

AACN HOSTING NEW ROUND OF ESSENTIALS REGIONAL WORKSHOPS



Scenes from the Essentials workshop held in San Antonio, June 2, 2023

AACN is hosting a new series of five regional hands-on workshops for faculty seeking strategies, resources, and solutions to adapting their undergraduate and graduate programs to meet the new competency expectations published in *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education*. Presenters will provide an overview of competency-based education (CBE), compare CBE to traditional teaching and learning, and discuss how CBE improves clinical judgment and prepares nurse graduates for clinical practice. AACN's *Essentials* Coaches and experts with the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN) will share their expertise and key principles for innovative course design while addressing aspects of the faculty role related to creating an active learning environment, robust clinical teaching (including a focus on simulation and coaching), and effective student evaluation. AACN's many resources for supporting *Essentials* implementation will be reviewed, and frequently asked questions addressed.

Faculty, curriculum specialists, deans/directors, and nursing school staff engaged in *Essentials* implementation and the transition to competency-based nursing education should plan to attend. Registration is limited to 160 participants for each event.

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Click the link to register for an *Essentials* workshop:

[Los Angeles, California - September 14, 2023](#)

[Los Angeles, California - September 15, 2023](#)

[Baltimore, Maryland - September 26, 2023](#)

[Baltimore, Maryland - September 27, 2023](#)

[Lake Buena Vista, Florida - November 29, 2023](#)

Q&A with Patricia Morton



PATRICIA MORTON, PhD, RN, ACNP-BC, FAAN

Dr. Patricia Gonce Morton, editor of the *Journal of Professional Nursing (JPN)*, is dean emeritus at the University of Utah College of Nursing, where she served as dean and professor from 2013 to 2018. She has served as *JPN* editor since 2013. Previously, Dr. Morton was the associate dean

for academic programs at the University of Maryland, where she taught in the baccalaureate, master's, Doctor of Nursing Practice, and PhD programs. She is an educator, scholar, and acute care nurse practitioner and is known for her work in critical care nursing and nursing education. She has authored three textbooks and numerous book chapters and journal articles. She has served on the editorial board of six nursing journals and, prior to joining *JPN* as editor, for 7 years was the editor of *AACN Clinical Issues: Advanced Practice in Acute and Critical Care*. She has presented many papers at regional, national, and international conferences, and she has hosted webinars on publishing for AACN. Dr. Morton was inducted as a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing in 1999.

Dr. Morton would like to thank AACN Editorial Director Bill O'Connor, who has been at the association since 1990, for his assistance in answering the first two questions.

How has academic publishing changed since you began your career as an editor?

Academic publishing has changed in many ways in the last 33 years, predominantly due to the internet and advanced technology, which allows for faster and more efficient communication and transfer of information. When I began as managing editor of the *Journal of Professional Nursing (JPN)*, we relied on the U.S. post office to send submitted manuscripts and review forms to the editor and reviewers, and we would bundle accepted manuscripts to send to the publisher. The time taken for all the mailing between authors, managing editor, editor, reviewers, back to editor, and finally to the publisher had to be factored into the total time taken for a manuscript to go from submission to final decision. Technology has reduced that time

considerably. In addition, the transition in publishing from print to electronic issues has been steady. For example, at AACN in the 1990s we mailed all our publications to members and kindred organizations. We moved to online-only publications years ago, as have most academic organizations. Another change in academic publishing in general has been the advent of open access publishing, which carries less restrictive copyright and licensing barriers than traditionally published work, and which has inherent pros and cons.

How has the *Journal of Professional Nursing* evolved and what do you envision for the future?

Certainly, the biggest change for the journal in the past 33 years has been in the number of submissions annually, which reflects the ability to easily access the journal online from anywhere in the world as opposed to only select libraries and schools of nursing in the United States. As we moved into the 21st century, the annual number of submissions to *JPN* averaged 100. There were times during

some of those years that we feared not having enough accepted manuscripts to compile complete issues. As recently as 10 years ago, submissions averaged 200. This year, we are on pace to receive more than 1,000 submissions. That exploding number is primarily due to submissions from international authors. In 2022, authors from 60 different countries submitted manuscripts to *JPN*. Going forward, I envision AACN and *JPN* embracing the international interest in academic nursing in this country and taking the needed steps for international authors to become involved in our scholarship process as we expand the worldwide professional nursing community.

What do you look for in a publishable manuscript?

The first thing I look for in a manuscript is a match of the topic with the purpose of the journal. The focus of *JPN* is baccalaureate and graduate nursing education, educational research, policy related to education, educational administration, and education and practice partnerships. Readers of *JPN* are faculty who teach in baccalaureate and graduate degree nursing programs. Publishable manuscripts are ones that are clearly written with a logical flow of ideas and are a good match for the needs and interests of the intended readers.

