Doctoral Nursing Students' Use of Evidence-Based Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes of Scholarly Writing

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Learning Objectives

• After attending this session, the learner will be able to:

  • Describe US doctoral nursing students’ use of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of scholarly writing.

  • Discuss recommendations for faculty that may promote writing development and use of evidence-based knowledge, skills, and attitudes for doctoral nursing students.

Authors do not have any real or perceived vested interest that relate to this presentation.
Introduction

- Scholarly writing is required for doctoral program graduates who plan to disseminate their work and advance the discipline of nursing.
- Nurses enter with varying ability and experience with scholarly writing (Gazza, Shellenbarger, & Hunker, 2013).
- There are curricular differences noted amongst programs.
- There may be differences in students, their educational and experiential backgrounds (AACN, 2014).
Background

• Faculty may expect that students have advanced writing ability developed in the MSN and BSN.

• Students often face challenges and may struggle to write at the expected level (Ryan, Walker, Scaia, & Smith, 2014).

• Prior studies have suggested that writing develops throughout nursing education and requires that students learn to write at each level of education (Gazza, Shellenbarger, & Hunker, 2013).

• Limited evidence-based information to guide faculty and students to develop their writing (Hawks et al, 2015).
Purpose

• Assess doctoral nursing students’ use of an evidence-based set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes specific for scholarly writing.
Methods

• Recruitment
  • Nursing program administrators
  • Doctoral programs in the US
  • Discover Nursing website

• Self-Assessment
  • 35-items
  • 5-point Likert scale
  • Based on knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA) of scholarly writing (Hunker, Gazza & Shellenbarger, 2014).
Sample

17 PhD from 6 States

56 DNP from 11 States
Demographics

PhD Students

- Female, Caucasian, PT
- Mix of traditional, hybrid, online
- Mean age of 44
- All were at least half way through their program

DNP Students

- Female, Caucasian, FT
- Hybrid program
- Mean age of 37
- Unable to determine
Associations and Self-Assessed Usage

PhD Students

• No associations between self-assessment of KSAs and gender, age, enrollment status, GPA, or mode of delivery
• Either “sometimes” or “usually” used all of the KSAs

DNP Students

• Positive association between age and item response (P= .0378)—students who were older tended to rate the items higher on the self-assessment
• Either “sometimes” or “usually” used most of the KSAs
Recommendations

- Assess KSAs at the time of entry into the program
- Tailor writing assignments, guidelines and rubrics to help support and develop writing at the doctoral level
- Plan to provide general writing support
- Build curricula that offer sequential writing assignments that work to develop the students’ scholarly writing development over time
Recommendations

• Consider assignments and learning activities that allow DNP students to develop abstract writing and summarize work
• Encourage DNP student role modeling of scholarly writing for others
• Nurse educators need to further explore this issue and provide opportunities for DNP students to develop these essential skills
Limitations and Recommendations

- Small convenience sample of doctoral students provides beginning information
- Further study with a larger more diverse sample is needed
- By developing writing, faculty can support and promote the transformation of knowledge and practice to advance global health and nursing.
References


Questions