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Mentoring the Novice Writer to Publicaton

Mentoring the Novice Writer to Publication: An Update from the INANE Student Papers Work Group

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NURSE AUTHOR & EDITOR, 2020, 30(3), 5

Many editors who attended the 2014 annual meeting of the International Academy of Nursing Editors (INANE) had noted an increase in student submissions and discussed some of the challenges in moving these manuscripts forward successfully to publication. Members who participate in INANE are dedicated to discussing and disseminating best practices in publication. Our discussion at the meeting led to the INANE Student Papers Work Group, a collaboration of five editors interested in exploring barriers to publication in the context of student writing.

In the past five years, we have conducted a survey of editors to seek feedback about student manuscript submissions to journals[4] and authored a white paper that offered tips based on this feedback from journal editors about helping students with the publication process.[1] Our research findings from closed and open-ended questions confirmed that most editors indicated concerns with student papers, and this reached across all levels of graduate programs.[4] In addition, our qualitative data demonstrated five emerging themes related to: 1) failure to follow author guidelines, 2) general characteristics of student submissions, 3) lack of professional behavior from students and faculty, 4) editor responses to student submission, and 5) faculty as mentors. Table 1 lists tips from editors that may be helpful for faculty serving as mentors to student writers. This evidence-based table can generate meaningful conversation among faculty related to program requirements, and program planning for necessary and available resources.

TABLE 1. EDITOR TIPS FOR FACULTY AS MENTORS TO STUDENTS

Program Requirement to Submit Manuscript: Thoughts to Consider
• The first and most important question is: Is a manuscript a realistic goal given the length of the program or coursework?   • Requiring students to write papers has value but encourage only students with a publishable paper to submit to a journal. Perhaps a student peer review process can be implemented to develop skills and identify those papers ready for submission.   • Avoid a blanket rule for submission of manuscript as requirement for course or graduation.   • If a requirement, advocate for sufficient number of faculty to mentor students and provide other supports.   • Faculty should take responsibility for quality of paper; this is a reflection on the academic program.
Faculty Challenges: Faculty need experience and dedicated time to mentor novice authors

- Are faculty:

    - Published or serving as peer reviewers?

    - Knowledgeable about publication process?

    - Experienced in writing and/or mentoring?

    - Able and willing to invest time and effort?

- Are there a sufficient number of faculty to mentor students?

Teaching Scholarly Writing: Novice authors need an intentional process to develop scholarly writing skills over time

- Make writing instruction part of coursework throughout entire program (e.g., content, depth, organization, grammar, language, format).

- Use a plagiarism detection software to detect high similarity scores early in the process.

- Teach ethical considerations for authorship (e.g., established ethical authorship criteria, such as those from the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICJME).[3]

- Consider a standalone course or workshop for graduate-level students.

- Require students to conduct peer review using a selected journal's format.

- Require practice:

    - Multiple writing assignments with faculty feedback before writing for submission.

    - Help students understand different types of scholarly writing as appropriate (e.g., research reports, quality improvement/projects, case studies).

- Design a process to help students learn about scholarly writing.

Teaching Manuscript Preparation: Novice authors need experienced faculty and support to help them.

- Teach the publication process (e.g., query letters, journal match and author guidelines for writing and submission, peer review, revisions and commitment to process, rejection).

- Teach students how to seek institutional review board (IRB) approval for manuscripts that report research, quality improvement (QI) projects, and case studies.

- Guide students to review and select appropriate journal (enlist a librarian to help with this).

- Assist with converting class papers to manuscript format, using journal guidelines.

- Read student papers, critique, edit, and assist with revisions.

- Ensure that the student writes in a scholarly tone and follows author guidelines.

- Help students understand value of rejection comments to guide future publications.

- Do not encourage students to submit low level and/or well-known information no matter how well written or organized.

- For those who submit, stress the full scope of author responsibilities when writing for publication, such as response to a positive review that suggests revision; response to editorial queries; and providing the editor with current contact information after graduation.

Source: Kennedy, M., Newland, J., & Owens, J.K., 2017.[4]

An important finding of our research was the need for mentoring by faculty to facilitate the writing process and increase the chance of publication. To address this finding, the published white paper briefly stated the scope of the problem, but most importantly presented many resources for both faculty and students in the form of two tables, one listing resources for faculty to use as mentors for students, and one with a list of suggested books and websites to provide information about scholarly writing.[1] We have disseminated these findings at multiple professional conferences from local to international in scope. Our next step was to develop a series of 12 checklists for use by students, faculty, and other reviewers as they begin and continue the writing process. These are available to download for free at the "Resources" section of the *Nurse Author & Editor* website. Table 2 lists the 12 checklists by name.