What are the criteria an author should use for selecting an appropriate topic for an article?

Topics for *JPN* must relate to baccalaureate and graduate nursing education. We do not publish manuscripts focusing on care of patients or staff nurse issues. An appropriate topic should be timely and spark readers' interest by providing new information or offer a unique slant on an issue. The topic must

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answer the “so what?” or “who cares?” question. Even if a manuscript is very well written, if it does not offer new information or a unique perspective on a familiar topic, it will not be published. Readers are interested in articles that help them solve common problems by providing novel solutions and strategies. Rather than merely telling your story, successful authors instruct readers on the step-by-step approaches for implementing their ideas. Research topics should be ones that contribute to the evidence that guides the practice of nursing education.

What are some strategies for overcoming writer’s block?

To overcome writer’s block, first, have confidence in yourself – you have something important to say. Next, ask yourself “What is holding me back? Is it fear of failure?” Analyze your block and work with a mentor for strategies to deal with the blocks. The most important tip I can offer is to set aside time every day to write, even if it is only 30 minutes. The greatest mistake want-to-be writers make is waiting for the “to do” list to be done before starting to write. The “to do” list will never end, so you must carve time in your schedule to write. Make an appointment with yourself in your calendar and stick to it just as you would for a meeting or class.

Determine your best time of day and write during that time. Are you a morning bird or a night owl? Know yourself and write when you are at your best. Find a place to write and it may not be in your home or your work office. You need a quiet place with few distractions.

Avoid delay techniques such as cleaning your house or office, napping, running, shopping for office supplies, playing video games, or reading old emails that have collected in your inbox. Instead, sit down with a goal of writing for 30 minutes and make progress. Break the process into

small manageable tasks and set a due date for each task. Start writing – pick an easy section to start. Reward yourself after each step of the writing process.

What distinguishes a student paper from a journal article?

The topic of a school paper is usually determined by the course objectives whereas the topic for a journal article is in alignment with the purpose of the journal and the intended readers. Student papers can have more than one purpose, but a journal article can only have one main focus. Often, student papers summarize the past or current state of an issue and do not necessarily offer new information. Editors seek journal articles that provide new information or novel solutions to issues. When writing a student paper, the audience is the faculty who is grading the paper. For a journal article, there must be a match of the topic with the audience and purpose of the journal. The requirements and directions for a school paper are laid out in the syllabus whereas for journal articles, all the directions are found in the author guidelines on the journal’s website. Authors of journal articles must follow the author guidelines regarding formatting, length, and reference style. Literature reviews are another distinguishing feature. Literature reviews in school papers can be lengthy with a detailed description of one study at a time. For journal articles, the literature review section is a synopsis of the outcomes of previous work. The author provides a brief synthesis of what is known about the topic based on previous research, what is not known, and how the project or study will fill the gap. Tables and figures are often not included in school papers whereas they are expected in journal articles. Students usually receive feedback about their school paper within days or weeks. Journal editors sometimes require weeks to receive peer review comments and make a decision about the manuscript.

What are some common reasons for rejection of a manuscript?

For *JPN*, one of the most common reasons for rejection is a mismatch of the manuscript topic with the purpose of the journal and its intended audience. Manuscripts with more than one purpose also are commonly rejected because the multiple purposes result in superficial coverage of the topic. Another frequent cause for rejection is poor writing with multiple grammar mistakes and illogical flow because the ideas are poorly organized. *JPN* frequently receives very lengthy student papers that have not been formatted for a journal. These inappropriate school papers are rejected with instructions for the author to find a mentor who will help the author re-write the school paper to comply with *JPN*’s guidelines.

Research reports are rejected if the selected design is not appropriate to answer the research question. Other reasons for rejection of a research report include using a homemade instrument for which there has been no testing of reliability or validity, employing the wrong statistical tests to analyze the data, or making conclusions that are not supported by the data.

Why are peer reviewers so important for *JPN* and other academic journals?

Peer review serves as the quality assurance system for the discipline’s body of literature. Feedback from peer reviewers promotes the quality, relevance, accuracy, and readability of articles. The peer review process assists authors to improve their writing and helps editors publish only the best articles. Feedback from peer reviewers for research reports helps confirm that the methods used were sound, data analysis was appropriate, and the conclusions are supported by the data.

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AACN STATEMENT ON THE SUPREME COURT DECISION AGAINST RACE-CONSCIOUS ADMISSIONS

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that race-conscious admissions practices used at Harvard and the University of North Carolina were unconstitutional, violating the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. The 6-3 decision reversed decades of progress to ensure equal access to education for all. Removal of racial considerations oppresses people of color and puts the onus on colleges to develop race-neutral programs that advance diversity.

