

DEFINING AND ASSESSING THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING IN NURSING



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Scholarship of teaching is inquiry about learning and teaching—asking questions about what works best and why and seeking answers through a systematic approach. This article provides a broad view of the scholarship of teaching in nursing, which captures the richness and breadth of our scholarship as nurse educators. The article suggests strategies for transforming teaching into scholarship and products of the scholarship of teaching for performance assessment. (Index words: Scholarship of teaching; Teaching performance; Assessment of teaching; Nurse educator) *J Prof Nurs* 30:370–375, 2014. © 2014 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

SCHOLARSHIP IS ESSENTIAL to nursing education and the teacher's role; it is through the scholarly work of nurse educators that we expand our knowledge about student learning and identify best practices for promoting their learning and development. Scholarship of teaching is inquiry about learning and teaching, asking questions about what works best and seeking answers through a systematic approach. The goal of the scholarship of teaching is understanding how students learn best and what educational practices will foster that learning. Stockhausen and Turale (2011) defined scholarship as activities that advance the research, teaching, and practice of nursing using systematic and rigorous inquiry. The inquiry should be significant to the profession, able to be documented and shared with others, and available for critical review and evaluation. Although some scholarly activities may involve original research, others will not—the scholarship of teaching is more than the discovery of new knowledge about learning and teaching and publication of databased articles in peer-reviewed journals. Teachers can demonstrate their scholarship without engaging in research. As nurse educators, we need a broader view of the

scholarship of teaching and products of our scholarly work for others to review, critique, and consider for their own teaching.

Although there is extensive literature in higher education about the scholarship of teaching and learning, less work has been done in nursing education to examine this form of scholarship and its assessment. Yet, this development is needed for nurse educators to transform their teaching into scholarship and document the products of their scholarly work for decisions about performance, promotion, and tenure and for their career progression. As more students and nurses become teachers and choose nursing education as the focus of their scholarship, they need to understand what it means to be a scholar in nursing education, develop their own scholarship, and create products of that work for review by others. The purpose of this article is to provide a broad view of the scholarship of teaching in nursing that captures the richness and breadth of our scholarship as nurse educators and makes it more visible for documentation.

Boyer's Views of Scholarship and Influence in Nursing Education

Boyer (1990) described four forms of scholarship, which expanded the definition of scholarship beyond only original research studies. This work was based on his concern about the lack of recognition of teaching and rewards for excellence in teaching in academic settings.

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Products of scholarly work related to each of these forms represented legitimate evidence of the accomplishments of faculty. Boyer's four forms or categories of scholarship were the following:

1. Scholarship of discovery: conducting original research to gain new knowledge in a field.
2. Scholarship of integration: making connections across disciplines and synthesizing research done by others.
3. Scholarship of application: linking knowledge to practice and translating knowledge into interventions to solve problems.
4. Scholarship of teaching: inquiry that focuses on student learning and teaching practices (Boyer, 1990).

Boyer's forms of scholarship allowed us to rethink what it means to be a scholar. However, the meaning of the scholarship of teaching was not clearly defined in Boyer's work and remains ambiguous even today (Bowden, 2007; Glanville & Houde, 2004; Kanuka, 2011; Ochoa, 2011). While original pedagogical research is one example of the scholarship of teaching, other ways of engaging in this scholarship such as the development and evaluation of innovative teaching methods, systematic reviews of educational evidence, activities related to reflective teaching, and sharing what was learned for peer review also need to be identified as examples of the scholarship of teaching. Otherwise, scholars in nursing education will be judged on their accomplishments based only on the extent of their research and publications.

Views on the Scholarship of Teaching

Glanville and Houde (2004) identified three views of the scholarship of teaching, which are important to consider when examining this form of scholarship in nursing. One view is that the scholarship of teaching is parallel to research or the scholarship of discovery. In this conceptualization, the scholarship of teaching represents pedagogical research in a field disseminated through articles and presentations. However, that view does not take into consideration the innovations of nurse educators and new programs, courses, and creative teaching methods developed by them. For example, developing a new clinical evaluation tool is scholarship, but it is not original research, and with this narrow view of the scholarship of teaching, it would not be considered as scholarship.

Another view is that the scholarship of teaching is excellence in teaching, documented by high student evaluations of teaching. However, being an outstanding teacher does not mean the individual is curious about own educational practices and reflects on whether there are better ways of guiding student learning. Although expert teaching is a goal for all educators, the scholarship of teaching is more than that. Scholarship involves reflection and inquiry about learning and teaching, resulting in products that peers can assess (Grigsby & Thorndyke, 2011).