TABLE 2. INDEX OF CHECKLISTS

Checklist Number	Title

1	Scholarly Paper: General Checklist for Students or Novice Authors
2	Writing a Review of the Literature: Checklist for Students or Novice Authors
3	Writing a Manuscript from a Dissertation/Thesis: Checklist for Students or Novice Authors
4	Writing a Manuscript from an Evidence-Based Practice Project: Checklist for Students or Novice Authors
5	School Paper to Manuscript: Faculty Mentor Checklist
6	School Paper to Manuscript: Student Checklist
7	Brief Grid for Faculty/Mentor Feedback for General Scholarly Paper
8	Detailed Grid for Faculty Feedback for Basic Student Research Critique
9	Basic Grid for Faculty Feedback for Student Review of Literature
10	Basic Grid for Second Reader Feedback for Thesis or Dissertation
11	Basic Grid for Second Reader Feedback for Evidence-Based Practice Project
12	Grid for Second Reader Feedback for Manuscript

Although our initial work targeted student writing, many of our resources in both the white paper[1] and the 12 checklists are appropriate for novice writers who may be new to a tenure-track or clinical scholarship position or persons serving for the first time on a peer review board for a journal. All of the resources generated by the work of this group are based on the evidence we have collected.

Our discussions in 2014 about the emphasis on preparing manuscripts for submission to scholarly journals continues in nursing education today. Editors remain eager to publish quality submissions that add to the nursing literature, including manuscripts that report rigorous scholarly work by a student or novice author. Another area of concern that we have identified is a lack of understanding between the differences of a school paper and a scholarly manuscript. Thus, many student

submissions require a great deal of attention and revision. This is because the purpose and scope of a school assignment is typically very different from that of a publishable article. We have compiled a brief comparison of scholarly writing in Table 3 to describe these differences.

TABLE 3. BRIEF COMPARISON OF SCHOLARLY WRITING

Types of Scholarly Writing	Course Paper	Academic Culminating Project (Thesis, Capstone, Dissertation)	Manuscript for Submission to Journal
Purpose	To demonstrate knowledge of course concepts.	To demonstrate a synthesis of learning throughout a program.	To create an original take on the topic area by synthesizing known information and/or gaps and disseminating new knowledge or concepts important to nursing practice. A manuscript must clearly describe the contribution to the literature.
Scope	Determined by course faculty. Driven by course level and content.	Typically reports a research study or project, or a quality improvement initiative.	Tighter focus than culminating project; may discuss one part of study/project or include less detail.
Typical Length	Often 5-20 pages inclusive of title page and references.	Written in chapter format or following specific style such as SQUIRE[6] for QI projects.	Follows individual journal guidelines for writing and submission. Often 10-20 double spaced pages or 3000-5000 words. The

			Equator network (n.d.) provides specific reporting guidelines for many study types.[2]
References	Number and currency of references often specified by professor.	Often many, resulting from an exhaustive search of the literature. (i.e., multiple searches with multiple keywords until results repeat, indicating saturation).	Number and currency of references may be specified by journal guidelines. Reviews of literature are usually brief (about 2-4 paragraphs) unless the manuscript itself is a review of the literature.
Formatting	Almost always APA in nursing.	Almost always APA in nursing.	APA or AMA are most frequent formatting styles found in nursing journals.[5] Research reports should follow standard research report headings.

Assignments are submitted to an instructor from a writer in the student role. A well-crafted manuscript that describes a rigorous and important topic should not, and need not, be identified as "student" work, although it may be based on work done as a student. The resulting manuscript is the work of a nursing professional and should stand alone as such.

The important work of a writing mentor, faculty or otherwise, includes helping novice writers, students or otherwise, to envision their scholarly work as a contribution to the profession as a whole. It is our purpose as a workgroup to create and disseminate helpful evidence and resources to support faculty members as they facilitate dissemination of high quality scholarly student work to inform nursing practice, and

likewise to provide support and useful resources for any novice author. As editors, and authors ourselves, we appreciate those who seek and use published resources to inform their writing and look forward to working with nurses making an impact in the scholarly literature!

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Portland, Maine
INANE 2014