

NLN

National League  
for Nursing

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## FOCUS Research

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### To Our Members:

Over the past two years, the NLN has expanded its research activities exponentially. Our first Research Conference, held last spring, was an important step in advancing the science of nursing education through solid pedagogical research. The educators who attended were energized by opportunities to connect with colleagues who shared a commitment to this type of scholarship. The quality of the presentations was superb.

On April 30th 2004, the NLN held its second Nursing Education Research Conference to facilitate the opportunities for nurse educators to explore common concerns and issues in nursing education and discuss how multi-site, multi-method, multi-paradigmatic research can foster excellence in all types of programs.

This issue of *Shaping the Future* will update you on the scope and depth of the research activities of NLN's Research and Professional Development Business Unit. You will learn about the research that the NLN is conducting, the grants we are providing, and the important work that we do to connect the science of nursing to the practice of nursing through nursing education research.

I am particularly delighted that through the new Scholarship Fund of our subsidiary, the NLN Foundation for Nursing Education, we were able to assist 25 gifted students to pursue advanced studies in nursing education. These students—the educators of tomorrow—will learn about and utilize the latest research techniques as part of their doctoral studies. The NLN Foundation for Nursing Education's grant program is funded by contributions from individuals, corporations, and Johnson & Johnson's Campaign for Nursing's Future.

We are very proud of all the progress that we are making in this important area. As always, we welcome your comments on and participation in our vital and dynamic work.



Ruth D. Corcoran, EdD, RN  
Chief Executive Officer

## AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. LIN JACOBSON

*NLN's Research Director, Linbania Jacobson, EdD, RN, CPHQ, talks about the nature and impact of nursing education research on teaching practice.*

**As in any other science, new knowledge in nursing education is constantly being created, replacing outdated principles and practices.**

**Q:** We hear a lot of discussion these days about evidence-based teaching practice (EBTP). What is it?

**A:** Simply stated, EBTP is a way of applying to teaching practice what has been learned from nursing education research. And research, as you know, is an orderly, systematic, and objective approach to creating new knowledge under rigorous testing conditions. As in any other science, new knowledge in nursing education is constantly being created, replacing outdated principles and practices. Some scholars believe that EBTP has become the standard for assuring quality in teaching, helping us understand what works best in creating learning environments for students in the classroom, in the lab, in the clinical area, or online.

**Q:** How does EBTP affect nurse educators teaching now?

**A:** All teachers want to keep their teaching practice current and vibrant, with regard not only to content, but also to how they teach. To challenge students to learn and develop new skills and understandings, the teacher must be the role model, demonstrating how new knowledge is incorporated into everyday practice and thinking.

**Q:** How is EBTP developed?

**A:** The cornerstones of EBTP are a questioning mind and a systematic analysis and integration of research findings. Innovative approaches to teaching and curriculum development undergo testing and evaluation by nursing education scholars, who

then synthesize these findings into a comprehensive whole. That whole provides the “evidence” upon which teaching practices are based.

**Q:** Why is this kind of research important?

**A:** Just as in health care delivery, where costs have skyrocketed and policymakers require evidence of efficacy for the use of clinical procedures or justification for hospital length of stay, so too in nursing education, as costs rise and the severe shortage of nursing faculty continues, we desperately need new approaches to nursing education. And those new approaches need to be scientifically validated. If nursing education is to meet today's challenges through learning experiences for students that prepare graduates to practice effectively and respond to threats to our nation's health, we must re-think, re-form, and re-vamp our approaches to education and base those approaches on research.

**Q:** What is entailed in this research?

**A:** Nurse education scientists have already begun to systematically study several critical areas—teaching strategies, learning processes, learner characteristics, learner outcomes, academic success, effects of technology, organization of curriculum, workforce development, theory verification, measurement and methodological issues, educational program standards, and administrative effectiveness. As in all good science, replication of studies with different population groups, circumstances, or environments is needed to add strength and validity to findings.