One other view is that scholarship of teaching is applying theory and research to one's own teaching (Glanville & Houde, 2004). Examples of this type of scholarship would be using social learning theory and evidence from a systematic review of instructional design features for developing an on-line course. However, there also needs to be products of the scholarly work to share with others and be available for critical review.

Forms of Scholarship of Teaching in Nursing

With the renewed interest in nursing education as a career, it is important for educators in schools of nursing to define the meaning of the scholarship of teaching in their institutions and identify evidence of that scholarship. Without those discussions, nurse educators who focus on teaching as their area of scholarship will be at a disadvantage for career advancement because their scholarship may not be original research about learning and teaching. By identifying clearly what is included in the scholarship of teaching, nurse educators have a framework for developing their scholarly activities, both short and long term. An equally important reason for deciding this in an institution is for the assessment of teacher performance for annual reviews and for promotion and tenure decisions. Definitions of the scholarship of teaching suggest types of evidence for documenting one's scholarly work for review by others. Although pedagogical research, evidenced by grants, publications in peer-reviewed journals, and presentations, is one type of scholarship of teaching, a broader view is needed in schools of nursing. With a broader view, other scholarly work can be valued and recognized as examples of scholarship.

Huber and Hutchings (2005) recommended a broad view of the scholarship of teaching that includes not only rigorous educational research but also recognizes small-scale activities such as reflective teaching practices that are shared and discussed with others. The key is that these activities need to be deliberate and contribute new knowledge and understanding about learning and teaching in nursing. Sharing an anecdotal experience about teaching with a colleague with no further reflection is not scholarship. However, critically analyzing that experience, searching for related literature to better understand the experience and offering new ideas generated from that analysis for review by others are examples of scholarship. Kanuka (2011) suggested that the scholarship of teaching was a deliberate process that makes a significant contribution to knowledge in a field. What is considered scholarship of teaching in nursing should involve a systematic and deliberate process and be in a form that is usable and able to be replicated by others.

Deciding what is the scholarship of teaching in nursing is important to guide nurse educators in transforming their teaching into scholarship and developing scholarly products for review by peers and others. The following framework provides a way of categorizing the scholarship

of teaching in nursing and enables nurse educators across settings to identify evidence of scholarship for use in assessment of their performance. The scholarship of teaching in nursing includes the following:

1. Original research that uncovers how students learn and how to produce long-lasting learning. In schools of nursing, this is the most recognizable form of scholarship and often the most valued. A strength of current research in nursing education is its inclusion of multiple paradigms and research approaches (Young, 2008). However, many studies lack rigor and may not use valid and reliable tools. Yucha, Schneider, Smyer, Kowalski, and Stowers (2011), based on their review of 133 quantitative nursing education studies, indicated that their methodological quality could be improved.
2. Evaluation studies of educational programs. The evaluations of educational programs that nurse educators conduct in their institutions are another form of the scholarship of teaching. Evaluation is closely related to more traditional research in nursing education and may use some of the same methods, but evaluation takes place within the context of the school of nursing or health care setting. Evaluation is the systematic collection of information about a program for providing feedback and making judgments about its value or worth (Oermann & Gaberson, 2014).
3. Systematic reviews that integrate research findings and provide evidence for educational decisions. With systematic reviews, experts critically evaluate studies about an educational intervention or to answer a question about an educational practice and synthesize the findings. These reviews include meta-analysis, which uses quantitative methods to synthesize the findings, meta-synthesis of qualitative research, integrative or narrative reviews of the literature, and other types of evidence reviews.
4. Application of theories and research to guide teaching, assessment, and other areas of the teacher's practice, which lead to dissemination. There are many examples in the literature of how nurse educators have used learning and other theories and research to guide their teaching practices. Kanuka (2011) suggested that a powerful theory can change the educator's view of learning and teaching and lead to a meaningful understanding of learning. These new views and understandings shared with others and critically analyzed provide another form of the scholarship of teaching in nursing.
5. Development of educational innovations and new programmatic initiatives. Nursing education is rich with innovations in curricula, teaching, simulation, and other areas; new

initiatives to meet the needs of learners and communities and improve the quality of education; and a wide range of other innovations. One only needs to review the table of contents of a nursing education journal to gain a sense of this form of scholarship of teaching in nursing. Clark and Webster (2012) recommended that evaluation be built into every project involving an education innovation. The innovation or initiative, the process of developing it, and its outcomes represent another form of the scholarship of teaching.

6. Development of new teaching methods, assessment strategies, instructional materials, technologies, and other strategies for teaching that are systematically evaluated and disseminated. The evaluation may include studies of the effectiveness of these new methods, but it also may be formative, providing feedback from students and colleagues for the teacher to critically examine the method, strategy, or instructional material and develop it further (Oermann, 2015).

