

MEDIA REVIEWS

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B O O K S

Conversations in Nursing Professional Development. Belinda E. Puetz, Julia W. Aucoin (editors). Pensacola, FL: Pohl Publishing, 2002, 415 pages, \$36.

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Conversations in Nursing Professional Development is a comprehensive guide of value to any nurse interested in enhancing professional and personal skills in teaching and developing education programs.

This text is one in a series of three books that addresses current nursing education topics; the other two books are *Conversations in E-Learning* and *Conversations in Leadership of Professional Nursing Associations*. The editors have recruited an impressive group of chapter authors, who are mainly educators with a wide variety of specialties. Included in this cadre of nurses are ONS members Pamela S. Dickerson, PhD, RN, C, Debra P. Sheldon, MSN, CNA, OCN®, Martha Turner, PhD, RN, C, CNA, and Suzanne G. Wilson, MSN, RN, as well as ONS staff member Laura Fennimore, RN, MSN.

The authors are successful in presenting an easy-to-follow question-and-answer format that is extensive and user friendly. The book includes answers to questions that many readers may not have considered, thus expanding the scope of the publication. Therefore, the format is this publication's greatest strength. The content is divided into nine sections, which are subdivided into three to nine chapters. *Conversations* follows a logical sequence beginning with Section 1: Getting Started, which explores the variety of educator roles and settings within the current healthcare system. Sections 2–8 address teaching strategies such as maximizing educational experiences offered and how to most effectively deal with

integrating departments and other groups while using limited resources. The accreditation and continuing education approval process, cultural diversity, critical thinking, evidence-based practice, and distance learning also are discussed. Section 9: Staff Development as a Career guides readers through a process to meet this professional goal. This section includes topics such as preparing for certification, advanced education, making presentations, publishing, and entrepreneurship.

Each chapter offers enriching how-to tips that enhance readers' experience. For example, *Conversations* offers suggestions for managing difficult learners, delivering a lot of information to a large group of learners over a short period of time with a high level of energy, and incorporating new technology into the classroom setting. Of particular interest is a chapter about new approaches and avenues for improving presentation skills. Specifically, ways to capture and maintain the learners' attention are discussed.

Conversations in Nursing Professional Development addresses nursing professional development in a time of limited resources and is a powerful guide. This text is a map of sorts about avoiding quagmires that so often block the pathway to success. The content of this book and its resources are invaluable to those seeking to enrich their professional development.

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Practical Statistics for Nursing and Health Care. Jim Fowler, Phil Jarvis, Mel Chevanne. West Sussex, England: John Wiley and Sons, Ltd., 2002, 213 pages, \$115.

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Practical Statistics for Nursing and Health Care provides a practical and logical approach to familiarize nurses and healthcare professionals with statistical principles and techniques for reading and evaluating research re-



ports and articles or for managing their own data. Although not specifically written for oncology nurses, the examples used to illustrate the statistical techniques are relevant to nursing practice across the discipline. As readers proceed through the book, the material advances in complexity.

The book provides a visual representation of statistics with an abundant use of tables and figures. Nurses with limited or no exposure to research will benefit greatly from the inclusion of many examples to illustrate statistical techniques. These examples are based on health-related problems and use variables common to nurses and healthcare workers, such as blood pressure readings, height and weight values, or therapeutic techniques (e.g., electroconvulsive therapy). Clinicians can apply the book's suggestions directly to their practice.

Most chapters begin with an introduction often referring to earlier chapters to assist readers with integration of related concepts. When appropriate, the authors include a section at the conclusion of the chapter that summarizes key points and provides handy tips for using statistical techniques. As necessary for any statistical book, numerous appendices are included, such as a random numbers' chart and critical values for statistical tests (e.g., t tests, Mann-Whitney U-test). Other resources include a list of symbols and an appendix for calculating sample size. This section is quite thorough given the size of the book.

The book can be improved in several ways. Providing a glossary of terms in the appendices similar to the list of symbols would be beneficial. The authors caution against using computer software prior to understanding underlying concepts and principles of the statistical technique; however, statistical analyses rarely are computed by hand. Therefore, the inclusion of some information about the types of statistical packages available and their utility in the health sciences would be helpful to nurses. If large data sets are to be analyzed, managing their analyses without a computer would be impractical and nearly impossible. A chapter on epidemiology serves as an introduction to specific terms for measuring diseases and models for study design. A similar chapter on using secondary data sets would be very timely as they are becoming increasingly common in this discipline.

