

# Creating a Culture for Publication Through Education and Mentoring

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Nursing administrators and researchers are well positioned to achieve innovative progress in clinical practice, leadership, and research through creating a culture of publication. Direct care nurses and advanced practice nurses often have fresh ideas about delivery of patient care but may consider publication of those ideas and results an impossible task. Creating a culture for publication can be challenging. By using a change model and focusing on mentoring, role modeling, education, securing appropriate resources, and celebration/recognition as key components, this important culture can be created. **Key words:** *culture, mentors, nurses, writing for publication*

**T**HE WORK ENVIRONMENT for the practice of nursing has long been acknowledged as one of the most demanding across all types of work settings.<sup>1,2</sup> By the same token, there is also an increasing expectation that both academic and clinical nurses will contribute to professional issues through scholarly publication.<sup>3</sup> Highlighting professional outcomes, such as scholarly publications, is important to organizations seeking to improve patient care and gain recognition as centers of excellence.<sup>4,5</sup> Publishing not only informs others about innovative or evidence-based clinical practice but also about research. Although scholarly publication is a valuable endeavor, it is not without barriers.<sup>4</sup> Commonly reported barriers to publishing include

lack of time, lack of knowledge, fear of failure or rejection, uncertainty, and the anticipated change in relationships and culture.<sup>6</sup> Any change in organizational process can potentially disturb the dynamic richness of the existing environment. Change can be defined as an alteration of a previous state of existing relationships<sup>7</sup> and can alter the spectrum of upstream as well as downstream relationships. Organizations can anticipate and address these barriers and create a culture that promotes scholarly publication and nursing professional development by understanding the change process.

The nature of nursing as a profession requires that clinicians possess specialized skills and knowledge, yet the mere acquisition of clinical skills may not be enough. There is a developmental aspect of professional nursing that does not always receive the same emphasis as clinical skills. These behaviors may include the ability to deliver oral presentations, poster development skills, and the ability to create written materials, such as scholarly publications or other professional documents.

Promoting participation in nursing scholarship can be challenging. The culture of scholarship is best described as an environment

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of creativity and productivity that extends from active investigations designed to create, advance, or transform new knowledge. The new knowledge becomes scholarship when it is evaluated by peer review and published. Initial steps to achieve a culture of scholarship include creating an awareness of the value of scholarship; providing supportive resources such as time, expert mentoring, and recognition for accomplishment; and giving encouragement to publish and disseminate in peer-reviewed journals.<sup>3</sup> This requires active support by nursing leadership as reflected in a dynamic infrastructure, well-defined method of evaluation, and system of rewards that adheres to the established evaluation criteria.<sup>8</sup>

The creation of scholarly work leading to publications is an integral component of nursing practice and is instrumental to developing a dynamic culture change in an organization. The revised Magnet model focuses on outcomes rather than structure and process, and scholarly publications can be used to highlight examples of organizational outcomes that can be embedded in Magnet documentation.<sup>5</sup> The current emphasis on evidence-based practice (EBP) underscores the importance of quality improvement and research dissemination.<sup>9</sup> It is particularly important for studies with clinical relevance to be disseminated, informing clinicians of research, quality improvement, or evidence-based knowledge that is relevant to their practice. When projects or studies reveal new findings and validate nursing interventions and best practices, that information must be communicated to nurses who can consider its use in practice. Disseminating the findings of research through publications not only provides evidence for nursing practice but also allows other researchers to replicate studies, extending what is known about nursing practice and the effects on patient outcomes.<sup>10</sup>

## ORGANIZATION GOALS/OBJECTIVES

In 2012, a 566-bed academic medical center located in the Midwest hired a program

director for nursing research to lead efforts to transform nursing research within the organization. The initial assessment completed by the person in this new role included the implementation of a framework for nursing research that is based on the concept of mentoring. In addition, specific goals related to publishing for the public and for health care providers were established.

## CHANGING CULTURE

To change the culture to one in which scholarly publication was “front and center” and highly supported, the decision was made to use a change model. The organization had previously adopted the Kotter Change Model<sup>11</sup> as a theoretical framework to use on its path to organizational transformation and used this model in this culture change. The 8 steps of the Kotter Change Model along with the organizational efforts associated with each step are outlined in the Table.

