

# SCHOOL OF NURSING SCIENCES' FIRST RESEARCH RETREAT WORKSHOP AND WRITING COURSE

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The School of Nursing Sciences (SONS) at the Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University (NWU) organised and held its first research retreat and writing course for staff and postgraduate students (Master's and Doctoral candidates) from 10 to 12 November 2017 in Roodepoort, Gauteng, South Africa. The workshop was

attended by NWU SONS management and facilitators, the language editor from the Department of English of the NWU, and Master's and PhD candidates from SONS. The purpose of the workshop was to capacitate NWU SONS staff and postgraduate students with research and writing skills. The workshop was officially opened by the Postgraduate Research Coordinator, Prof. Lufuno Makhado. The workshop was facilitated by grounded research presenters such as Dr Liberty Hove (Senior Lecturer and Language Editor), Prof. Lufuno Makhado (Acting Programme Manager: Research and Postgraduate Studies), Prof. Abel Jacobus Pienaar (Acting Faculty Coordinator for the Faculty of Health Sciences), and Dr Leepile Alfred Sehularo (Undergraduate Research Coordinator) who also officially welcomed all the participants.

Dr Hove presented the philosophical foundations and transcendent preconditions of the nursing discipline, the layout of manuscripts and dissertations, and language and scholarly writing. He started by giving a panoramic picture of nursing research that comprises five elements of writing, namely the nature of the study, methods or methodology, the literature review, the analysis and summary, and conclusions and recommendations.

Prof. Pienaar gave a presentation on qualitative research, mixed and multimethods, data analysis, interpretation and discussions. His presentation on qualitative research focused on the types of data collection methods and how data are analysed in qualitative research, including the four elements, namely spoken words, concepts, categories, and themes.

A presentation on quantitative research, the systematic review, and the manuscript or dissertation proposal was given by Prof. Makhado. Prof. Makhado emphasised that data interpretation is a process that focuses on what is important within the analysed data, why is it important, what can be learnt from it, and that the researcher has to add his/her voice. For the discussion session dealing with the challenges faced by postgraduate students, the Master's students were divided into groups, and staff members who have completed their Master's degree and who were busy with their PhD degree assisted in the session.

The postgraduate students were divided into three groups, namely Master's students who are still busy with their research proposals, Master's students who have collected data and were busy with the writing up, and the PhD candidates who have submitted their manuscripts. Both groups of Master's students were requested to share their progress with regard to how far they have developed their working research areas, challenges they face, and recommendations to deal with these challenges. They were also requested to reveal the way forward. Allocated staff members who have completed their Master's degree assisted to facilitate the process.

During the reflection session, the postgraduate students expressed their appreciation for the SONS for organising this essential and refreshing research retreat workshop and writing course. Dr Hove suggested that the writing protocols for each genre such as articles and dissertations be considered more fully in the next research retreat workshop.

A way forward was charted by Prof. Pienaar, who mentioned that “the workshop was practical and essential because postgraduate students have already entered the scholarly platform and they must enjoy it”. At the end of the research retreat workshop and writing course, Prof. Makhado applauded the candidates who attended the research retreat workshop and writing course because 10 manuscripts for publication were reviewed, corrected and submitted for language editing. Prof. Pienaar supported him by thanking all staff members who managed to attend and for making it an academic and stimulating platform that generated 10 manuscripts for possible publication.

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