Digital Object Identifier: 10.1188/04.ONF.341-342

Ease of Reference and Usability	Content Level	Book Size
🕒 Quick, on-the-spot resource	✓ Basic	📖 Pocket size
🕒🕒 Moderate time requirement	✓ ✓ Intermediate	📖📖 Intermediate
🕒🕒🕒 In-depth study	✓ ✓ ✓ Advanced and complex, prerequisite reading required	📖📖📖 Desk reference

Practical Statistics for Nursing and Health Care provides a basic foundation of statistics and is a good resource for nurses who want to understand, apply, or become actively involved in research. The book is very user friendly and makes the application of statistical techniques to practice less daunting for novices.

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W E B S I T E S

Editor's note. This issue features the premier of an expanded Web site review section. In collaboration with the ONS Web Site Editorial Board, we are excited to offer a larger variety of Internet sites to enhance your current knowledge and support your daily practice. Some topics that we hope to include are new products, medications, and clinical trials.



Name of site: Oncology Nursing Society Distance Learning Courses

URL: www.ons.org/xp6/ONS/Education.xml

Authorship: Group: Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) Education/Cancer Care Issues Team

Privacy statement: present, comprehensive, and easy to find

Disclosure: present, comprehensive, and easy to find

Content highlights: ONS member and nonmember oncology nurses have the opportunity to participate in selected programs in a completely Web-based format. Safe handling and an introduction to health policy currently are available on the site. ONS offers the courses through the very reliable WebCT Learning Management System. To take the ONS courses, users must register for the WebCT system.



Name of site: RN.com

URL: www.rn.com

Authorship: Multiple organizations: American Mobile Healthcare, HRMC, Medical Express, Nurses Rx, NurseZone.com, O'Grady-Peyton International, and Preferred Healthcare Staffing

Privacy statement: present, comprehensive, and easy to find

Disclosure: present, comprehensive, and easy to find

Content highlights: RN.com is accredited as a provider of continuing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center and multiple state boards of nurses and caters to traveling nurses who are looking for professional development opportunities. Courses are available online and in print.



Name of site: Center for Nursing Career Advancement

URL: www.smartfau.com/nursing

Authorship: Florida Atlantic University, College of Nursing, and Medical Staffing Network

Privacy statement: present, comprehensive, and easy to find

Disclosure: present, comprehensive, and easy to find

Content highlights: This site is an excellent example of a brick-and-mortar college expanding its professional development offerings via the Web. A wide variety of courses is offered. Many courses for the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and the state boards (e.g., domestic violence, preventing medical errors and pain) also are available.



Name of site: National Center of Continuing Education

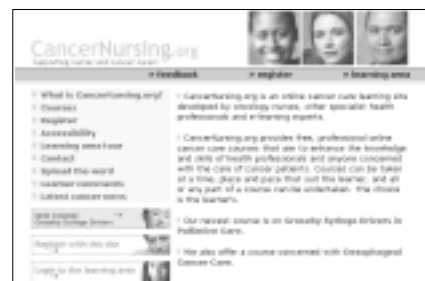
URL: www.nursece.com

Authorship: Group: multiple authors

Privacy statement: present, comprehensive, and easy to find

Disclosure: present, comprehensive, and easy to find

Content highlights: This long-standing provider of continuing education for nurses offers a handy list of continuing education requirements per state on its Web site. For nurses licensed in a second state, a second certificate is given for free for the same course. This is a great benefit because many sites require double payment for the extra certificate.



Name of site: CancerNursing.org

URL: www.cancernursing.org

Authorship: four volunteer nurses in the United Kingdom

Privacy statement: present, comprehensive, and easy to find

Disclosure: present, comprehensive, and easy to find

Content highlights: This is an interesting model for delivering continuing education. This group is looking to partner with organizations worldwide to provide professional development opportunities. Two classes currently are offered, and others are planned for the future. Most users are based outside of the United States.

*Elizabeth Gomez, RN, MSN, AOCN®
Editor, ONS Web site*

Do you have comments or a Web site that you would like to suggest for review?
If so, send them to Media Reviews Associate Editor Nancy Phelan Walsh, RN, MSN, at nancypwalsh@cs.com.