

**Building Blocks for Effective Scholarly Writing: Lessons Learned**  
**From the First Year of Implementing Writing Intensive Courses in an Online Graduate**  
**Nursing Education Program**

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Students with earned undergraduate degrees are presumed to be competent academic writers. However, a large segment of incoming graduate students fail to meet the minimum standards of academic writing, leaving them ill-prepared to supplement their academic writing skills to become proficient scholarly writers. Even more problematic is the smaller yet significant number of students who lack basic skills in standard written English (SWE). Traditional “brick-and-mortar” universities often provide remedial resources and writing assistance; however, many online graduate education programs do not have sufficient resources to assist students to develop their writing skills to meet the expectations required for the scholarly writing in graduate programs. Implementing writing across the curriculum (WAC), including writing intensive and writing attentive courses, in MSN/DNP programs has gained attention as one way to address this gap; however, there is a lack of evidence regarding the best practice to improve graduate students’ writing using this methodology.

As a way to address the writing deficit that exists for many incoming graduate students, faculty at an online graduate nursing education program re-introduced WAC as a thread in the graduate curricula (MSN and DNP). The first step to address writing was the requirement that all students take a writing intensive course (Introduction to Scholarly Writing) at the beginning of their program of study. This course was designed to prepare students to write at the level expected for nurses holding undergraduate degrees, thereby providing a base to build on for scholarly writing in the graduate program. The purpose of this presentation is to illustrate the outcomes from the first year of implementing the scholarly writing course in the writing intensive curriculum, including what worked and what did not—and the changes that were made to improve the course.

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