse innovator!

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