**Q:** What can nurse educators who are not conducting research do to advance EBTP?

**A:** Critical to reform and change in nursing education is the dissemination and adoption of research findings. This is where all faculty members can play a major role. As the principal users of new knowledge in the everyday practice of teaching, they can identify what might be a next step, or building block, in the foundation of nursing education research.

And, most importantly, teachers are the role models for students to learn how EBTP is used to influence and change teaching practice. By learning and using new teaching models and methods, teachers can excite and greatly influence their students to try new ways of thinking, observing, learning, and practicing that they can carry over to the clinical setting to improve patient care.

**Q:** What is the NLN doing to advance the science of nursing education?

**A:** We are already engaged in many activities to advance the science of nursing education. The steps we have taken so far—and are planning for the future—stem from our mission and the strategic plan put in place by NLN’s Board of Governors, and they are relevant to all types of programs. The NLN has formulated *Priorities for Research in Nursing Education* that are basic to all its endeavors.

*Examples of the NLN’s work in Nursing Education Research are outlined in this newsletter on pages 4 and 5.*

**Q:** If NLN members wish to participate in EBTP as researchers, how can they get involved?

**A:** If you are ready to begin work on your own studies, the NLN has a research grants program that funds efforts related to our *Priorities for Research in Nursing Education*. This grants program includes funds to pilot national multi-site, multi-method studies, as well as funds to support

smaller, more local studies. Full details about the grants program are provided on the NLN Website at <http://www.nln.org/aboutnln/grants.htm>

One does not need to be a nursing education researcher, however, in order to make a scholarly contribution. Several other routes are available to support the development of the science of nursing education, including the following:

■ **Data collection:** When researchers are looking for faculty or students to participate in a study, you can help by completing the survey yourself, encouraging colleagues to respond to it, or volunteering to distribute the survey in your institution.

■ **Pose Important Research Questions:** As someone who is involved in the teaching/learning process on a daily basis, you are in an excellent position to identify significant questions that need to be addressed through pedagogical research.

■ **Conduct Concept Analyses:** By engaging in and publishing scholarly analyses of concepts that are relevant and critical to nursing education, you contribute to the development of the science of nursing education. Scholarly analyses of concepts such as learning style, collaborative learning, assessment of learning, group learning, challenge and support, and many others, will do much to advance our understanding of the educational experience.

■ **Synthesizing Research Literature:** You can make an enormous contribution to advancing the science of nursing education by reading literature from nursing education, higher education, and education in other disciplines; identifying parallels among those ideas; and noting differences among reports and gaps in the literature. Such findings lead to research questions and the continuing quest for answers to some of our most significant challenges.

**Critical to reform and change in nursing education is the dissemination and adoption of research findings. This is where all faculty members can play a major role.**

### \$60,000 IN GRANTS SUPPORT SIX NEW PROJECTS IN 2003

As part of an NLN grants program that supports research in nursing education, six new projects were funded in 2003.

As part of an NLN grants program that supports research in nursing education, six new projects were funded in 2003. Four awardees received one- to two-year grants of up to \$5,000 each, and two received grants of up to \$20,000 each:

***Ethics Education in MSN Programs:  
A Study of National Trends***

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

**Jill Burkemper** PhD

Instructor and Departmental Faculty  
Saint Louis University, St. Louis, MO

***Heresy in Education: Combining ASN and  
BSN Students in the Classroom to Teach  
Differentiated Practice***

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

**Nancy Nightingale Gillespie** PhD, RN

Chair and Professor  
University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne, IN

CO-INVESTIGATOR:

**David R. Johnson** DNS, RN

***Developing the Science of Nursing  
Education: Explicating the Reforming and  
Innovative Practices of Faculty Using a  
Multi-Method Approach***