Shulman (2000) proposed that the scholarship of teaching resulted when the teacher's work became public, was subject to peer review and critique, and was exchanged with others in one's own community of scholars (p. 50). One of the purposes of making scholarship public is that it allows the quality of the work to be assessed through peer review (Kreber, 2013). By sharing products of the teacher's scholarly activities, other nurse educators can use those ideas in their own educational settings and can replicate and extend the work. Dissemination is critical to spread ideas throughout the nursing education community and build evidence for teaching in nursing.

Strategies for Transforming Teaching into Scholarship

Nurse educators can begin the process by reflecting on their current practices and student learning, questioning if there are better ways of promoting learning and sharing ideas with colleagues individually or in small groups. Dewar (2008) identified three questions that can be used to guide the reflection and questioning phase of the scholarship of teaching process: (a) What is? Questions to examine the current situation with students and their learning with the goal of describing it; (b) What works? Questions that seek evidence on the effectiveness of an educational innovation, method, or approach; and (c) What could be? Questions that provide a vision of what is possible. Debating ideas and answers to these questions with other nursing faculty is important because they can lead to new conceptualizations, other questions to consider, and new educational practices (Rolfe, 2009). Reflecting on teaching with colleagues is not scholarship, unless those discussions generate products that are available for review and critique by others. Turner, Palazzi, Ward, and Lorin (2012) recommended forming a

community of practice around teaching and collaborating on projects as a team. Within their community of practice, they shared educational resources, reflected on teaching experiences, provided feedback on ideas, discussed educational topics, and exchanged information to improve their own development as teachers. They developed a series of monthly conferences and translated their discussions and resources into a handbook that reflected their learning journal on teaching.

Second, every nurse educator should be familiar with the literature on learning and teaching in nursing and higher education. Teachers should consult the literature when they are developing a new initiative in their nursing program, searching for a new teaching strategy, revising a course, or planning an assessment. A search for evidence not only provides a basis for the educational activity, but it also increases the teacher's knowledge and expertise in that area of nursing education.

The third strategy is for teachers to identify which of their educational activities can be examined systematically and lead to a scholarly product for dissemination, considering the possible types of scholarship of teaching in nursing. This is a time to start small: if concerned about the outcomes of students' clinical experiences in an ambulatory care setting used in the nursing program, the teacher can begin with a focus group or interviews with students, faculty members, and staff in the setting to better understand the experience rather than a study with students randomized into ambulatory care and a comparable clinical site.

Fourth, teachers should develop a personal plan for developing their scholarship of teaching and disseminating it. This plan should begin with an examination of their passions, skills needed to engage in inquiry and for dissemination, available resources, and competing priorities (Banks, 2012). The plan also should include the scholarly activities to be completed and evaluated, and types of products resulting from the work that would be accessible for critique and use by others. There are varied methods for nurse educators to disseminate their scholarship of teaching. These include articles published in peer-reviewed journals; presentations at conferences and meetings; book chapters and books; reports of studies, evaluations, and scholarly products; discussions at faculty and committee meetings; summaries on Web sites; and reports in newsletters and communicated through other means in the teacher's work setting.

Assessment of Scholarship of Teaching in Nursing

In most of the schools of nursing, the teacher's performance is assessed in the areas of scholarship/research, teaching, service, and clinical practice depending on the role of the educator and school's criteria. Assessment of performance can be formative to provide feedback to educators for their career development or summative, done periodically to evaluate if the teacher's performance meets established criteria. Summative eval-

uation provides data for decisions such as renewal of a contract, promotion, and tenure.

Regardless of whether the assessment is for feedback for the teacher's own development or for promotion and similar types of decisions, the criteria used to judge the performance of faculty members should be consistent with the type of scholarship in which they are engaged. There needs to be recognition and valuing of the scholarship of teaching in schools of nursing, made visible in the criteria for evaluating a faculty member's scholarly performance. Hutchings, Huber, and Ciccone (2011) found in their survey of faculty teaching in higher education settings that although there was recognition of the importance of the scholarship of teaching and learning, it was not valued in performance assessment and decisions about tenure and promotion. Some participants reported that, in their institutions, the scholarship of teaching was not considered a substitute for scholarly work in one's discipline.

