

9-28-2018

A Partnership Between the Graduate Resource Center and College of Nursing

Stephanie Sanchez

Heidi Rogers

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hsc_ed_day

Recommended Citation

Sanchez, Stephanie and Heidi Rogers. "A Partnership Between the Graduate Resource Center and College of Nursing." (2018).
https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hsc_ed_day/20

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Health Sciences Center Events at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in HSC Education Day by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.



Stephanie M. Sanchez¹ and Heidi Honegger Rogers²

¹Graduate Resource Center, Center for Teaching and Learning, University of New Mexico
²College of Nursing, Health Sciences Center, University of New Mexico

INTRODUCTION

The College of Nursing (CON) Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program Graduate programs offer baccalaureate RN students the opportunity to continue their education. The CON offers a graduate program in nursing leading to the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN). Advanced practice concentrations prepare graduates to assume roles in health care as an adult gerontology acute care nurse practitioner (AGACNP), a family nurse practitioner (FNP), a pediatric nurse practitioner (PNP), psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP), or a nurse midwife (NM).

The Graduate Resource Center (GRC) is a learning center on UNM’s Main Campus that provides free academic and professionalization support services for all graduate and professional students at UNM.

In the Fall 2017 semester, the College of Nursing and the Graduate Resource Center partnered to provide MSN students with writing interventions at the start of their program (May 2018) that included an online course, a 3-hour workshop, and a scaffolded writing assignment. The purpose was to address specific academic writing issues that College of Nursing faculty identified based on students’ previous writing assignments and to orient new graduate students to academic writing conventions.

OBJECTIVES

As nursing professionals, academic writing can be an unfamiliar skill these students are expected to have upon entering a graduate program. However, writing at the graduate level is “a complex and often novel undertaking for the student” (Lavelle and Bushrow 2007, p. 807). Across disciplines, writing at the graduate level proves to be challenging, yet necessary, especially with increasing demands to publish and conduct research. The overall objective for the comprehensive writing workshop was to bridge the gap between skill level and expectations. The authors developed separate student learning outcomes to structure the workshop, as well as post-workshop support to help students further develop their writing proficiency. Following the online course and intensive writing workshop, students were expected to:

- Identify common writing errors
- Develop a deeper understanding of sentence structure, grammar, organization, and plagiarism
- Identify self-editing techniques
- Apply what is learned to a discipline-specific writing exercise

MATERIALS AND METHODS

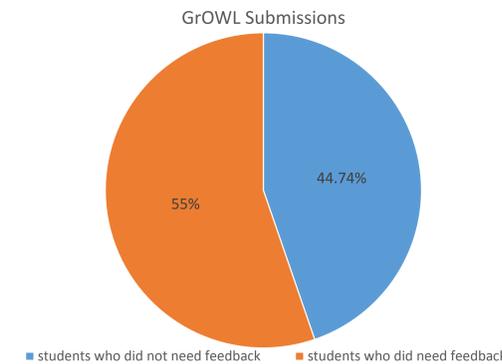
The overall purpose of the partnership was to develop an approach to academic writing that works for MSN students and that addresses writing issues faculty have identified as problematic. The first step was to gather feedback from faculty on specific writing issues they encountered in their students’ writing. These issues included organization and structure of patient histories, commonly misused or misspelled words, grammar and mechanics, and (not) using effective writing process techniques, such as writing from an outline. In order to positively impact MSN students’ writing proficiency, the authors introduced changes in writing approaches at the start of students’ program and a scaffolded writing assignment throughout the theory course.

At the start of their program, students were emailed instructions to prepare for the writing workshop and an introductory writing assignment on holistic self-care. As part of their preparation, students were asked to take the Stanford “Writing in Science” online course: <https://med.stanford.edu/cme/courses/online/writing15.html>. Students were also instructed to purchase *A Writer’s Reference* (8th ed.) and to use the Purdue OWL as an online writing resource.

