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An International Collaboration: Linguistic Editing of Scholarly Work

Michelle A. McMahon, PhD, RN, CNE

School of Nursing, Curry College, Milton, MA, USA

Susan A. LaRocco, PhD, MBA, RN, CNE, FNAP

School of Nursing, Mount Saint Mary College, Newburgh, NY, USA

Amani Khalil, Professor in nursing

School of Nursing, The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Background for collaboration: Theta-at-Large Chapter is one of the oldest and largest Sigma chapters. Psi Kappa Chapter at the University of Jordan in Amman was formed in 2015 and admitted to Sigma Theta Tau International in 2017. A member of Theta-at-Large was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Jordan during academic year 2015-16 and a participant in the first induction held in January 2016. Theta-at-Large provided some financial support during the founding of Psi Kappa. This established connection between the Theta-at-Large and Psi-Kappa chapters afforded a unique opportunity to create a global collaboration consistent with Sigma's 2017-2019 Presidential Call to Action. An initiative was sought to formally "connect" these chapters, find a purposeful way for members to "collaborate" and to "catalyze" new professional relationships and scholarly partnerships (Tigges, 2017).

Theta-at Large and Psi Kappa Chapters discussed ways to collaborate: Leaders in both chapters were interested in creating a sustainable international partnership. After doing a member needs assessment, Psi Kappa leadership determined that their members could benefit from linguistic editing done by the native English speaking members of Theta-at-Large. Although the University of Jordan utilizes English in classes and for all scholarly writing, the Arabic speaking scholars struggle with the nuances of English grammar. Literature supports the value of review, revision and mentorship of scholars for whom English is an additional language during the scholarly writing process (Baggs, 2010; Belcher, 2007; Guttman, 2004; Kuteeva & Mauranen, 2014; Spear, 2006). Theta-at-Large, a chapter that includes Boston University, Curry College, and Simmons University, has many members who have published extensively and who are well equipped to assist their colleagues with linguistic editing.

Collaboration Initiated: The presidents of the two chapters collaborated to create a process and to clarify expectations. The first manuscript review occurred in December 2017.

Evaluation according to Stufflebeam's CIPP model: To date eight manuscripts have been reviewed. These include manuscripts for publication and doctoral students' dissertation chapters. During one year of collaboration, formative and summative review of this project has been done using Stufflebeam's CIPP model (Stufflebeam, 2014). In this model, context, inputs, process, and products are evaluated with the goal of continuous quality improvement and to promote project sustainability. Questionnaires were distributed to both the Jordanian scholars who utilized the review service and to members of Theta-at-Large who did the reviews.

Surveys were returned by most of the volunteer reviewers and about half of the Jordanian scholars who requested a linguistic review. Regarding processes, most respondents rated the request process, review timeframe, and communication positively. A few open-ended responses showed a discrepancy between expected depth of commentary and editorial recommendations from both the requestor and reviewer perspectives. Literature suggests successful writing mentorships require negotiation of goals and are based on clear expectations (Kennedy, 2017). This finding suggests the need for improved messaging to emphasize the project aim to provide linguistic editing.

Evaluation data related to products, noted both expected outcomes of scholarship including several manuscript submissions, a podium presentation, and a dissertation defense. Other unintended benefits expressed by the reviewers included themes noting the value of reading a cross cultural perspective on a common clinical practice topic and embracing the opportunity to provide service to a distant nursing colleague.

Additional input gleaned from chapter president correspondence since implementation has yielded valuable assessment data which guided revisions over time. Anecdotally, one of the greatest process challenges is to recruit and maintain enough linguistic reviewers. A concern of having a small pool of reviewers is the risk of fatigue due to over requesting. Therefore, to ensure sustainability, efforts to strategically rotate review requests amongst volunteers is done, with the aim to minimize perceived burden and to maximize repeat and periodic participation. Another challenge relates to the logistics of following the linguistic review process from start to finish. Currently the Theta-at-Large president manages the requests including submission and return dates, seeks availability from the reviewer pool, matches the requestor and reviewer dyad interests when possible, and collects verification when the review cycle is complete. Although manageable at present, if this collaboration is to expand in size and scope a more formal process might be needed.