With the renewed interest in nursing education and growing numbers of non tenure-track faculty who typically spend most of their time teaching nursing students, it is important for faculty to define their expectations about good teaching, identify examples of documents to convey good teaching beyond student ratings, and describe performance expectations and products that represent the scholarship of teaching for those educators who choose this focus for their scholarly work. Secret, Leisey, Lanning, Polich, and Schaub (2011) explored the status of scholarship related to teaching and the merit given this type of scholarship in various academic units at research/doctoral granting institutions. In their survey of 159 tenured and tenure-track faculty from all types of colleges and schools, findings documented that databased publications and national presentations about educational studies and other publications related to education were the most common products that represented the scholarship of teaching. Those products also were given the most consideration in the performance assessment of faculty for promotion and tenure in terms of research. Participants reported that scholarship related to teaching included activities that could be reviewed and evaluated and were accessible to others. Teaching materials such as case studies and assignments, developing a new course, integrating technology into teaching, and revising teaching based on student evaluations were identified by some of the junior faculty as scholarship but only by a fraction of senior faculty.

Discussions among the faculty about the scholarship of teaching and products accepted in their school of nursing to document this type of scholarship are critical to develop performance criteria that are clear and comprehensive of the multiple types of scholarship of teaching in nursing. These products include databased and other types of publications about education in nursing and national presentations about educational studies. However, assessment of the scholarship of teaching should not be based only on publications in peer-reviewed

journals. The scholarship of teaching is not the same as the scholarship of discovery, and as described earlier, the many forms of teaching scholarship can be demonstrated through products other than funded research and databased papers published in peer-reviewed journals. We need to broaden our view of scholarship in nursing to have a more inclusive understanding of what it means to be a scholar and products that represent various types of scholarship in nursing. Day, Delagrange, Palmquist, Pemberton, and Walker (2013) suggested that it is time to challenge the widely used “one-size-fits-all” model of tenure and promotion guidelines because that model assumes a uniformity in the roles and responsibilities of faculty. In most of the nursing programs, faculty have a diversity of roles and varied forms of scholarship, which should be reflected in how their performance is assessed.

In addition to journal articles, other products that faculty can use to document their scholarship of teaching as part of their performance reviews are books; book chapters; descriptions of programs, educational innovations, new initiatives, teaching methods, assessment strategies, and instructional materials, with evaluation results; editorials about teaching; simulation scenarios; and media and technology developed by the teacher (McGaghie & Webster, 2009). These products provide an opportunity to make scholarly work public and

disseminate new ideas on education. Evaluation reports, descriptions of contributions to the curriculum and courses, and tools developed for teaching and assessment are additional products that can be used to represent the teacher's scholarly work.

Because many of these would not be listed on a curriculum vitae, they can be included in a teaching portfolio, which can be used to document the teacher's scholarship and teaching performance. A teaching portfolio is a collection of materials selected by nurse educators to document the quality of their teaching (Oermann & Gaberson, 2014). In their portfolios, teachers also can describe and provide examples of their scholarly work, indicate their individual contributions to work produced by a team of faculty, and summarize their dissemination efforts beyond what is apparent on the curriculum vitae. Table 1 provides examples of documents that can be included in a teaching portfolio to provide evidence of the scholarship of teaching.

Summary

The scholarship of teaching is inquiry about learning and teaching—asking questions about what works best and why and seeking answers through a systematic approach. It is through the scholarly work of nurse educators that we expand our knowledge about student learning and establish best practices for teaching. There are many forms of scholarship from pedagogical research through the development of innovative teaching methods. How the scholarship of teaching in nursing is defined in a school of nursing or other setting should reflect the many forms that scholarship can take and should be clear to teachers and whomever is reviewing the teacher's work.

References

Table 1. Examples of Documents That Provide Evidence of the Scholarship of Teaching

Grants for educational research and development of new educational products
Publications in peer-reviewed journals of educational studies and other scholarly work
Presentations at conferences related to learning and teaching
Book chapters and books on learning and teaching
Summaries of evaluations of educational programs
Systematic reviews of educational evidence, publications (or plans for publication), and summary of implications for own courses and teaching
Descriptions about and examples of new educational programs, courses, modules, initiatives, and innovations; teaching methods, instructional materials, student learning activities, and assignments developed for courses; assessment strategies and evaluation tools; and other scholarly products. Summaries of their use, outcomes, and evaluations by students and others. Plans for further development, evaluation, and dissemination with time frame. Summaries of individual contributions if developed by group
Descriptions of technologies and media developed for teaching and their successful application, with plans for further development, evaluation, and dissemination with time frame
Descriptions of simulations developed and related activities with plans for further development, evaluation, and dissemination with time frame. Summaries of individual contributions if developed by group
Editorials about learning and teaching and letters to the editor about educational topics
Descriptions of contributions to the curriculum, courses, tools developed for teaching and assessment, and other areas with plans for developing the activity into own scholarship of teaching (including time frame)

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