## STRATEGIES

While following this change model was deemed essential to success, the specific strategies that were used to develop a culture for scholarly publication were in the categories of mentoring, role modeling, education, availability of resources, and celebration/recognition. It was essential that the strategies used reach across these 5 areas to convey both a feeling of strong support as well as recognition for these efforts. The use of the various strategies also ensured that the needs of an increased number of staff were met, as these need differ from individual to individual.

### Mentoring

At this organization, the definition used to define mentoring is a supportive, facilitative person who works with a mentee in a learning relationship that is focused on meeting mentee learning goals to foster professional growth, someone who fulfills a role of expert for particular learning areas.<sup>12</sup> Mentors help

**Table.** Kotter 8-Step Change Model and Organizational Efforts

<b>Kotter Step</b>	<b>Kotter Action</b>	<b>Organizational Efforts to Address the Kotter Step</b>
1	Increase urgency	Magnet recommendations 2009; Magnet redesignation 2013
2	Build the guiding team	Establishment of a nursing research office, including director, nursing research and clinical nurse specialist for evidence-based practice (EBP)
3	Get the vision right	New director, nursing research initial assessment November 2012 identified need for increased publications
4	Communicate for buy-in	Vision shared with nursing leadership and nursing research council
5	Empower action	Implemented monthly scholarly forums; provided mentoring, role modeling, resources
6	Create short-term wins	Publications recognized in newsletter Poster fair; participants encouraged to develop poster into scholarly publication
7	Don't let up	Developed quarterly report to all ensure publications are being captured Continuing monthly scholarly forum
8	Make change stick	Implemented EBP fellowship in 2014

to facilitate and manage the change process. In the context of mentoring to create a culture for scholarly publication, mentors serve in both formal and informal roles within the organization. The Program Director for Nursing Research serves as a formal mentor for those interested in pursuing publication. This individual mentors staff regarding potential research projects, and the notion of scholarly publication is emphasized early on in these discussions.

Other key nursing leaders within our organization mentor staff in a variety of ways as well. The senior vice-president, Patient Care Services/chief nursing officer and the vice-president, Development, Nursing and Patient Care Services provide leadership to facilitate the development of productive collegial relationships between experienced and novice writers. An essential element of leadership is the ability to contribute to the growth of others through the provision of development opportunities.<sup>5</sup> This is accomplished through

the encouragement to publish and inclusion on manuscripts even when someone has not previously published.

Nurses are mentored by helping them to determine the best journal for publishing their topic and message. Factors that are considered when determining the best journal for a particular topic include discussing the intent of the manuscript, clarifying the message to be told, and identifying the best match for a journal. When possible, more than 1 journal is suggested, keeping in mind that the first journal may not accept the manuscript. Authors are shown the Author Guidelines from the journal(s), and these are reviewed to be sure there is an understanding of each of the guidelines.

Writing for publication requires making thoughts and ideas visible to others with clarity. Experienced writers, using mentoring to frame the relationship between novice and the experienced, develop mutually understood goals through trust and empathy.

Another part of scholarly publication that novice writers use most and benefit from is that of manuscript review and editing. Novice authors feel more comfortable having their outlines and draft versions of the manuscript reviewed by a mentor who is experienced in publishing, prior to submission to the actual journal. This allows them to know they are on track, and their work is well written and scholarly.

### **Role modeling**

It is important for those at the highest level to role model desired behaviors for all staff. This includes role modeling through publication. Executive nursing leaders have not only regularly published, but also have mentored many nursing staff as coauthors for publications. Many of those staff had not published before, and by doing so with someone who has previously published, the mystery and fear are taken out of the process.

Nursing leaders role model this behavior not only with other nursing leaders but also with front line nursing staff. Including front line staff who have participated in an improvement project in a publication of their work can seem overwhelming to the participating staff, but working on a manuscript together makes the work manageable and can increase engagement between staff and leadership. Front line nurses bring their expertise of care provision to the process, which can be empowering for staff.

