



Canadian Association  
of Schools of Nursing

Association canadienne des  
écoles de sciences infirmières

## Position Statement

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### **Scholarship among Nursing Faculty**

As the national voice for nursing education in Canada, the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) has a mandate to promote high standards for undergraduate and graduate programs for nurses. Scholarship is recognized nationally and internationally as an essential component of quality in baccalaureate education (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2008; Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2007). Its promotion is, therefore, central to CASN's mission.

The purpose of this Statement is to articulate CASN's position on the definition of scholarship, and on the range of activities that constitute scholarship; it is founded on Boyer's vision of four domains of Scholarship (Boyer, 1990), and integrates the subsequent standards for scholarship developed by Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997), as well as the defining criteria delineating scholarship (Fincher & Work, 2006; Glassick et al., 1997).

### **Background**

With the baccalaureate as entry-to-practice for Registered Nurses in most Canadian provinces and territories, nurses in academia are responsible for engaging in scholarship and advancing nursing knowledge. In order to meet the needs of knowledge development in a practice profession, Canadian Schools of Nursing have adopted a broad conceptualization of scholarship rather than restricting it to the traditional domain of discovery research. These needs include building a body of scientific knowledge to underpin the discipline, enhancing nursing education by advancing knowledge of teaching and learning in nursing, generating new knowledge through the integration and synthesis of existing knowledge, and creating knowledge to be applied in nursing service and practice. Discovery, Teaching, Integration, and Application, the four Scholarship domains identified by Boyer (1990), capture the broader boundaries needed to advance the practice and the discipline of nursing. The domains provide the foundation for the CASN definition of Scholarship, and are understood to be interrelated and overlapping with scholarship activities often falling into more than one domain.

## **Definition of Scholarship**

Scholarship encompasses a full range of intellectual and creative activities that include the generation, validation, synthesis, and/or application of knowledge to advance science, teaching, and practice. Scholarship domains include inquiry that builds a scientific body of knowledge (Scholarship of Discovery), inquiry that supports the pedagogy of the discipline and a desire to understand how students learn and how teaching influences this process (Allen & Field, 2005) (Scholarship of Teaching), the advancement of knowledge related to expert practice (Scholarship of Application), and the development of new insights as a result of integrative, interdisciplinary, and synthesizing work (Scholarship of Integration) (Boyer, 1990).

Scholarship in all domains involves rigorous and reflective thinking, expert knowledge, and new ways of viewing phenomena of interest. It reflects the standards that guide the evaluation of scholarship, as identified by Glassick and colleagues (1997), which apply across the four domains. These six qualitative standards include:

1. Clear goals;
2. Adequate preparation;
3. Appropriate methods;
4. Significant results;
5. Effective presentation; and
6. Reflective critique.

In the four domains of scholarship, three defining criteria differentiate scholarship from activities that are not scholarship: 1) documentation of the intellectual and creative activities carried out, 2) peer review of the documented work, and 3) public dissemination of this work enabling critique and replication of the activities that led to a work's finding (Fincher & Work, 2006; Glassick et al., 1997). Peer reviewers are generally individuals of similar academic status to, and at arms-length from, the author(s) of the document, who have recognized expertise in the phenomenon under review. All three criteria must be met for the work to be considered to be scholarship.

## **Scholarship vs. Scholarly Activities**

It is important to note that there are differences between scholarly work and scholarship; scholarly activities reflect knowledge depth, breadth, and quality, as well as learned thinking (Acorn & Osborne, 2013). Scholarship involves these attributes but, as noted, requires documentation, peer review and public dissemination, thereby adding new knowledge to a field.

Scholarly work and scholarly teaching are an essential element of quality in nursing education and are highly valued by CASN. While scholarly work is an important pillar of

excellence in nursing education, it should not be confused with scholarship, as defined above.

In differentiating scholarship from scholarly works, the following questions should be asked:

- 1- Has the work been made public?
- 2- Is the work peer-reviewed/critiqued?
- 3- Can the work be built upon and reproduced by other scholars as a result of dissemination?

