

**TASK GROUP ON INNOVATION IN NURSING EDUCATION**  
**FINAL REPORT -- JANUARY 2008**

Introduction

This report is being submitted to the Nursing Education Advisory Council (NEAC) for the purpose of summarizing the activities and accomplishments of the Task Group on Innovation in Nursing Education. This group was initially constituted in 2004, with membership consisting of ten (10) individuals representing a broad distribution of nursing education programs and regions and one (1) Board of Governors liaison member. The group was re-configured for 2006-2007, with five (5) new individuals appointed and four (4) previous members retained. The Chair of the Task Group (Karen Pardue) and the NLN liaison (Terry Valiga) have remained consistent throughout the duration of the Task Group.

Charge

The charge to the Task Group was put forth as follows: **to promote innovation and encourage reform in all types of nursing programs.** Within this overall purpose, the group was charged with completing a number of specific tasks, which served as the framework that guided the activities of the Innovation in Nursing Education Task Group over the 4 year duration of this effort. For 2004-2006, the specific tasks were as follows:

1. Assist in the dissemination of the NLN *Position Statement on Innovation in Nursing Education*.
2. Propose strategies that will promote the factors that enhance innovation in practical nurse, associate degree, diploma, baccalaureate, master's and doctoral programs.
3. Propose strategies that will eliminate the barriers to innovation in practical nurse, associate degree, diploma, baccalaureate, master's and doctoral programs.
4. Design methods that nursing education researchers can use to assess the impact of innovation in nursing education or student learning and program outcomes.
5. Add information about innovation, innovation in education, and innovation in nursing education to the literature database in order to create a repository of evidence on this topic.
6. Prepare an article, monograph and/or research proposal related to innovation in nursing education.
7. Establish and monitor an electronic "community" on the topic of innovation in nursing education.

For 2006-2007, the tasks were outlined as follows:

1. Advance a culture in all types of nursing programs (i.e., practical nurse, associate degree, diploma, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral) that champions creativity, change and renewal.
2. Assist faculty and nursing education leaders as they strive to achieve the *NLN Hallmarks of Excellence in Nursing Education*, particularly the hallmark related to innovation.
3. Propose strategies that nursing education researchers can use to assess the impact of innovation in nursing education on student learning and program outcomes.
4. Design and pursue funding for a multi-site, multi-method research study related to innovation in nursing education and its impact on student learning, faculty satisfaction, student-faculty relationships and program outcomes.
5. Recommend to NEAC the reaffirmation of, or propose revisions to, the position statement entitled *Innovation in Nursing Education: A Call to Reform*
6. Influence accrediting and regulatory bodies toward being more receptive, encouraging and accepting with respect to innovative practices in nursing education
7. Add information about innovation, innovation in education and innovation in nursing education to NLN's literature database in order to expand the repository of evidence on this topic.
8. Monitor an electronic "community" on the topic of innovation in nursing education.

### Activities and Accomplishments

The Innovation in Nursing Education Task Group (hereafter referred to as TG) completed a comprehensive review of the literature in nursing, higher education, business and other relevant fields surrounding the concept of innovation. A concept analysis of innovation was completed, and a definition of innovation with respect to nursing education was proposed. This definition asserts the following: *Innovation is using knowledge to create ways and services that are new (or perceived as new) in order to transform systems. It requires deconstruction (i.e. challenging) long-held assumptions and values. The outcome of innovation in nursing education is excellence in nursing practice and the development of a culture that supports risk-taking, creativity and excellence.* This work and definition were published in *Nursing Education Perspectives* in January, 2005.

The TG convened a focus group during the NLN Education Summit in 2004. That session explored faculty experiences with innovation in nursing education, including the perceived supports and barriers to innovation. Strategies to support and advance innovation also were explored. The ideas exchanged were captured in a 'Headlines from the NLN' column entitled, "Substantive Innovation in Nursing Education: Shifting the Emphasis from Content Coverage to Student Learning," and published in the January, 2005 issue of *Nursing Education Perspectives*.

In January 2005, an on-line survey created by the TG was posted for 4 weeks on the NLN website. This survey queried faculty teaching in all types of nursing education programs on selected elements of the position statement on innovation, as well as faculty perceptions about innovation in nursing curricula and processes of teaching and learning. An Executive Summary and the results of the survey ("A First Step toward Reform: Results of the Faculty Survey on Innovation") were published in *Nursing Education Perspectives* in January, 2006.

