

**Reflections on
Florence Nightingale's Legacy
from three Royal College of Nursing members
on the 200th anniversary of her birth
and in the International Year of the Nurse
12 May 2020**



On 7th May 1970 a *Nursing Times* editorial addressed the then GNC's intention to take the State Final Practical Examination out of the School of Nursing and back into the wards, with assessment by ward sisters, four times in the three-year course. In the late 1980s these were discontinued in favour of continuous assessment, in a format not unfamiliar to students today.

As a one-time Teacher I often think how this approach to assessing that vital part of nursing, actual patient care, owes much to Nightingale. This same editorial, now 50-years-old acknowledges her comment of 1893:

**“If you examine at all, you must examine all day long ...
current examination, current supervision as to what the nurse is doing...”**

Her relevance to present day nursing and nursing education
is there for all to see ...

Professor Dame Betty Kershaw
Former President, Royal College of Nursing



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Florence Nightingale recognised that adequate supplies and equipment was necessary to provide care. She introduced environmental standards around cleaning and ventilation and delivered 'basic care' to ensure that fundamental needs were met, such as bathing, clean clothing, dressings and adequate food.

The psychological and emotional well-being of her patients were also supported and these key aspects of nursing care are evident today. They have been brought into sharp focus as nursing teams support the response to the global pandemic, wherein these fundamental aspects of care are critical to the safety, well-being and outcomes for patients, staff and communities across all care settings.



Estephanie Dunn
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200 years after her birth, Florence Nightingale remains a towering figure in nursing history. Her work and writing remain highly relevant today. For example, I feel she encapsulated all the 'six Cs' known to modern nurses:



My favourite quotation of hers is:

**“Let us never consider ourselves finished nurses.
We must be learning all of our lives.”**

Professor Claire Chatterton
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