

## **Sigma's 30th International Nursing Research Congress**

### **A Phenomenological Study Investigating Faculty Developing as Scholarly Writers**

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#### **Purpose:**

Disseminating research, practice, and teaching innovation via scholarly writing and professional presentations is an expectation of the academic nurse educator. Sharing scholarly work with others helps to connect colleagues globally with critical knowledge that may enhance nursing education, benefit practice, and improve health outcomes. This is only one of the many roles that faculty must fulfill as academic nurse educators.

The National League for Nursing (2005, 2012) provided the first evidence-based identification of competencies associated with the academic nurse educator role in the *Scope of Practice for Academic Nurse Educators*. This document outlines the essential competencies and associated task statements and has been used to guide faculty role development. One of the identified competencies is engaging in the scholarship of teaching with the sharing of work through scholarly writing. Scholarly writing is “specialized in nursing, communicates original thought, includes support from a body of literature, contains formal language consistent with the discipline of nursing, and is formatted in a manner consistent with peer-reviewed publications” (Gazza, Shellenbarger, & Hunker, 2013, p. 268). Scholarly writing remains an important aspect of the faculty role as well as academic career progression. Ten years after the original *Scope of Practice* was released Halstead (2019) reports that these competencies, including engaging in scholarship, remain a continued aspect of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the nurse educator role.

Successfully engaging in scholarship as an academic nurse educator requires effective use of scholarly writing to communicate critical knowledge. Unfortunately, not all nurse faculty are engaged in the creation and dissemination of scholarly work. Faculty encounter challenges that may be related to varying writing skills, past writing experiences, feelings faculty have about writing, available writing time, or other issues that interfere with scholarly writing (Driscoll & Powell, 2016; von Isenburg, Lee, & Oermann, 2017). Various authors have discussed attempts to enhance writing by engaging faculty in writing development assistance programs yet the findings of effectiveness are mixed (Kulage, & Larson, 2016; Noone & Young, 2018; von Isenburg, Lee, & Oermann, 2017). Little is known about the actual experience of nurse faculty developing as scholarly writers.

#### **Methods:**

To better understand how nursing faculty develop these essential scholarly writing skills, a hermeneutic phenomenological study was conducted in 2018 to uncover the experience of their development as scholarly writers. Digitally recorded personal interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of 12 nursing faculty. Participants were Caucasian (100%), primarily female (83.3%), employed full time (83.3%), and represented diverse faculty ranks, tenure status, and employment classification (full and part-time). All informants had some prior scholarly writing experience that resulted in publication. After obtaining consent for this institutional review board approved study interviews were arranged at mutually convenient times. During audiotaped interviews informants were asked to respond to a broad opening statement inquiring about their experience developing as a writer. Follow-up probes were used to facilitate a rich discussion about the topic. After transcription of the interviews, a 5-step data analysis process was used to identify common themes (Barritt, Beekman, & Mulderi, 1984). The criteria of

credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were used to establish trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **Results:**

Five themes emerged from the data analysis process and included: pulling everything together, steering me in the direction, using feedback to grow, squeezing it in, and staying on task. Informants described specific points in their formal education where they pulled everything together to produce scholarly writing. Assignments, activities, and other faculty were responsible for helping developing writers pull their knowledge together in a scholarly manner. Informants were steered through the process of scholarly writing by current scholarly writers who modeled writing, provided opportunities for writing, and reviewed their work. The informants used both positive and/or negative feedback from others to grow and improve their writing. They persisted despite difficulties they encountered with writing. One of the challenges that scholarly writers faced was squeezing writing in with the multitude of other activities and responsibilities, which often took precedence over scholarly writing. These informants discussed the challenge they faced with squeezing writing into their lives. All informants described ways to stay on track with scholarly writing. Most informants talked about writing with others, either in pairs or groups. When writing with others the informants discussed being accountable for helping the group reach their common goal related to writing.

### **Conclusion:**

Suggestions for strategies that can be used to foster scholarly writing emerge from this study. Since collaboration with other scholars helped to overcome perceived personal writing obstacles, nursing faculty should seek out opportunities to work with others on scholarly activities. Both informal and formal collaborators and approaches facilitated success. Since mentors were helpful in providing guidance and motivation, faculty should consider mentoring relationships with colleagues and students. Even though qualitative findings are meant to be transferred to similar populations rather than generalized, nurse educators may want to consider these findings when working with emerging scholars such as new faculty and graduate students. Professional development initiatives can focus on addressing these writing concerns. Further study is needed to understand how to effectively provide approaches that will help faculty become skilled with this important nurse educator competency.

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### **Title:**

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### **Keywords:**

Faculty, Scholarship and Writing

### **References:**

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### **Abstract Summary:**

This presentation discusses a hermeneutic phenomenological study with 12 nursing faculty that uncovered their experience developing as scholarly writers. Five themes of scholarly writing development emerged and will be shared.

### **Content Outline:**

#### I. Background

A. Need for scholarly writing to communicate messages effectively and disseminate knowledge

B. Scope of Practice for Academic Nurse Educators

C. Literature review discussing problems faculty encounter with writing and strategies used to address these problems

#### II. Sampling

- A. Methods
- B. Demographics
- III. Data Collection
  - A. IRB approval
  - B. Informant recruitment
  - C. Interviews
- IV. Data analysis
  - A. Steps to ensure quality
  - B. Methods
- V. Findings
  - A. Pulling everything together
  - B. Steering me in the direction
  - C. Using feedback to grow
  - D. Squeezing it in
  - E. Staying on Task
- VI. Limitations
- VII. Recommendations
  - A. Professional development suggestions

First Primary Presenting Author

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