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

**Pamela M. Ironside** PhD, RN

Associate Professor  
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI

***Connections: The Experience of  
Participating in a Mentoring Group***

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

**Carol Kostovich** PhD, RN

Assistant Professor  
Saint Xavier University, Chicago, IL

CO-INVESTIGATOR:

**Kay Thurn** PsyD, RN

***Comparison of Outcomes of Community-  
based versus Traditional Generic  
Baccalaureate Programs: A Pilot Study***

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

**Judith P. Ruland** PhD, RN

Visiting Associate Professor  
University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL

CO-INVESTIGATOR:

**Diane Wink** EdD, FNP, ARNP

***Examination of Disability-related Content  
in Nursing Textbooks***

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

**Suzanne C. Smeltzer** EdD, RN, FAAN

Professor and Director, Nursing Research  
Villanova University, Villanova, PA

CO-INVESTIGATORS:

**Gale Robinson-Smith** PhD, RN

**Mary Anne Dolen** DrPh, RN, CHES

\$ 60,000 will again be available to support the **2004 research grants cycle**. Applications for those funds have been received and are being reviewed. Grant recipients will be announced at NLN's Education Summit 2004, and these researchers will launch their projects shortly after that.

It is expected that the timeline for the **2005 research grants cycle** will be similar to that used for 2004: proposals must be postmarked by March 1st. Be sure to watch the NLN Website, NLN Update, and *Nursing Education Perspectives* for specific announcements about the 2005 research grants cycle.

Also check the URL for the *Position Statement on Funding for Nursing Education Research* <http://www.nln.org/aboutnln/PositionStatements/fundfornursed02.htm>

## LAERDAL AWARDS NLN MAJOR GRANT FOR RESEARCH STUDY

NLN has received a three-year, \$375,000 grant from Laerdal to conduct a national, multi-site, multi-method study on the use of simulation in nursing education. The eight project sites selected represent all types of programs, geographic regions, and public and private institutions of all sizes. They are:

### **Case Western Reserve University**

Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing

### **Community College of Southern Nevada**

Nursing Program

### **Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center**

School of Nursing

### **Tulsa Community College**

Nursing Division

### **University of Maryland**

School of Nursing

### **University of Southern Maine**

College of Nursing and Health Professions

### **University of Virginia**

School of Nursing

### **The Washington Hospital School of Nursing**

The research goals of the Laerdal project are:

- a. to explore how to design and implement simulations as a teaching strategy, and
- b. to evaluate selected learning outcomes using simulations.

Initially, the eight project coordinators conducted a literature review to identify gaps in the available information about simulation as a teaching practice. Following this, a research design and simulation framework was developed by the project director, **Pamela R. Jeffries**, DNS, RN, Associate Professor, Indiana University School of Nursing.

At this point in the study, each project coordinator is working on an individual simulation study that will be completed by June 2004. Finally, all participants will come together to develop an ideal simulation, which will then be implemented at each of the eight sites.

## RECENT NLN RESEARCH ON NURSING EDUCATION AND NURSE EDUCATORS

Published in 2003:

- ***Nurse Educators 2002: Report of the Faculty Census Survey of RN and Graduate Programs.***

(can be ordered online)

To be published in 2004:

- ***Trends in RN Education Programs: A Comparison Across Three Points in Time—1998, 2003, 2008.***
- ***A National Study of Faculty Role Satisfaction***
- ***2004 State–Approved Schools of Nursing–RN***
- ***2004 State Approved Schools of Nursing–LPN***

To be conducted in 2004:

- ***A Survey of Nurse Faculty on the Topic of Nursing Student Recruitment, Retention and Graduation Strategies***
- ***The 2004 Annual Survey of Schools of Nursing***

In collaboration with the International Coalition of Mass Casualty Education:

- ***Emergency Preparedness Curriculum in U.S. Schools of Nursing***

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LEFT TO RIGHT: Vicki Carter, Linbania Jacobson, and Kathy A. Kaufman