“The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) joins with the larger higher education community in denouncing this decision, which threatens the creation of more diverse and inclusive learning environments,” said Dr. Deborah Trautman, AACN President and Chief Executive Officer. “AACN reaffirms our commitment to serving as a champion for diversity, equity, and inclusion, while recognizing the importance of a diverse nursing workforce to reducing health disparities, addressing social determinants of health, and improving patient outcomes. We stand with our schools of nursing and will work diligently to identify strategies, to ensure our student populations reflect the broad diversity of our society.”

AACN has created a new [online resource](#) focused on the Supreme Court decision and is planning a webinar on how to structure a holistic admissions process and other student recruitment strategies that will not violate the new restrictions. We will not let the Supreme Court’s decision stop us from creating a more diverse nursing workforce, which is essential to meeting our nation’s healthcare needs.

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Based on recent submissions, what are some of the hot topics in academic nursing that authors are writing about?

Currently, readers are very interested in articles that guide the integration of the domains, competencies, and themes from *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* into the curriculum. Another topic of great interest are manuscripts addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of nursing education. Creative teaching/learning practices and new ideas for courses are also appealing to readers. Readers especially appreciate articles that provide solutions and strategies for solving common problems such as dealing with student or faculty concerns. Other hot topics include interprofessional education, academic-practice partnerships, and leadership.

What advice do you have for faculty who want to motivate their students to submit manuscripts to journals?

I highly encourage faculty to motivate their students to submit manuscripts for publication. However, faculty cannot assume students know the process or that they can figure it out on their own. Faculty must teach students the process of writing and publishing in a professional journal. Often, this means the faculty member must first learn this process themselves. Faculty could offer a course in journal publishing or use one of the many existing online resources to teach students. Faculty must guide individual students and/or writing teams of students. Also, faculty can consider inviting students to join a faculty team of writers.



UPCOMING CONFERENCES

[Graduate Student Nursing Academy Conference](#)

August 17-18, 2023 | Washington, DC

[Essentials Faculty Development Workshops](#)

September 14, 2023 | Los Angeles, CA September 27, 2023 | Baltimore, MD
September 15, 2023 | Los Angeles, CA November 29, 2023 | Lake Buena Vista, FL
September 26, 2023 | Baltimore, MD

[Organizational Leadership Network Program](#)

October 27-28, 2023 | Washington, DC

[Academic Nursing Leadership Conference](#)

October 28-30, 2023 | Washington, DC

[Transform 2023](#)

November 30-December 2, 2023 | Lake Buena Vista, FL

Pre-Conferences:

- Faculty Development Workshop on Competency-Based Education
November 29, 2023
- Faculty Leadership Network Program
November 30, 2023



L-R: Dr. Cassandra “Cassi” Chandler, Dr. David Weinberger, Dr. Tim Cunningham, and Dr. Peter Buerhaus

ACADEMIC NURSING LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE TO FEATURE FOUR PROMINENT SPEAKERS

“A New Vision for Academic Nursing: Leading with Courage, Commitment, and Collaboration” is the theme of this year’s [Academic Nursing Leadership Conference \(ANLC\)](#), to be held October 28-30 at the JW Marriott in Washington, DC.

Highlighting the conference will be presentations from four outstanding speakers.

[Cassandra “Cassi” Chandler](#) has led a distinguished career as a risk executive and an innovative strategist who is responsible for identifying and addressing intelligence and operational, regulatory, and reputational risks in the banking industry and in the federal government. She is currently president and CEO of Vigeo Alliance, a private risk assessment firm. She will speak on building a culture of motivational leadership.

[Dr. David Weinberger](#) is an author, technologist, and speaker. Trained as a philosopher, his work focuses on how technology — particularly the internet and machine learning — is changing our ideas. He is the author of the book [Everyday Chaos](#), a collection of stories from history, business, and technology that reveal the unifying truths lying below the surface of the tools we take for granted—and a future in which our best strategy often requires holding back from anticipating and instead creating as many possibilities as we can.

[Dr. Tim Cunningham](#), co-chief well-being officer at Emory Healthcare and the Woodruff Health Sciences Center, collaborates with interprofessional teams to support structural and systemic well-being change for healthcare professionals, university staff and faculty, researchers, learners, and community members. His publications, including two books on self-care and a children’s book on resilience, center around ideas of well-being, compassion, and fostering creativity.

The John P. McGovern Lectureship Award will be presented to [Dr. Peter Buerhaus](#), a nurse and healthcare economist well known for his studies on the nursing and physician workforces in the United States. He is a professor of nursing and director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Health Workforce Studies at the College of Nursing, Montana State University.

For complete information on the conference and the Organizational Leadership Network preconference, including how to register, visit the [ANLC page on the AACN website](#).

ABOUT SYLLABUS

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