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Hussein Rassool, Goolam

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MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION: FIRST STEP IN WRITING FOR PUBLICATION IN NURSING

Goolam Hussein Rassool¹

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Current trends suggest that the dissemination of nursing knowledge and published papers in high quality journals bring further development in the professionalisation of nursing. There is limited understanding of the factors that enable nurses' writing for publication, but an educational programme on publications skills development at all levels of nursing could act as a catalyst in this process of change. Nursing leaderships not only account for the responsibility to contribute to the nursing knowledge base through publications, but also to prepare future nurses in the same arena. The aims of the paper are to examine some issues regarding nursing publications, postgraduate nurses in particular, and suggest book reviews as a framework for the professional development of nurses in how to write for publication.

DESCRIPTORS: nursing; publications; periodicals

LA BÚSQUEDA DE UN NUEVO PARADIGMA EDUCACIONAL PARA LA CAPACITACIÓN DE ENFERMEROS CON VISTAS A PUBLICACIÓN

Tendencias actuales sugieren que la diseminación del conocimiento en enfermería y la publicación de artículos en revistas de alta calidad propician mayor desarrollo en la profesionalización de la enfermería. Hay poca comprensión de los factores que hacen los enfermeros capaces de escribir para publicación. Sin embargo, un programa educacional sobre como escribir para publicación en todos los niveles de la enfermería puede funcionar como un catalizador en este proceso de cambio. Los liderazgos de enfermería no solo son encargados de contribuir a la base de conocimientos de la enfermería por medio de publicaciones, pero también de preparar futuros enfermeros en la misma área. Las finalidades de este artículo son investigar algunas cuestiones referentes a la publicación en enfermería, particularmente al nivel postgrado y sugerir y pensar en reseña de libros como un referencial para la capacitación profesional de los enfermeros con vistas a publicación.

DESCRIPTORES: enfermería; publicaciones; publicaciones periódicas

EM BUSCA DE UM NOVO PARADIGMA EDUCACIONAL PARA A CAPACITAÇÃO DE ENFERMEIROS NA ÁREA DE PUBLICAÇÃO

Tendências atuais sugerem que a disseminação do conhecimento em enfermagem e a publicação de artigos em revistas de alta qualidade propiciam maior desenvolvimento na profissionalização da enfermagem. Há pouca compreensão dos fatores que tornam os enfermeiros capazes de escrever para publicação. Contudo, um programa educacional sobre como escrever para publicação em todos os níveis da enfermagem pode funcionar como um catalisador neste processo de mudança. As lideranças de enfermagem não só têm a responsabilidade de contribuir à base de conhecimentos da enfermagem através de publicações, mas também de preparar futuros enfermeiros na mesma área. Os objetivos deste artigo são investigar algumas questões relacionadas à publicação em enfermagem, particularmente em nível de pós-graduação, e sugerir revisão de livros arcabouço para a capacitação profissional dos enfermeiros na área de publicação.

DESCRIPTORES: enfermagem; publicações, publicação periódica

¹ Professor in Addiction & Mental Health of University of London

INTRODUCTION

Publications by nurses in high quality journal are part of the current trends in the dissemination of nursing knowledge. However, to enable this whole process into action, there is a need to examine an "up-stream" approach and tackle the root for the development of nurses to write for publication, whether in English or any other language. The potential to publish research studies as first publication in international peer-reviewed is rather restricted for the novice authors.

The first step in learning of how to get published in nursing and other journals is to write short papers in the form of book reviews. The publications of books review or opinion letters are often regarded by some elitists to have no added value in the hierarchy of publication papers. This may, however, be the case for seasoned and experienced writers and academics. But for the majority of nurses who has a desire to publish or to see some form of publication in print, having a start on short pieces of writing is their window of opportunity. This is the first step in the "rites de passage" for new authors to have the opportunity to get some publications in print. Some high quality journals provide opportunities for the publication of book reviews, clinical procedures and care studies. The aims of this paper to provide a framework for writing a book review for potential publication in nursing journals.

PROCESS OF WRITING A BOOK REVIEW

A book review is both a description and an analysis of a book whose purpose is to describe the content and to present some kind of evaluation. Book reviews perform an important part for readers in bringing an insight those who would like to keep with up-to-date with new publications but also having limited spare time to read. The importance is that a book review needs to be written with simplicity and clarity. A reader who reads your review should be able to decide whether the book is worth reading or buying. Some reviews summarize the book's content and then evaluate it; others integrate these functions, commenting on the book and using summary only to give examples⁽¹⁾. It is definitely not a summary of the book. There is no single approach in book reviewing and the key is to write a piece and then work out

what suits your style. This type of publication require the need to be focus on the book's theme and make a few key points about the book. There is no way to have a wrong opinion, but in order to have a useful opinion, you must be able to explain your opinion clearly⁽²⁾.