### **Education**

The demands of nursing practice today require that nurses must learn, integrate, and synthesize knowledge everyday. Profound changes in nursing practice call for equally profound changes in education of nurses.<sup>13</sup> Providing ongoing education for nurses is an essential component of organizational strategic plans and is accomplished by several methods. Formal educational forums to promote scholarly writing and publication, such as Scholarly Forums and Clinical Grand Rounds, are held monthly to provide content and to support skill development and outcomes in

writing for publication. For example, several nurses presented on their experience with writing and publishing, which aided others who had lacked confidence and may have felt vulnerable to scrutiny of their writing. The collaborative governance council structure and numerous continuing education forums coordinated with the School of Nursing and interprofessional groups also contribute to development of leadership skills and a strong research and EBP culture.

### **Resources**

Organizational resources are provided for publication support. One resource is the Scholarly Forum program. Monthly, 1-hour, research and educational sessions held over the lunch hour are intended to provide the novice clinician with assistance in the research process, including demystifying the institutional review board application, and in writing for publication. Other avenues that are used to increase awareness at this organization are Nursing Grand Rounds, which provide a forum for nursing staff to share their expertise on clinical and leadership topics with other staff, Clinical Grand Rounds as a means to inform nurses and other clinicians of current projects, and the Nursing Research Council. The charge of the Nursing Research Council is to promote a spirit of inquiry to initiate research studies and develop EBP projects. The council supports research by increased awareness and participation in research activities, disseminates and translates research findings to practice, and contributes to the development of evidence-based nursing standards, practice guidelines, and policies.

### **Celebration/Recognition**

An important part of enhancing the culture for publication includes celebrating our successes and recognizing staff who publish. At our organization's monthly Patient Care Services Leadership Council, anyone who has published is invited to the podium, and it is announced that their work has been published and the title and authors are shared. New publications also are cited in the nursing

department publication called *Practice and Progress*. Staff publications are included in their annual performance appraisal as an accomplishment. Publications are included as a feature in the Nursing Clinical Advancement Program and can be used as one element to support the next clinical advancement level.

## OUTCOMES

Publication is a means of documenting outcomes, sharing knowledge, and promoting professional growth.<sup>4</sup> Organizational culture is pivotal to developing and promoting scholarly publication successes. The fervor to publish is evident. For example, since the program started, nurses at the organization published 15 manuscripts in year 1, 17 manuscripts in year 2, 18 manuscripts in year 3, and 19 manuscripts in current year. In addition, it is believed that the organization's scholarly contributions contributed to a successful Magnet redesignation in early 2014.

## DISCUSSION

Using the Kotter Change Model and 5 strategies of mentoring, role modeling, education, resources, and celebration/recognition, organizations can move toward a culture of encouraging staff to add to the body of nursing knowledge by sharing the important work that they do through scholarly publication. Using multiple strategies is key to demonstrating evidence of an expanded culture of scholarly work and an increased number of scholarly publications.

Writing for publication is also an important aspect of building research capacity. Nursing

research results are foundational to understanding clinical situations, guiding development of new practices, and making clinical decisions. As nurses develop knowledge that can be of value in providing better care, more effective interventions, and innovations in the delivery of care, their ability to report them in meaningful ways will continue to advance nursing's contributions that are accessible and meaningful to broad nursing communities.

## SUMMARY

The Institute of Medicine has recommended that nurses perform at their highest level of education and work in partnership with physicians and other health professionals in redesigning health care in the United States.<sup>14</sup> Continuing to emphasize the *value* of publishing as a professional responsibility remains essential to ensure ongoing success in the investment of excellence in nursing development. Nurse administrators and researchers are well positioned to encourage a vision of engaged nurses going beyond their comfort zone to write for publication. Change is never an isolated event; the ability to adapt and evolve with change are prerequisites for any type of culture change. Dedicated time and help for novice writers is not easy to provide on a consistent basis; however, the direct and indirect benefits to creating a culture change are well worth the effort. Organizational benefits may include a more engaged nursing staff and enhanced relationships between service and academic organizations. As successful organizations have experienced, these kinds of investments and strategies will create a work environment that allows nurses to flourish.

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