The TG created a comprehensive strategy to disseminate the position statement on innovation in nursing education including, but not limited to the following: two (2) focus groups at the NLN Summit (2004 & 2005); a letter to Deans and Directors suggesting innovation and innovative teaching methods be a priority for faculty development, discussion and action in academic year 2005; use of ‘e-Communities;’ reports in *Nursing Education Perspectives*; and exploration of a funded research project.

The TG completed work on a ‘model’ provision for State Boards of Nursing rules and regulations that makes explicit support for innovation in nursing education. In preparing that model, the TG reviewed the rules and regulations that were published on the websites of all State Boards of Nursing, making note of language championing or discouraging educational innovation, creativity and change. A manuscript has been completed which captures this analysis. Special commendation is credited to Janet Grady and Bonnie Hobbins for their notable effort and contribution to this endeavor. As a result of this work, the NLN has embarked upon collaborative conversations with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) as partners for innovation in nursing education. A meeting was held in August 2007 to initiate this collaborative activity.

The TG proposed and received funding from the National League for Nursing in 2005 for a multi-site, multi-level research study designed to (a) explore the impact of innovative teaching methods on student learning, and (b) assess faculty and student satisfaction with a creative learning experience. Four (4) programs were recruited to participate, representing associate degree, generic baccalaureate, RN-to-BSN, and master’s students. Lois Neuman served as Principle Investigator for the project, and her leadership with this effort was invaluable. The project raised questions about the meaning of innovation in different educational contexts, and how it is viewed by both faculty and students. The results of this study were presented by the TG at a symposium during the 2007 NLN Summit. A manuscript disseminating the results of this project has been accepted and is in press with *Nursing Education Perspectives*.

The TG initiated collaboration with NLNAC as a way to learn about innovative approaches in nursing education. The TG requested NLNAC review boards to make note of schools of nursing that were engaged in what they thought were innovative practices. NLNAC has identified several schools through this process, and mechanisms for following up with these schools to learn more about their culture, environment, and approaches that support innovation and creativity will be proposed to NEAC for future work.

The TG completed a survey to learn about the impact on innovation in schools of nursing that send multiple attendees to the NLN Educational Summit. This data collection process involved participants from the Summits of 2004, 2005 and 2006. The survey sought to identify if sending a ‘critical mass’ of faculty to a professional development opportunity, such as the NLN Summit, resulted in enhanced support for creativity, change, risk taking, and innovation. The information gained from this inquiry served to contribute to a collective understanding of approaches that promote change and innovation in nursing education.

Finally, TG members reviewed the position statement on innovation and made preliminary recommendations for revision. This activity is ongoing, and will be addressed in the 'work to be completed in the future' section of this report.

#### Work to be Completed in the Future/ Remaining Work

1. On-going collaboration with regulatory bodies, as exemplified in recent dialogue around innovation between the NCSBN and NLN. It is hoped these discussions and efforts will continue.
2. A survey has been developed by the TG addressing student perceptions on innovation in nursing education. This survey has not been implemented, but is available for future use by the NLN.
3. Development of a mechanism to sustain collaboration between NLNAC and the NLN regarding innovative approaches in nursing education. It is hoped that review panels will continue to identify schools where innovation is occurring and that the NLN will be able to post these ideas on its website as a way to share creativity with faculty across the country.
4. On-going revision to the *Position Statement on Innovation in Nursing Education* and the companion Background statement. Pamela Ironside, Elaine Tagliareni, Karen Pardue, and Terry Valiga have agreed to work on this endeavor. The revisions, once completed, will be forwarded to NEAC for affirmation. Once endorsed by NEAC, the position statement will then be forwarded to the Board of Governors. The anticipated time line is for the May 2008 meeting.

#### Conclusion

It is our firmest hope that the leadership and the membership of the National League for Nursing continue to champion efforts directed at educational innovation and reform; and that the work of this TG represents only the beginning, and not the end, of this important initiative. Creating cultures that support innovation and creativity nourish exciting teaching and learning environments.

The membership of the Task Group on Innovation in Nursing Education is to be commended for its tireless work and significant accomplishments. This has been a highly productive group of energetic and creative nurse educators. This TG has made important and lasting contributions to the scholarship of educational innovation in nursing. I would like to close by formally naming and thanking each individual who participated in this effort. This task group truly exemplifies the innovative spirit, and the boundless horizons possible when approaching work with zestful inquiry, courage, creativity and risk taking. Each is to be commended for her work.

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