Scholarship must meet all three criteria.

### **Evidence of Scholarship**

In this section, evidence of Scholarship in each domain is discussed. It is important to keep in mind that the domains are not mutually exclusive, but rather, they are fluid, dynamic and frequently overlapping.

#### **Scholarship of Discovery**

The Scholarship of Discovery represents the most traditional form of scholarship and includes knowledge gained through basic and applied research. The Scholarship of Discovery involves systematic investigation of phenomena using a range of qualitative and quantitative methods with the results adding to, confirming or rejecting what is already known. The Scholarship of Discovery is integral in building a strong scientific basis for Nursing.

Documented evidence of the Scholarship of Discovery may include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

1. Peer reviewed grant awards to support research related projects;
2. Peer reviewed publications of empirical research; and/or
3. Peer reviewed presentation of research papers at scientific and scholarly conferences.

#### **Scholarship of Teaching**

Initially, the Scholarship of Teaching was understood to include the conveyance of knowledge from the expert to the novice, building bridges between the teacher's understanding and the student's learning (Boyer, 1990). Now considered scholarly teaching, this activity is based on a pedagogical approach that is grounded in a depth and breadth of knowledge, and involves intellectual engagement with the subject matter being taught (Allen & Field, 2005; Andresen 2000; Glanville & Houde, 2004;

Kreber 2002; McKinney, 2006; Richlin, 2001). This earlier conceptualization of the Scholarship of Teaching has since evolved (Allen & Field, 2005), and the Scholarship of Teaching is now considered to be activities that are based on “an ethic of inquiry in which faculty broadly frame and explore questions related to teaching and learning” (Sawatzky et al., 2009). The Scholarship of Teaching addresses the development of innovative teaching methods and educational materials, and the study of teaching and learning (Allen & Field, 2005). For nursing, such questions include those concerned with academic teaching and learning, both theoretical and clinical. They may be examined using research or evaluation methodologies, or through theoretical and philosophical modes of inquiry involving the integration of existing knowledge often from various disciplines.

Documented evidence of the Scholarship of Teaching may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Peer reviewed presentations and/or publications regarding teaching and learning;
2. Peer reviewed grant awards to support teaching and learning activities/projects;
3. Creation and dissemination of innovative curriculum modalities and teaching materials, instructional tools and learning platforms that are adopted by educators in other courses and programs in both the home institution and more broadly; and/or
4. Dissemination of peer reviewed innovative clinical or preceptorship modalities.

### **Scholarship of Integration**

The Scholarship of Integration is defined as the generation of new knowledge and perspectives from the purposeful examination of original work in various fields in academia (Boyer, 1990), including nursing. Synthesizing findings and discovering patterns and connections across disciplines creates an integration of knowledge and brings new meanings to original work.

Documented evidence of the Scholarship of Integration may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Publication of a textbook or chapter in a textbook that synthesizes different professional perspectives on an issue;
2. Public dissemination of a policy analysis paper on a health or professional issue;
3. Public dissemination of a new program to improve the health and well-being of society and dissemination of the same; and/or
4. Publication of a scoping review synthesizing existing literature on a phenomenon of interest for nursing.

## **Scholarship of Application**

The Scholarship of Application refers to the generation of knowledge that is developed in working with the community (including the nursing practice community) and is of use to this community. This form of Scholarship is concerned with the relationship between knowledge and action, in which service to the community results in practice generated research questions (Thoun, 2009).

In nursing, the Scholarship of Application includes reflective investigation leading to new understandings as practices are explored in relation to concepts, principles, research findings, theories, and results. Nurses are ideally positioned to promote and develop the Scholarship of Application in nursing by drawing on their clinical knowledge and expertise.

Documented evidence of the Scholarship of Application may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Peer reviewed grant award providing financial support for a practice initiatives;
2. Grant to conduct a knowledge translation project;
3. Publication and dissemination of an environmental scan;
4. Peer-reviewed presentation related to health and health care issues;
5. Published evaluative report of a practice demonstration projects including recommendations for future implementation; and/or
6. Publication of a policy papers related to practice and/or to larger health issues impacting society with peer review and dissemination.

