

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CLINICAL NURSE SCHOLAR IN BACCALAUREATE EDUCATION



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The purpose of this national study was to explore the vision of chief academic officers for baccalaureate nursing education. We invited chief academic nursing officers, randomly selected from a representative sample of accredited baccalaureate nursing programs to participate in the study. Audiotaped interviews were conducted in focus groups at professional meetings or by telephone and were transcribed verbatim. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached ($N = 29$). Analysis of the findings revealed themes that described future vision for baccalaureate education that provides guidance to faculty as they develop curriculum. An overarching theme “We are all Stewards of the Profession” and three supporting themes emerged: “Learning Pathways are Varied,” “Faculty Need to Grow,” and “New Pedagogies Need to Focus on the Development of ‘Who I Am’ as a Clinical Scholar.” Findings point to a future where diverse learning pathways are integrated throughout the curriculum. The curriculum of tomorrow will place greater emphasis on the development of professional identity as a nurse and calls for expanded stewardship for nursing education. Deans recommended that investing time and resources into well-designed faculty development programs will help all faculty, regardless of appointment, to adapt to changing student needs and rapidly evolving practice environments. (Index words: Baccalaureate education; Scholarly nursing practice; Faculty role; Faculty development; Professional identity) *J Prof Nurs* 31:379–387, 2015. © 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

PREPARED FUTURE NURSES with a scholarly nursing practice to care for the sick and well public remains an unchanged commitment held by baccalaureate nursing education in every corner of the world. How a student develops a scholarly nursing practice is inextricably linked to how the practitioner of tomorrow will practice as the “best of the best” caregiver. The foundation for the development of nurses who practice with a scholarly approach can be traced back to baccalaureate nursing education. The debate about and call for reform in baccalaureate education and practice environments is ongoing in the literature and professional associations. The overall focus of this debate is the need for redesign of baccalaureate nursing education to better prepare future nurses for scholarly nursing practice

(American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2008; AACN, 2010; Benner, Sutphen, Leonard, & Day, 2010; Broome, 2009; Glasgow, 2012; Institute of Medicine, 2011; National League for Nursing, 2005; Newman, 2008; Schultz, 2009; Tanner, 2007; Tanner, 2009; Valiga, 2012). Deans, directors, and chairpersons of baccalaureate nursing programs play a pivotal role in shaping this called-for educational reform. As academic nursing officers, they have the overall responsibility to provide leadership that empowers faculty to fully invest time and resources into curriculum redesign. The purpose of this article is to share the findings of a national study of chief academic officers who described their vision for the development of future curriculum in baccalaureate nursing programs that prepares tomorrow's nurses for a scholarly nursing practice.

We believe that the purpose of baccalaureate nursing education is to prepare future nurses for scholarly nursing practice. For more than a decade, our program of research on scholarly nursing practice has focused on the examination of what it means to be a scholar in a practice discipline (Riley, Beal, Levi, & McCausland, 2002). Findings from these studies indicate that nurses who have a scholarly nursing practice are knowledge workers who use a multidimensional

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Table 1. Scholarly Nursing Practice

Characteristics of the scholar in nursing practice	
Role attributes or who I am	Role processes or what I do
I am an active learner: I seek the unknown I am motivated I am insatiably curious	I evolve: I learn from patients and families I keep nursing fresh I advance myself
I am an out of the box thinker: I am an innovator I am a risk taker I am a rule bender	I reflect: I reflect for action I reflect in action I reflect on action
I am passionate about nursing: I am passionate about patients, work, and my profession	I lead: I advance practice I develop others I am nonhierarchical
I am confident: I am flexible I am comfortable I seek complexity	I share knowledge: I disseminate I model I teach
I am available for others: I am committed to the development of others I am present for others	I give care: I immerse myself I remain vigilant I prioritize relationships

Beal, J., Riley, J. & Lancaster, D. (2008). Essential elements of an optimal clinical practice environment. *Journal of Nursing Administration* 38(11), 488-493.
 Authors. (2013). Scholarly nursing practice from the perspectives of early-career nurses. *Nursing Outlook*, 61 (2), e16-e24.

way of thinking about practice that includes role attributes and role processes (Authors, 2013; Beal, Riley, & Lancaster, 2008; Riley, Beal, & Lancaster, 2008; Riley, Beal, & Lancaster, 2010; Table 1). The scholar in nursing practice is visually presented as a model and is described in published research reports (Authors, 2013; Beal et al., 2008; Riley et al., 2008).

Background

Current literature on baccalaureate education identifies numerous instructional areas needing innovation. These include, for example, integration of safety and quality competencies, redesign of conceptual frameworks, strategies to reduce content, and development of alternative pedagogies for enhanced learning (Forbes & Hickey, 2009; Giddens & Brady, 2007; Newman, 2008; Patterson, 2009; Quality and Safety Education for Nursing, 2007). Although there has been little agreement on the best pedagogical practices to support learning, there has been a consistent call for educational innovation that will facilitate the development of scholarly nursing practice. For example, arguing for a new baccalaureate education model that links today's learning with tomorrow's practice, Benner et al. (2010) proposed four paradigm shifts in the nursing education experience:

1. From a focus on covering decontextualized knowledge to an emphasis on teaching for a sense of salience, situated cognition, and action in particular clinical situations.
2. From a sharp separation of classroom/clinical teaching to integrative teaching in all settings.
3. From an emphasis on critical thinking to clinical reasoning and multiple ways of knowing.

4. From an emphasis on socialization and role taking to an emphasis on formation (p.89).

The Lifelong Learning in Medicine and Nursing Report (AACN, 2010) emphasized the continuum of professional education beginning with baccalaureate education and sustained to the completion of one's career. The report made recommendations in three key areas: education, practice, and regulation. In particular, linking innovative responsive teaching/learning models and strategies from baccalaureate education to workplace learning, lifelong learning, and interprofessional education were recommended for analysis and development.

Future curricular models are essential to prepare future clinicians for a scholarly nursing practice across the lifespan of their career. Setting the vision for these models, contemporary chief academic officers need to "identify what to focus on and for how long and when to pull back and let go of certain initiatives that effect their school, faculty, and staff" (Broome, 2013, p 327). Invitations to "reexamine time-honored traditions in nursing education" and to develop a blueprint for curricula change have been announced (Glasgow, 2012, p. xiv; Waters, Rochester, & McMillan, 2012). A call for partnerships, between educational and practice leaders as well as faculty and practitioners, that lead to broad based reform of clinical education has been given (Beal, 2012; Brennan & Sullivan-Marx, 2012; Ridenour, 2009).

Examining vision for the future of nursing education through the lens of research has potential to uncover current facilitative best teaching-learning practices and practices that need to be developed. It supports the

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