

# Understanding Nursing Effectiveness: A Person-Centred Perspective on the Nurse's Role



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## Starting Point: Paradoxes of Nursing (Research)

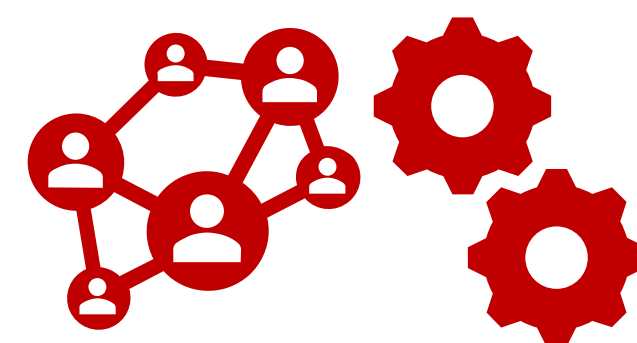
### The unique contribution of nursing

Despite its indisputable societal mandate, historically, it has proven challenging to articulate and demonstrate the unique contribution of nursing to the health and wellbeing of people.



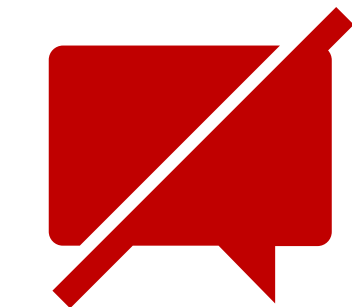
### Relationality versus functionality

Mismatch between theoretical premises of nursing (nursing is social action, realised through the interaction between the nurse and the patient) and their representation in quality and regulatory frameworks (research).



### Scientific speechlessness

Discrepancy between subjectively experienced effectiveness and objectively ascertainable effectiveness. Despite diligent methodological efforts and ample anecdotal evidence, traditional research designs fail to demonstrate nursing effectiveness.