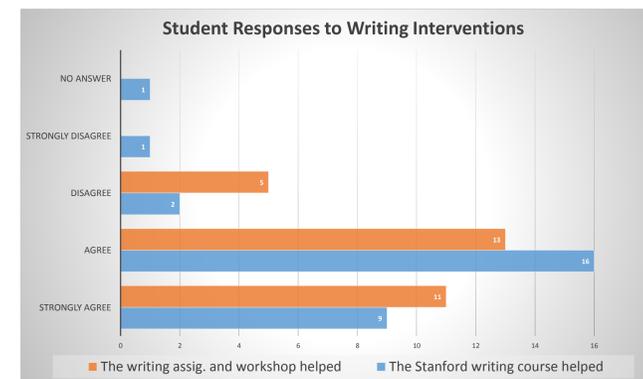
The workshop itself was designed based on the faculty feedback and desired outcomes for students, which included understanding expectations of graduate-level academic writing and their individual writing processes, such as pre-writing and self-editing. Students then applied what they learned in the workshop to their holistic self-care writing assignment. Following the workshop, students were given a scaffolded writing assignment in their theory course, which allowed students to receive different modes of writing support and also emphasized that writing is an iterative process. The assignment focused on applying theory to a real-world nursing situation encountered by the student. Students were first provided feedback by their instructor on the first section of the writing assignment. Next, students were required to submit a completed draft of the assignment to the GRC’s Graduate Online Writing Lab (GrOWL). The GrOWL provides feedback for online writing submissions in the areas of structure, organization, clarity, and argument. After incorporating GrOWL feedback, students submitted their final paper as part of their course grade. At the end of the course, students were asked to provide feedback on the writing materials, workshop, and the GrOWL experience.

RESULTS

46 students participated in the writing workshop and 38 students submitted their theory paper to the Graduate Online Writing Lab for review. Of the 38 submissions, 17 needed little feedback while 21 needed feedback to improve the organization, structure, argument, or flow.



Following the writing interventions, students were asked to rate the overall experience—the usefulness of the Stanford “Writing in Science” course, the writing workshop, and the Graduate Online Writing Lab—and their recommendations for including these resources in future orientations. 29 students responded to 10 polling questions about the writing interventions and the MSN orientation.



Students who did not respond favorably to the writing interventions wrote that they did not require writing assistance, that they thought the content was remedial, or that the course and workshop were too long.

CONCLUSIONS

Although the Stanford writing course and the GRC writing workshop focused on the foundations of technical and academic English, the majority of students found these helpful, with 24 students rating the scaffolded writing assignment and GRC writing workshop as helpful (agree/strongly agree) and 25 students rating the Stanford writing course as helpful (agree/strongly agree).

The purpose of these interventions was to bridge the expectations of CON faculty and students’ writing ability, which means the writing interventions had to target those students with less-developed academic and technical writing skills. Early feedback from faculty members has shown that students’ writing has improved and there are fewer instances of common mistakes in academic writing. While some students found the focus to be basic or “things folks should already know,” even these students have benefited from a writing refresher and a deeper understanding of the importance of clear and concise writing in their MSN program. The experience has also emphasized campus resources for North Campus students who may not be aware of academic support services, such as those found at the GRC. A number of students noted that the requirement to submit to the GrOWL should continue as it allows students to become “familiar with the process and improves the likelihood that we will use it in the future.”

REFERENCES

Hacker, D. & Sommers, N. (2015). *A Writer’s Reference* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin’s.

Lavelle e., & Bushrow K. (2007). Writing Approaches of Graduate Students. *Educational Psychology*, 27, 807-822, DOI: 10.1080/01443410701366001

Stanford Center for Continuing Medical Education. (2015). Writing in Science [Online course]. Retrieved from <https://med.stanford.edu/cme/courses/online/writing15.html>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank the 2018 MSN student cohort who participated and offered feedback, as well as the CON faculty who provided data on students’ writing. We would also like to thank our departments, the College of Nursing and the Center for Teaching and Learning, for support in serving graduate students.