

Becoming an Erudite of Nursing Profession in the 21st Century: The Career Path

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Introduction

A career is a lifelong commitment that has the potential to be extremely rewarding and not merely a pay check. It is therefore important for anyone wishing to choose a career to carefully consider all aspects of the career. The aim of this paper is to show the career path to becoming an erudite in nursing profession in this 21st century. According to the Oxford Advanced English Dictionary, an erudite is someone who have or shows profound knowledge to have learnt or scholarly in his or her chosen field. It is a most distinguishing level or status that is earned, attained and not through any man's generosity. This is made possible by hard work, mentoring, sacrifice, maintaining the highest standards of excellence and achievement, appropriate studying until one is approved, been extremely strong emotionally and physically in order to stand-out. However, it must be quickly resolved here, that as mortals, we are limited in certain rights. No matter how a man tries, except God puts His blessings upon Him, he may just be labouring in vain. The path to becoming an erudite in a chosen field like nursing starts from career advancement/development.

Career advancement in nursing constitutes any form of professional promotion that recognizes and rewards talent in clinical and administrative nursing practice. It serves as a tool that supports nursing excellence through the conferment of higher clinical status to those nurses who meet the requirements [1].

The Professional Excellence and Career Advancement in Nursing (PECAN) model emphasized mentorship and self-efficacy as major determinant of professional development and career advancement of clinical nurse leadership [2]. The model proposes that nurses who are self-efficacious and receive appropriate mentoring are better positioned to engage in ongoing professional development as well as pursuing and acquiring a higher level of education. As nurses attain higher level of professional preparedness, they are in a better position to optimally leverage the competencies and factors identified in the model (external support, human capital factors,

social capital factors and system factors) to advance their career, enhance and develop their leadership skills and improve positive patient outcome as well as proffer solutions to problem arising in health care delivery system. A nurse who will be an erudite in this 21st century must understand personal branding. Personal branding asks the question of what is unique about the individual. This means that personal branding breaks the individual from others by telling everyone who you are, what you do, how you do it and what makes you different from everyone else. In other words you create value and benefit in a way that no one else can. As a direct patient caregiver, the nurse ensures that his brand is directly related to the quality or value of your patient care and skills. Through branding the nurse establish a value and as result establish trust.

A nurse who chooses to be an erudite and make impact in his/her own chosen field must:

- a) Live by the tenets of the profession as contained in the Nurses Pledge (Florence Nightingale Prayers).
- b) Have good organizational skills and be able to choose the right association that focuses on topics that will help in building him/her.
- c) Have strong communication skills: Develop relationships by sharing information, knowledge and insight with a variety of other medical professionals, patients or the population in general.
- d) Set a career and a job goal: Develop a road map for the job and career success. One cannot be successful in a career or profession without setting both short-term and long-term goals.
- e) Innovative: Instead of waiting for change to find you, continuously bring innovation into your job and to stay ahead of it. Take the initiative with ideas for doing things better and have the courage to advance and implement them.

- f) Choose skills and not title: Think of your career in term of building blocks with each block representing a set of skills. Do whatever it takes to acquire the skill that will help take you to the next level.
- g) Be ready to boost skills through exploring new education/training opportunities.
- h) Focus on time efficacy: Spend time on activities that are enlightening and productive. Sooner than later, there will be gained hours to reap the benefits of success. Dedicate time and effort to determining the plan for your preferred future and execute that plan in focused and consistent manner.

Conclusion

The 21st century poses a lot of challenge for practitioners of nursing who is expected to successfully engage in health care policy development and decision making. The development of a critical mass of nurse leaders who will be in the front-line of practice as well as in formal administrative roles cannot be apt than this time [2]. Educational system and policies must be designed in such a way that will make the emergence of erudite easier in which the knowledge, facts, skill which is important in nursing as a profession. The educators should be adequately qualified to impact the adequate skills and knowledge needed by the students to become erudite of the profession. The main task of becoming an erudite depends greatly on the students in aspects of personal reading, research and improvements of their skills with clear evidence of show of interest in the profession. The financial, spiritual and psychology support from the parents cannot be over-emphasised.

The primary goal of nursing is to improve the overall health and well-being of entire population's at all levels of health care. The

potential place of employment for nurses ranges from government agencies to private businesses. The nurse is expected to work, develop and implement plans that work on promoting, and reducing various health and safety within the population they serve. Nurses differs from other health providers in that they don't simply care for a single patient at a time but for the family and spend the longest hours of the day with the patient. We must look beyond just obtaining a degree and caring for patient in order to take ownership of our professional development and career advancement within nursing and among the multidisciplinary team. The contemporary nurses constantly face series of technological, managerial, administrative, political and economic changes involving new ideas, new values and new problems that may need on the spot decisions and solutions [3]. It is therefore obvious that contemporary nurses need a new orientation to help them successfully cope with developing changes in the health care to attain the erudite status accrued over long and sustained career development. Nursing is amongst the most sought-for careers in life [4]. Be proud therefore that you belong to this most celebrated, cherished, down-to-heart, non-profit making, selfless and divinely career called-NURSING.

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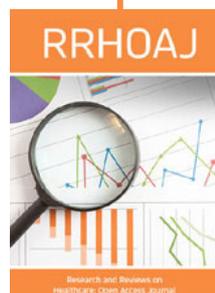
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