Future Directions: This first year pilot and evaluation has demonstrated success with a linguistic editing collaboration. Many positive outcomes were reported by both reviewers and Jordanian scholars, yet there were also some recommendations that could enhance the process. Specifically, areas for improvement included requests for shorter turn-around times, creating an option for the same reviewer to complete multiple dissertation chapters for greater continuity, and refinement of the linguistic review request form to collect more details of reviewer needs. Furthermore, continued strategies to engage more volunteer reviewers are needed. Increased visibility of this program has occurred through newsletter requests for assistance which included a picture of Jordanian scholars, e-mail blasts for recruitment, and one reviewer's offer to co-review and mentor new linguistic reviewers as an option.

Finally, to promote greater awareness of the connection between the Theta-at Large and Psi Kappa chapters and in the spirit of collaboration, the two chapters share chapter publications and information about current activities. Most recently the presentation at a Theta-at-Large dinner meeting was video-recorded and made available to the Psi Kappa members. It is expected that continued collaborations will lead to new scholarly relationships including opportunities for joint research projects in the future.

Title:

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Abstract Summary:

Theta-at-Large Chapter has established a partnership with Psi Kappa Chapter at the University of Jordan to assist Jordanian scholars by providing linguistic editing of manuscripts and other scholarly work such as masters theses and dissertations. The CIPP model guided project evaluation. The process, outcomes and benefits are described.

Content Outline:

1. Background for collaboration
1. Psi Kappa is a new chapter, started as an honor society at the University of Jordan in 2015, admitted to Sigma in 2017

2. Theta-at-Large member worked closely with Jordanian colleagues during the formation of the honor society (as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Jordan in 2014-15)
3. Theta-at-Large Chapter proved financial support to the Jordanian honor society during their start-up
2. Theta-at-Large and Psi Kappa Chapters discussed ways to collaborate
 1. Psi Kappa needs assessment to determine how a collaboration could benefit their chapter
 2. Theta- at-Large determined what member skills could be used to provide meaningful, sustainable collaboration
 3. Collaboration initiated
 1. Expectations formalized by both chapter presidents
 2. First manuscript reviewed
 4. Evaluation according to Stufflebeam's CIPP
 1. context
 2. inputs
 3. process
 4. products
 5. Future directions
 1. Refinements and awareness for project sustainability
 2. Continued sharing of chapter publications and activities utilizing online formats
 3. Consider possible joint research projects

First Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

Michelle A. McMahon, PhD, RN, CNE
 Curry College
 School of Nursing
 Professor
 Milton MA
 USA

Author Summary: Dr. Michelle McMahon is the Theta at Large Chapter President. She is a Professor and Director of the MSN Graduate Program at Curry College School of Nursing in Milton, MA. Dr. McMahon has published in peer-reviewed journals and presented at local, regional and national conferences. She is a Certified Nurse Educator and on-site evaluator for the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

Second Secondary Presenting Author

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author

Susan A. LaRocco, PhD, MBA, RN, CNE, FNAP
 Mount Saint Mary College
 School of Nursing
 Dean and Professor
 Newburgh NY
 USA

Author Summary: Dr LaRocco is the Dean of the School of Nursing at Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh NY. She has been a member of Sigma for over 40 years. Dr LaRocco was a Fulbright Scholar, teaching doctoral students at the University of Jordan in Amman. She is a Certified Nurse Educator.

Third Secondary Presenting Author

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author

Amani Khalil, Professor in nursing

The University of Jordan

School of Nursing

Professor

Amman

Jordan

Author Summary: Dr Amani is a Professor in Nursing (clinical adult nursing) at the University of Jordan. She is the founding President of the Psi Kappa Chapter. Dr Amani received her PhD from the University of Kentucky-Lexington, USA. and her research work is in caring of patients with acute and chronic kidney disease.