SHOWCASING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN QUALITY IMPROVEMENT, EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE, AND RESEARCH

To the Editor:

I applaud Dr. Shirey and her colleagues on their article about the differences between quality improvement, evidence-based practice, and research recently published in The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing (Shirey et al., 2011). I want to not only recognize them for the quality of their work, but also praise them for the manner in which the article was developed—the outcome of a “. . . faculty-led class assignment” (Shirey et al., 2011, p. 58).

As an experienced educator from both clinical practice and academic settings, I believe the authors have provided readers with a document that can facilitate collaboration between hospitals and schools of nursing and discussion among all nurses regarding the value and intertwined relationships of these three approaches to attaining quality nursing practice. The authors pose a challenge for educators in both nursing professional development and faculty roles to better understand how to prepare nursing students, as well as novice and experienced nurses, to become engaged in these approaches in practice.

The article provides an excellent focal point from which faculty can hold open discussions regarding ongoing questions related to the DNP (doctor of nursing practice) role, especially within schools of nursing that offer PhD (doctor of philosophy in nursing) programs. Topics of discussion include, but are not limited to, expectations regarding the final DNP project; the role of DNP faculty members and their valuable contributions to quality nursing practice; tenure and promotion indicators in tenure-track clinical practice positions; potential opportunities for DNP and PhD students to learn and practice together; and implications for advancing interdisciplinary collaborations.

Finally, the authors challenge journal editors and manuscript reviewers, who need to guide potential authors in quality improvement, evidence-based practice, and research initiatives.

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REFERENCE

Reply:

Dr. Lockhart, my coauthors and I express our deepest appreciation for your thoughtful letter. For us, this collaboration has been a gift that continues to give. First, our DNP students have had a beneficial mentored opportunity with scholarly writing. Many are first-time authors who have experienced the full publication process. Second, in sharing their learning from our class assignment, the students have contributed to knowledge synthesis and translation for the purposes of bridging the research-practice-academia gap and enhancing interprofessional collaboration. Finally, through letters such as yours, the students have witnessed the value of scholarly writing and the impact their contribution can have on our discipline. Many of the students have been bitten by the “writing bug,” so they will clearly continue to make lasting contributions to the profession.

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The authors disclose that they have no significant financial interests in any product or class of products discussed directly or indirectly in this activity, including research support.
doi:10.3928/00220124-20110222-05