## **Conclusion**

This framework describing the nature of scholarship in nursing is based on a comprehensive conceptualization of scholarship that includes rigorous scientific studies, evaluation and action research, historical analyses, policy papers, teaching and learning resources, integrative reviews, and theoretical and philosophical work. To be scholarship, a work must be documented, reviewed by peers, and disseminated publicly.

While all faculty members have a responsibility to engage in scholarship, they are not expected to carry out scholarship activities in all four domains. In order to create a quality learning environment, however, every program/site/partner should demonstrate scholarship in each domain. The overlapping nature of the domains allows smaller units to generate scholarship across all domains, as work in one domain can often be categorized in two or three others.

**EXAMPLES OF SCHOLARSHIP IN EACH DOMAIN (PLEASE NOTE THAT MANY OF THE ACTIVITIES BELOW COULD BE CLASSIFIED IN MORE THAN ONE DOMAIN)**

**SCHOLARSHIP OF DISCOVERY:**

- A faculty member is principal investigator on a research team to identify the mediating effects of physical activity on fatigue in patients with COPD.
- A faculty member presents a peer reviewed paper at a conference reporting on a qualitative investigation into patients' experiences of caring in an emergency department of a regional hospital.
- A faculty member designs, tests, and published a valid reliable and parsimonious instrument to measure continuity and discontinuity of self following a stroke.
- A team of faculty publish a study to describe characteristics, attitudes and communications of nurses regarding hospice and caring for terminally patients.

**SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING:**

- A faculty member presents a paper at a peer-reviewed conference on the development, implementation and evaluation of an innovative curriculum grounded in First Nations cultures.
- A faculty member publishes a document describing the integration and evaluation of a new technology in the delivery of a course, thereby transforming the learning experiences of the students.
- A faculty member assists graduate students to develop papers for peer-reviewed journals and the papers are co-authored and published.

### **SCHOLARSHIP OF INTEGRATION:**

- A faculty member publishes a systematic review of literature on caretaker burden. using the Joanna Briggs Methodology
- An interdisciplinary team reviews the literature across nursing, psychology, and health education and develops an integrated model of health promotion for use among adolescents with peer reviewed funding from a provincial Ministry of Health.
- A faculty member publishes a paper that examines ethical perspectives in relation to nursing practice.
- A faculty member publishes an article providing a new understanding of the concept of cultural competence.
- A faculty team present a paper at a peer reviewed conference proposing a new conceptual framework regarding the risk factors for medication errors that is based on a synthesis of existing literature.
- A faculty member publishes an historical analyses of the introduction of nursing services in a particular region of Canada using secondary sources

### **SCHOLARSHIP OF APPLICATION:**

- A faculty member serves on a community board to establish group homes for mentally challenged individuals who will be relocated from institutional environments. In this capacity, the faculty member is among the eight authors of a report that is reviewed by a panel of civil servants and disseminated to the public by the provincial Ministry of Health.
- A faculty member serves on a national committee designed to examine and revise a code of ethics, and is involved in a review of relevant literature, critical analyses, professional consultations, reflection and the development of a final document that is peer-reviewed and disseminated to the public.

- A faculty member responds to the downsizing of acute care hospitals by developing non-traditional practice opportunities for students and publishes an evaluation of the results.
- A faculty member conducts a policy analysis of the impact of casinos on the health of a community, a report of which is reviewed by the provincial Ministry of Health and publically disseminated by them.
- A faculty member is part of a team that develops evidence-based practice standards and protocols for a new out-patient care unit in collaboration with current practitioners and consumers, which is then reviewed by a panel of peers and publicly disseminated electronically.
- A faculty member collaborates with ward staff on a demonstration project to evaluate the outcomes of an early discharge program, the results of which are peer-reviewed and publically disseminated.

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