The length of a book review in nursing journals is between 300 and 500 words and the aim is to examine the book's content in terms of its readability and relevance. Some international publications devote as much as half of their pages to book reviews and there are literary journals which devote nearly their entire contents to them. The important thing is get to know the journal and its guidelines for authors and its books' reviewing policy. If no information is provided, write to the editors. Non-solicited book reviews are not generally published by journals but editors will often commission books reviews. The first thing to do is to send short curriculum vitae with your interests and speciality or the areas that you would like to be a reviewer. If you are interested in a book and its theme it will help you write a more balanced review. Before beginning to read the book, examine the title of the book and have some ideas about what it suggests.

PREPARATION: READ THE TEXT

Like most piece of written publications a lot of there is a lot of preparation to be done. First of all you need read book reviews in various journals to get an idea of how other authors have approached the task. At the beginning of the review, scan the book and make a note of all the bibliographic information about the book: the number of pages in the book, the publisher, the date of publication, the place of publication, the name of the author(s) or editor(s) and the ISBN number. Most book reviews start off with a heading that includes those details. Look at the title page, is there a sub-title?

The goal or purpose of the book is usually found in its Preface or back cover. Always read the preface or introduction for statements about the book's aims. The Contents provides information about the organisation of the book and the development of the topic and may be what topics are missing. As you scan the book underlined passages and make notes of its relevance, strengths, limitations. Here, you will identify effective passages for quoting and to record

your reactions. Statements quoted or cited from other sources must be properly acknowledged. Check the referencing in the authors' guidelines. How many times you need to read the book for a review is a matter of practicality. The key factors are to be familiar with the essence of the book and its evaluations. As you're reading, ask yourself the questions⁽³⁾ as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Questions Relating to Book Review

Questions	Responses
What are the author's viewpoint and purpose?	Check the introduction or preface.
What are the author's main points.	Check introduction.
What is the author's style ?	Is it formal or informal? Does it suit the intended audience?
How accurate is the information in the book?	Check outside sources if necessary.
What kind of evidence does the author use to prove his or her points?	Why or why not? Does the author support his or her points adequately?
If relevant, make note of the book's format -	Layout, Index, references, illustrations. Do they aid understanding?
How does this book relate to other books on the same topic.	Is the book unique? Does it add new information? What group of readers, if any, would find this book most useful?
To establish the book's authority .	What areas are covered/not covered? Why?
What has the book accomplished? Is further work needed?	Compare the book to others by this author or by others.
How successful do you think the author was in carrying out the overall purposes of the book	Meeting purpose or aims. Authoritative writing on the subject? Provides a framework or guidance? Up to date literature. Accuracy and redability of the text?

Adapted from Writing Tutorial Services (2004)

PREPARE AN OUTLINE

You will need to review all your notes and then make an attempt to write a basic outline. Like most pieces of writing, the review itself usually begins with an introduction that lets the readers know the points you intend to make. It is important to capture the reader's attention and to motivate them by making your opening sentences effective. The structure of your book review should be developed in a logical manner. Statements such as: "This book is..." or "I am writing this review because..." should be avoided. Instead begin with a very brief anecdote connected with the book. Sometimes you will need to include a background to enable readers to place the book into a specific context. For example, you might want to describe the general problem the book addresses by referring to current health or nursing policies. Next, you should also include a summary of the content, its

purpose, to whom the book is aimed for, its accuracy, and your evaluations. In the final assessment it is valuable to make a recommendation about the book as a whole. Is it worth recommending?

WRITING THE REVIEW

Writing a first draft from the outline is the next step forward. The first draft usually will contain materials that will require further editing at a later stage. You will need to keep within the limits of the maximum of words allowed. Keep going back to the first draft and read it a few times. You may want to start doing some severe editing checking for ambiguity and incomplete statements. Check again for logical presentation and, if necessary, make major revisions to the text. Make draft 2 and start the whole process again. In addition, continue checking for errors in grammar and punctuation.

FINAL COPY

Proofread the typed copy and make some final minor revisions. It is recommended to have someone else read your book review looking for basic coherence to the text and grammatical errors. Make the necessary changes, if appropriate, from the feedback received. Just a reminder that that spell and grammar check programmes on your computer do not address all your spelling mistakes. For some papers considerations should also be given to having the paper translated into English or any other international language. Finally have the paper ready for submission to the particular journal. All of this is done now through the electronic mails systems or on the Internet. The book review editor will inform you in due course when your book review will be published

FURTHER READING ABOUT PUBLICATIONS

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CONCLUSION

To move in the right direction we need to enable postgraduate nurses to write and publish. There

is a broad spectrum between writing a book review and having a research study or a book published. Academic staff should be targeted with the provision of continuing professional development to make them being better informed about publications skills and about their responsibility attached to facilitate postgraduate nurses publication skills' development. Co-authors or supervisors should be clear about the implications of facilitating postgraduates to write for publication. A general recommendation for all stakeholders in writing for publication and policy development is required.

Getting a book review published in high quality journal is of immense value for the book reviewers and a step in the right direction in their publishing careers. Most journals always need book reviewers and from time to time they recruiting new book reviewers and referees. Nurses in developing countries should take this opportunity to get published.

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2. Writing Book Reviews Literacy Education Online. <http://leo.stcloudstate.edu>. 20/04/2004
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