How Do I Get Started on Research or Scholarship?

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Various Strategies

• Turn a course paper into a manuscript
• Secondary data analysis
• Investigate a problem in clinical practice
• Collaborate with a colleague
• Start looking at a literature that interests you
• Talk with a senior colleague/potential mentor
Turn a Course Paper into a Manuscript

- State of the Science paper
- DNP Capstone Project
- Dissertation
Moving from course paper to journal manuscript

- Course work tends to be defensive: you’re justifying yourself and what you know to faculty
- Manuscript writing assumes your competence and requires you to lay out your argument clearly
- Coursework is writer-centered: faculty are a captive audience: reading your work is their job!
- Manuscript writing has to be reader-centered: First question asked is “can I be bothered to read this”? 
- Biggest problems:
  - You have something new to say but don’t make what’s original about your work clear
  - Literature review is not sufficiently comprehensive
How to Choose a Journal

• Choose a journal
  – Talk to senior colleagues
  – Use journal finder tool (see Duquesne University Gumberg Library reference): Where to Publish Your Research ... - Duquesne University
  – From International Academy of Nursing Editors (INANE): VIEW THE NURSING JOURNALS DIRECTORY
  – From Nursing and Allied Health Resources section of the Medical Library Association NAHRS List of Selected Nursing Journals

• Get additional feedback (present at a conference, go back to your faculty member to talk about turning into a manuscript, share with other faculty or peers)

• Determine the appropriate length
  – Many journals in the health sciences have max. lengths ranging from 2000 words to 4000 words (8 to 16 pages)
How to Become a Published Writer
(from 2017 series in AJN)

• Why Write? You can contribute to knowledge for a practice-based profession.
• Create a Writing Life. Read/Write regularly/Join or Create a Writing Group.
• Getting Ready to Write: Set aside space and time. Get to know the guidelines.
How to Become a Published Writer (from 2017 series in AJN)

• Types of Articles
  – Research that builds knowledge
  – QI projects with supporting data
  – Clinical review articles providing up-to-date evidence on best practice
  – Systematic/integrative lit. reviews
  – Insightful analysis of professional issues or health policy
  – Opinion essays that present a well-reasoned argument or discussion of topics of concern in health care
  – Personal narratives that provide insight into nursing or patient experiences

• Writing clearly and correctly
• Submitting and revising a manuscript/Getting published
Secondary Data Analysis

- Doing additional analysis with data already collected by someone else
- There are lots of databases out there
- Issues:
  - Ask questions to answer what you’re interested in?
  - Sample?
  - Data Quality
Investigate a Problem in Clinical Practice

- Suzanne S. Clark: “Prior to doing my research study Trends and Factors in Blood Pressure in Hyperbaric Medicine, I had been asked numerous times by patients undergoing hyperbaric oxygen treatments about why there was an increase in their blood pressures after their treatments. I provided patient teaching regarding increased blood pressure and vasoconstriction, but I could not explain it does not always occur during every treatment.”


- From: McLaughlin & Bulla, pp. 209-212
Investigate a Problem in Clinical Practice

- Nancy B. Hutchison & Megan E. Brunson: Overcome with patients’ discomfort related to thirst post open-heart surgery, several nurses created this research project as a result of discussing the differences between patient care in dealing with the thirsty, dry-mouthed patients.”

- Study Design: Randomized comparison of 4 groups: 30 cc/hr or less of ice chips, ice chips as desired up to 120 cc/hr, water at room temperature, as desired, up to 120 cc/hr, up to 120 cc/hr of Diet Sprite. No stat. differences in outcomes, most satisfaction with fluids vs. ice chips

- From: McLaughlin & Bulla, pp. 213-216
Cheryl G. Newmark: The particular study I am working on at the present time came about while I was in the triage area in the emergency department. I would greet patients in triage and ask them about allergies and if they took any medications on a daily basis. I was amazed and somewhat disheartened to see that many of the patients who presented to me in triage had no idea of certain aspects of their medications.

Study: Subjects complete medication card and asked to be sure they understand it. Will be strategies to update at patient’s next visit and check with providers if patient used medication card.

From: McLaughlin & Bulla, pp. 167-170
Start Looking at a Literature That Interests You

- Formulate a research question
- Identify a term/terms that will be used to search the literature
- Create robust inclusion and exclusion criteria to select the most appropriate literature
- Select the most relevant databases to interrogate the literature
- Search the literature from a global perspective
- Analyze, synthesize and critique the research articles
- Present the findings
Your Program of Scholarship and/or Research

- Career “Cartography” like mapping is a perspective on the development of your scholarly and/or research career trajectory
- Ideally, your work will be “coherent,” related to one or a small number of (related) topics, putting together a story over your career
- For researchers, you will want to start with published dissertation research, then pilot studies, and finally larger grant-funded projects. Always turn presentations into manuscripts to submit for publication
- For clinicians, you will want to think about long-term goals related to practice or policy and consider the steps to get there
- Destination Statement: Elevator Speech
Figure 1. Conceptualization of the career cartography process.
Questions to Inform Destination Statement: Context of Science

- What are significant health issues including incidence, cost, morbidity, and mortality?
- What is the political and social will to address these health issues near-term and long-term?
- How will the science inform policy to advance the health of the public?
- How does the science align with the priorities of the institution (health system, university), county, state, region, and nation?
Questions to Inform Destination Statement: Impact of Science

- What are the unique contributions for health, education, and practice?
- How does this science change health outcomes of the public and healthcare systems?
- Does this research have the potential to be sustained long-term and scaled up?
- What are outcomes of the science in comparison to county, state, and national data?
References