

# Headlines from the NLN

## Long-Term Impact of an Intensive Writing Retreat Experience on Participants' Ongoing Writing Behaviors

Writing for publication in nursing is essential to disseminate research findings, share initiatives and innovations with others, provide new information to keep nurses up to date, and develop the science base of the profession. However, few nurses are prepared in their educational programs to write for publication. Since 2008, the National League for Nursing has sponsored 12 Scholarly Writing Retreats, which provide individualized, structured writing support in an intensive format. Participants are limited to 9 to 11 nurses who are selected through a competitive application process. In the six to eight weeks prior to the face-to-face retreat, participants are guided by one of two retreat leaders, both journal editors, to move through the writing process, from topic and journal selection to preparation of a manuscript that meets the requirements for submission to a targeted journal. At the retreat, held on a weekend from Friday through Sunday, participants finalize their manuscripts, which are copyedited and submitted electronically to their selected journal.

Because outcomes of the Scholarly Writing Retreats had not been studied systematically, we surveyed participants who had participated in one of 11 retreats held between 2008 and 2013. A total of 111 participants were invited to complete an online survey; 62 responded for a response rate of 55.6 percent. Respondents were predominantly doctorally prepared ( $n = 56$ , 90.3 percent) and taught at all levels of nursing education, from licensed practical nurse and associate degree through doctoral programs. The majority taught in baccalaureate nursing programs ( $n = 45$ , 72.6 percent). Nearly all the respondents ( $n = 61$ , 98.4 percent) submitted a manuscript as an outcome of the retreat. Of these submissions, 49 (80.3 percent) were published, with an additional 7 (11.5 percent) still in review at the time of survey completion. The majority ( $n = 46$ , 76.6 percent) of the papers were published in attendees' first or second choice of journals.

The most significant impact of the writing retreat, however, was on the participants' writing behaviors following the experience. More than half ( $n = 38$ , 61.3 percent) submitted additional manuscripts (one to five) for publication. (See Table.) This is a significant outcome considering that most of the participants had no experience ( $n = 25$ , 40.3 percent) writing for publication or limited experience (submitted one or two manuscripts prior to the retreat;  $n = 20$ , 32.3 percent). Examples of prior types of writing done by participants were articles in newsletters ( $n = 18$ , 29.0 percent), other types of publications ( $n = 17$ , 27.4 percent), book chapters ( $n = 11$ , 11.3 percent), and letters to the editor ( $n = 7$ , 11.3 percent), among others. Most attendees ( $n = 58$ , 93.6 percent) shared lessons learned in the retreat with colleagues and students ( $n = 42$ , 67.7 percent), disseminating new knowledge and

Table: Manuscripts Submitted and Accepted for Publication Following Participation in the NLN Scholarly Writing Retreat

Number	Manuscripts Submitted <i>n</i> (%)	Manuscripts Accepted for Publication <i>n</i> (%)
1	12 (31.6)	23 (60.5)
2	9 (23.7)	3 (7.9)
3	4 (10.5)	3 (7.9)
4	8 (21.1)	5 (13.2)
5 or more	5 (13.2)	4 (10.5)

skills they learned about writing for publication.

Workshops have been used in other studies as a strategy for preparing nurses to write for publication, but typically the evaluations only include the articles submitted from the workshop. Our survey suggests that the NLN Scholarly Writing Retreat has an impact on the long-term writing behaviors of participants, preparing them to continue to write for publication. Writing for publication as a nurse educator is critical to disseminate new ideas and educational innovations and share best practices with others.

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**Note.** NLN Scholarly Writing Retreats are supported by a grant from Pocket Nurse, Inc. Applications for the fall 2014 retreat, November 7-9 at the Emory Conference Center, Atlanta, Georgia (due August 8) will be online in April at [www.nln.org/facultyprograms/workshopsandconf.htm](http://www.nln.org/facultyprograms/workshopsandconf.htm).