

# MEDIA REVIEWS

**Nancy Phelan Walsh, RN, MSN**  
Associate Editor

## 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.*

🕒 ✓ 📖📖📖📖 **Hardcover**

*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.

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### Ease of Reference and Usability

🕒 Quick, on-the-spot resource

✓ Basic

🕒🕒 Moderate time requirement

✓✓ Intermediate

🕒🕒🕒 In-depth study

✓✓✓ Advanced and complex, prerequisite reading required

### Content Level

### Book Size

📖📖 Pocket size

📖📖📖 Intermediate

📖📖📖📖 Desk reference