Published scholarship is a crucial expectation for faculty working in colleges and universities throughout the world. And, published scientific literature is the way in which members of a discipline share their theories, research, and findings to support knowledge used in practice. However, many academics identify perceived barriers to their lack of scholarly productivity. Lack of time to dedicate to writing as well as lack of experience in writing have been cited as obstacles to successful publication and scholarship. In addition, due to various forms of preparation to serve as a faculty member in nursing, some may not have had adequate education regarding the processes surrounding writing for scholarship. Therefore, many schools of nursing apply strategies such as writing groups, encouraging team writing, or other tactics to support faculty in their scholarship endeavors.

A recent inquiry was made to 10 productive faculty members and nurse researchers from the United States to find out more about the advice and suggestions they would offer faculty about remaining productive in their writing. Seven responded to this query and offered feedback. These scholars had varying backgrounds and research areas and most worked in academic environments. Their feedback was reviewed and organized into themes including concepts related to being: aware, intentional, goal-oriented, pragmatic, and persistent (see Figure 1).

BE AWARE

Several scholars suggested to start by being aware of the appropriate journals for your idea and learning more about recent publications on the topic. Therefore, identifying the best journal for your manuscript is a crucial early step in the writing process. While many would see this as obvious advice, it is often a step that is skipped, to an author’s eventual dismay. Some writing guides such as Manuscript Success and Writing in the Digital Age advise authors to do their due diligence in identifying the most appropriate journal for their work. The manuscript should be matched with the topic, the type of article, and the intended audience. You should ask yourself what new ideas your work presents. Furthermore, you should review your target journal for recent publications on the topic to avoid rejection due to redundancy. On the topic of target journals, one scholar noted, “It does matter where you publish.” The target journal may increase visibility among certain audiences. And, finally, one scholar suggested the idea of being aware of the excitement an author’s writing might bring to the body of literature. She suggested recording a reading of the final product and noted, “If you are not excited when you listen, the reader won’t be excited either.”

BE INTENTIONAL

Another identified theme was intention. Several scholars suggested protecting writing time; one even suggested finding strategies to get into “writing mode.” How to do this? One respondent plays the piano; another had a ritual cup of tea and sat in a specific chair. It is important to identify the time when you write best—think of this as your “A” time, the time when you are most productive and have the most energy. Though competing demands may conflict with your best writing time, you should make every effort to protect this time without apology.

Another idea within the theme of intention was to develop an outline with realistic due dates prior to starting the writing project. Be intentional and review the author guidelines so they may be followed “exactly” for manuscript preparation. This activity can be used for planning and goal setting. Another scholar stated that she has developed ways, such as highlighting and making comments in the text, to help her re-orient herself to her work. This is helpful if she has had to put a manuscript away for a time to address other work activities. Being able to do this helped her not lose time upon re-starting the writing project.

BE GOAL ORIENTED

A number of strategies were shared related to the idea of goal setting. Some of these ideas varied among scholars who suggested that authors must establish patterns and workflows related to writing that work best for them. For example, some scholars noted that it was important to not procrastinate, so that goals could be met. However, there was some conflicting advice about how many articles a person (or writing...
TEAM WRITING AND GROUP WRITING

The topic of team writing and group writing was mentioned by multiple respondents. To clarify, team writing is working with a team to complete a project, whereas group writing may be an activity or a time dedicated to writing, with authors working on various or individual projects. Respondents indicated that teams have the potential to be helpful and assist in accomplishing writing goals. However, with a writing team, having clear communication among the members, determining authorship early on in the project, and having agreed upon deadlines are essential for success.

Writing groups were also mentioned as methods to assist in meeting writing goals. These groups may occur in different places other than the typical work environment, with many being offered as a retreat. Time intervals for meetings and due dates may vary among members of the writing group but the group may help offer accountability to authors. One responded, “Group writing is not for everyone. Some people truly enjoy the solitude of writing...and they are always the most prolific,” again supporting the notion that writers—you—must consider your personal styles and understand the ways in which you work best.

CONCLUSION

The need to increase writing productivity throughout the nursing discipline remains a challenge. Nurse researchers and scholars are constantly bombarded with competing demands of workload, likely resulting in tension as you balance writing with other expectations. Disciplined writing habits coupled with strategies to support personal needs and obligations may assist you to establish consistent writing patterns, ultimately resulting in a positive impact on your writing productivity. While the advice and strategies shared differed among colleagues, it was clear that each of them had specific guidelines and “rules” for themselves. Many of their strategies were personal and creative. Their adherence to these personal procedures has likely contributed to their success and offers an example for others.
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