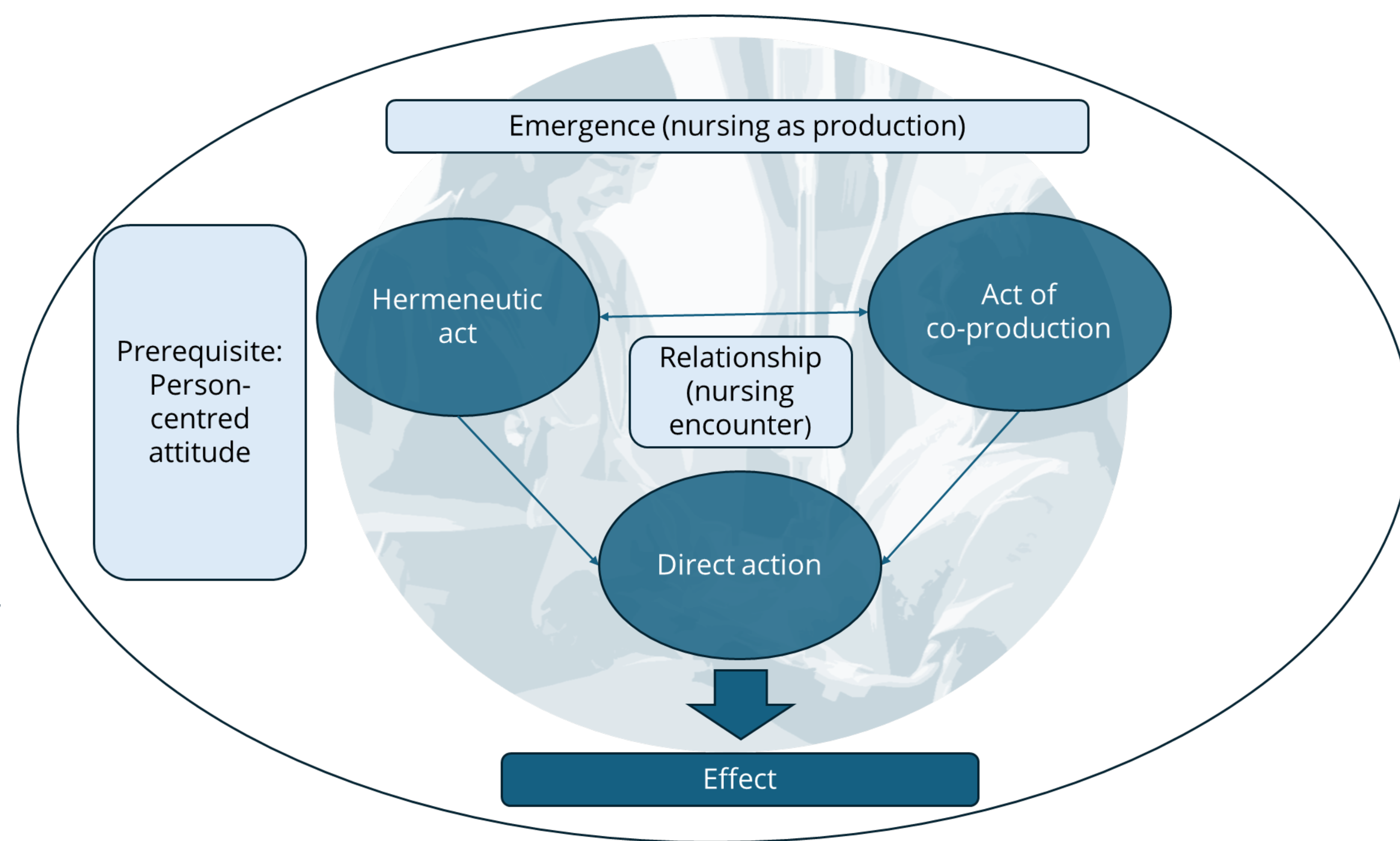


## The Empirical Base: Qualities and Complexities of Nursing

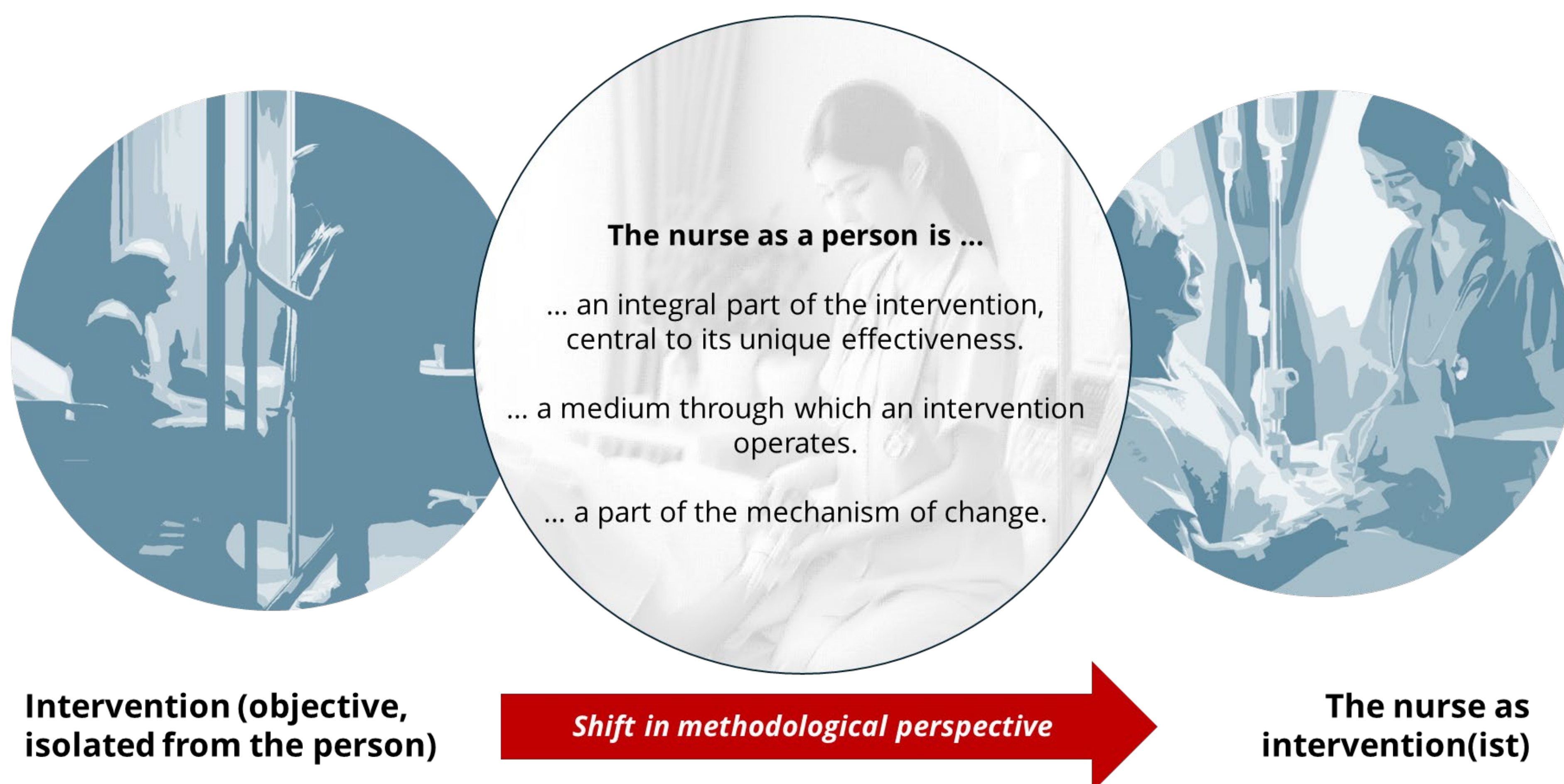
In several of our research projects, at the intersection of person-centredness and theory-based programme evaluation, in fields including dementia care (Karrer et al., 2023; Schnell et al., 2022, Adlbrecht et al., 2018), paediatric palliative care (Haselmayer et al., 2021) and digital counselling for family caregivers (Clement et al., 2023) in the long-term care, acute care and homecare setting, the **nurse and their unique characteristics emerged as one common factor that is central to the effectiveness of interventions.**

In all these projects, programme theories or theoretical models were developed, conceptualizing modes of action and mechanisms of change of complex nursing interventions.

Nursing interventions take place in the context of encounters, unfolding their effectiveness through interaction. Professional knowledge, knowledge of the individual situation of the persons being cared for as well as the attitude and values of the nurse are the necessary foundations that make a nursing intervention effective.



## The Case for Methodological Justification



In pursuit of a genuine, original nursing perspective, a few aspects might be worth rethinking:

- At the level of philosophical underpinnings of research, some crucial concepts might benefit from being revisited, including, for instance, concepts of causality, evidence, and effectiveness.
- Methodological decisions need to be justified with regard to the premises of nursing: instead of asking how a method or research design can be implemented in nursing, we should ask what approaches are needed to address the unique characteristics of nursing.
- This implies a different starting point of inquiry: starting from a theory about the nature and operating principles of nursing interventions, new methodological approaches can be developed or established approaches adapted so that they can do justice to the nature of nursing (rather than the other way around).

**"... one cannot design out complexity."** (Pawson, 2013:50)

### References

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