

Advancing Nursing Education Scholarship: A Roadmap for Faculty Success

Scholarship in any field is important to the dissemination of knowledge and advancement of new ideas. Nursing has a strong foundation in education. Early doctorates in nursing were awarded as Doctor of Education degrees until nursing schools began to implement nursing research-focused PhD programs, which expanded as the National Institute for Nursing Research was created in the 1980s (Ketefian & Redman, 2015). Despite this strong foundation in education and nearly 20,000 U.S. full-time nursing faculty (Li, Turinetti, & Fang, 2018), the body of literature on nursing education practices is not as robust as the sheer number of educators in the field. There is an urgent need for nurse educators to share their expertise with the greater community. Nursing education is a continually evolving and dynamic field with significant changes in recent years, such as introduction of the practice doctorate, integration of technology in education, infusion of interprofessional education, and implementation of initiatives to increase nursing workforce diversity. It is critical to share “what works,” as well as “what doesn’t work,” to ensure the evolving dynamics of nursing education are adequately captured so best practices can be identified and incorporated.

I spent 6 years of my career focused on faculty development programs to increase scholarship in the area of nursing education research. In my work, I met with nursing faculty in both one-to-one and group settings to identify their scholarship goals and develop individually tailored plans to support the achievement of those goals. During this work, I witnessed common pitfalls that deterred nursing

faculty from advancing their scholarship goals. Primary pitfalls included:

- Balancing faculty priorities with scholarship goals. This was particularly true of clinical-track faculty who have high teaching loads and regularly practice clinically.
- Variation in what counts toward promotion and tenure, based on appointment type.
- Failure to convert presentations into publications.
- Perceptions that nursing education scholarship is not valued.
- Feelings of isolation due to academic silos and difficulty identifying role models and mentors for support.

These pitfalls are similar to barriers to scholarship in health professions identified by Smesny et al. (2007).

On the basis of these commonly encountered pitfalls, I emphasized manageable strategies that faculty could incorporate on an individual level to move them toward their scholarship goals while also promoting a culture of nursing education inquiry as a priority. This roadmap for faculty success is summarized here as the ABCs of advancing nursing education scholarship.

Advocate for Nursing Education Scholarship

It is important that one not only conducts scholarly work in nursing education but also advocates for nursing education scholarship. This can be accomplished in many ways, whether through voicing the importance of nursing education scholarship at curriculum and college meetings, being an active member of faculty development platforms at one’s university, or

belonging to a regional or national nursing organization where one can bring nursing education issues forward.

Block Time

To be productive in nursing education scholarly pursuits, goals must be designated and prioritized with a clear plan to achieve those scholarly goals. This means time should be identified and dedicated to achieving those scholarly goals. Time dedicated to nursing education scholarship should be blocked on one’s calendar. Additionally, one must commit to that appointment. Just as one would not skip a class they teach or an appointment with patients (except in special cases), nursing education scholarship should receive the same level of commitment.

Chunk Scholarly Work

Many individuals tend to not get excited at the prospect of writing an article or grant. As a result, it is easy to put off tackling certain aspects of scholarly endeavors that have less instant gratification. The result is typically procrastination and cramming. This only perpetuates feelings of stress and being overwhelmed that are often associated with accomplishing scholarly goals. Breaking down one’s scholarly goals into a series of milestones or deliverables that can be accomplished in a shorter time frame accomplishes a number of tasks: it keeps one on track to achieving their goals, reduces the stress of tackling a large project, and promotes feelings of accomplishment as each deliverable is met. For example, instead of trying to crank out an article in one weekend, try breaking it down para-

graph by paragraph or section by section and setting aside time to focus on only those specific smaller assignments.

Delegate Work Through Teams

Projects can be more fun when you work with a team. Working in teams can also reduce the load of accomplishing those scholarly goals. Delegating different sections of an article or grant to members of a team is an efficient way to expedite one's scholarship goals and distribute scholarly credit.

Educate Colleagues and Students About the Value of Nursing Education Scholarship

Openly share with colleagues and students the advances being contributed to nursing education through scholarship. Share a new teaching practice you just read about with a colleague, or introduce a new learning strategy to students. Just as evidence-based practice is emphasized

throughout nursing education in terms of clinical practice, it should also be emphasized in terms of teaching and learning practices as well.

Find Resources

Myriad great resources are available that support advancement of scholarly goals. Institutions often hold faculty development programs. Additionally, many useful blogs, articles, and books on how to write scholarly products (e.g., articles, grants, presentations) are available. Seek these resources out.

Nursing has a tremendous opportunity to accelerate the advancement of health care and health professions education by increasing its publishing visibility. Each publication in nursing education has the promise of sparking the next ideas that can matriculate into new innovations to improve the education of students and care of patients. I encourage you to publish the next piece of work that becomes

a source of inspiration for your fellow nurse educators.

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