### EXPANDED RESEARCH ACTIVITY REQUIRES ADDITIONAL STAFF

*“In order to implement new initiatives, the NLN has expanded its research staff,” says Dr. Terry Valiga, NLN’s Chief Program Officer. The research arm of the Research and Professional Development Business Unit consists of three outstanding individuals who have come to the NLN within the past three years.*

Research Director, **Linbania (Lin) Jacobson**, EdD, RN, CPHQ, leads NLN’s research efforts. Among her activities are working with the Nursing Education Research Advisory Council (NERAC) and its task groups, and supervising NLN’s grants and scholarship program. Dr. Jacobson has overall responsibility for all aspects of the Annual Survey of Schools of Nursing, as well as the design and coordination of other studies and research-related publications. She is a graduate of New York University and Teachers College, Columbia University and holds a certificate in epidemiology from the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota.

Prior to coming to the NLN a little over a year ago, Dr. Jacobson provided leadership and expertise to nursing research in academic medical centers. She was the Scientific Director of a \$5 million “U. S. Air Force HEART Project,” Director of “Program and Evaluation of Corporate Methods for Cardiovascular Health Promotion,” a \$1.5 million project supported by the National Cancer Institute, Cancer Control and Prevention Program, and a Distinguished Research Fellow in Aerospace Biotechnology for the U.S. Air Force School

of Aerospace Medicine. Additionally, Dr. Jacobson served as Evaluation Consultant to the U. S. Agency for International Development, Salvadorean Demographic Association, El Salvador. Dr. Jacobson served on The New York State Nurses Association’s Council on Nursing Research and the Association’s journal Editorial Review Board. In earlier years, she served on the NLN’s Committee on Research. She also has held graduate-level faculty appointments.

Research/Statistical Specialist **Kathy A. Kaufman**, PhD, a sociologist, manages NLN’s effort to provide and interpret nursing workforce supply information and other related surveys. Previously she taught at Vassar College and worked as a research consultant on a wide variety of health and workforce related projects. Although Dr. Kaufman has only been at the NLN in this position a month, she previously worked at the NLN as a research coordinator.

Research Associate **Vicki Carter** provides support for NLN’s research efforts. She has been at the NLN for nearly three years. Before coming to the NLN she worked in data collection, data entry and data management positions.

## **Shaping the Future**

is published by the National League for Nursing (NLN), a nonprofit organization that champions the pursuit of quality nursing education for all types of nursing education programs. It is the professional association for nurse educators, education agencies, health care agencies, allied/public agencies, and interested members of the public.

### **Joyce P. Murray**

EdD, RN, FAAN  
President

### **Ruth D. Corcoran**

EdD, RN  
Chief Executive Officer

### **R/G**

**Communications**  
Editor

## **MEMBER INVOLVEMENT IN NLN'S RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

The NLN has established six Advisory Councils that promote opportunities for members to network and to address and influence significant issues in nursing education. Each Advisory Council is led by a five-member Executive Committee, elected by the NLN membership. All NLN members are eligible to participate in Advisory Councils or their Task Groups.

The Advisory Council that works with NLN's Research Unit is the Nursing Education Research Advisory Council (NERAC). Its purpose is to promote the scholarship of teaching and learning through providing leadership in the development of the science of nursing education, supporting nursing education research, and promoting evidenced-based teaching and

learning. Most recently, this Advisory Council has updated the NLN *Priorities for Research in Nursing Education* and prepared a *Position Statement on Funding for Nursing Education Research*.

Three Task Groups carry out aspects of NERAC's work and include:

- Task Group on Funding for Nursing Education Research
- Task Group to Develop a Nursing Education Minimum Data Set
- Task Group to Develop an Electronic Resource Repository for Nursing Education Research

Reports of work of these Task Groups and NERAC are reported in NLN'S Updates, Journal, and Website.

The NLN logo consists of the letters "NLN" in a white, serif font, centered within a solid yellow square.

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