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Insights on Guest Editorship for Doctoral Students and Early-Career Researchers --Manuscript Draft--

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**TITLE: INSIGHTS ON GUEST EDITORSHIP FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS AND
EARLY-CAREER RESEARCHERS**

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Opportunities for academic journal editorship training are few. In a survey of 128 nurse editors in the International Academy of Nursing Editors (INANE) listserv, most respondents learnt the intricacies of the editor role while on the job, and approximately half had received mentorship from an experienced editor and/or a publisher (Waldrop & Likis, 2022). Although formal mentorship through the INANE has been available since 2019 (Shirey, 2016), the findings of this survey align with similar gaps identified almost two decades ago (Freda & Kearney, 2005) and suggest a continuous lack of development opportunities for nursing editors. Given that current opportunities to develop are primarily offered to those already in the role, training programs for nurses interested in learning about or pursuing an editor role are of great importance.

Nurses who have completed their doctoral studies are ideally suited to occupy an editor's role. It is widely acknowledged that doctoral programs offer the research training and philosophical thinking necessary to develop, integrate and mobilize nursing knowledge to address the challenges and improve healthcare and health outcomes for people, groups and communities. Included in this high-intensive academic preparation can be philosophical, research and leadership capabilities that place nurses in an ideal position to steward knowledge dissemination and high-quality research to and within the nursing community and, therefore, academic journal readers. From this perspective, developing the doctoral student's researcher capability, including formal scholarly activity training such as publication and peer-reviewed endeavours, is critical to the doctoral journey. Yet, it is not always recognized as a priority by the student, supervisor or academic institution. A result of this lack of awareness in applied research, is a disconnect between the doctoral student's research development and their capacity to cultivate their experience into scholarly inquiry that may emerge.

It could be argued that editorship offers an opportunity to strengthen the student's scholarly portfolio of skillsets and capabilities during doctoral nursing education while simultaneously illuminating the role of nurse editors in steering knowledge mobilization. Editorship during doctoral education may also present as a viable solution to address the paucity of training opportunities for nurses interested in an editor role. We offer our thoughts on the added value of editorship opportunities during doctoral training and early career research. Our reflections and learnings stem from a temporary role as Guest Editors for a special issue of *Nurse Education Today* focused on diversity and social justice in nursing. We are a collective of one Ph.D. candidate, two Early-career Researchers (ECRs), one Mid-career Researcher (MCR) and one Late-career Researcher (LCR) with diverse backgrounds and experiences from various parts of the world, invited by the last author and Senior Guest Editor (CM) to form an editorial team. XXXXXX is a registered nurse and a doctoral candidate at a university in Canada, Dr. XXXXXX is an Early-Career Researcher (ECR) and the deputy head of a department for nursing at a university in England, Dr. XXXX is an ECR and the head of nursing at a London-based university (England), Dr. XXXXX is an MCR and a public health researcher at a university in New Zealand, and Dr. XXXX is a nursing professor of XXXXX in London university (England). All of us identify as members of communities of Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC) and/or Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and additional sexual orientations and gender identities (2SLGBTQIA+). In negotiating the guest editorship, XX

wanted to build capacity for a doctoral student, ECRs and an MCR. He aimed to develop editorial leadership by assembling an international team with expertise in social justice and diversity based on his networks. Before accepting the guest editor role, all of us had previous experience as peer reviewers and/or as members of editorial boards of academic journals.

This reflection has three parts. We begin by describing the benefits of guest editorship for doctoral students and ECRs and then shift our gaze to reflect on skills and knowledge to consider before embarking on guest editorship opportunities. In the final section, we put forward recommendations to universities and academic journal editors. By offering our thoughts and learnings on this experience, we hope to spark the interest of editors of academic nursing journals to create structures that support guest editorship, and prompt doctoral students, supervisors and universities to seek such opportunities that can enrich doctoral students' and ECRs' scholarship.

What are the benefits of guest editorship for doctoral students and Early-career Researchers?

Guest editorship for doctoral students and ECRs offers a series of benefits for learning by doing in an environment where support is available from senior editors. For doctoral students, the opportunity to develop academic skills can be profound. By engaging with various manuscripts, we recognize the ways in which students can apply the skills and knowledge learned about research, critical reading and apprising literature. Insight into a wide range of research methodologies and methods, and exposure to advancements in the field, are also augmented, thus strengthening research portfolios and programs of research. Given that peer reviewers offer nuanced understandings of the research, its methodology and methods, close connection with a plurality of perspectives will undoubtedly increase the intellectual capacity of the guest editor to be more attuned to diverse perspectives in the future when participating in or leading research teams. Guest editors who act as peer reviewers can also expand their critical analytic skills and ability to offer constructive feedback (Candelaria et al., 2022). Beyond developing research skills, the experience of reading and editing multiple manuscripts during the editorial process may prove beneficial in refining doctoral students' and ECRs' academic writing skills.

Editorship also generates unique understandings of the multi-level editorial process and publishing practices. Albeit for a short period, editorship increased our comprehension of the tasks of curating a journal issue, the rules of the editorial process, and the intricacies of peer reviews. It illuminated factors that explain delays often hidden from authors during the peer-review process, such as the challenges in finding suitable peer reviewers to comment on substantive areas of research and methodology or who are available to conduct an appraisal within the journal's review time. Through active participation in the editorial process, we observed how different authors wrestled with the reviewers' feedback during manuscript revision, adopting or pushing back on some of the comments and suggestions. We see this combined learning as valuable to scholars who communicate research findings through academic journals.

Lastly, guest editorship has the potential to encourage self-reflection, expand scholarly networks and contribute to the professional development of doctoral students and ECRs. As a vehicle to express ideas, document practices and research findings, nursing journals are

indispensable educational tools for nurses (Kearney & Freda, 2006). As a result, editors hold a leadership role in disseminating disciplinary knowledge and need to stay abreast with current debates on issues affecting nursing and healthcare. Engagement with various research topics, methodologies and methods may also lead doctoral students to identify gaps in their knowledge and areas for further improvement. Moreover, guest editorship presents itself as a space to build connections with scholars on the editorial team, opening up opportunities to network and develop a community willing to work and engage in further collaborative ventures. For some of us, discourse on social justice and diversity in nursing extended to the workplace, promoting knowledge exchange and inquiry, and leading to manuscript submissions. For instance, the second author made a concerted effort to seek scholars within their department and across the health and education faculty interested in contributing to this special edition. This promoted discussion between doctoral students and supervisors, prompting cross-department collaborations that might have never happened if not steered by the guest editorship opportunity.

While we presented advantages for embarking on guest editorship, doctoral students and ECRs should devote considerable time and concerted effort to reflect on the aims and scope of the journal in relation to their academic level and the requisites for undertaking the role.

What skills and knowledges are needed before embarking on a Guest Editorship?

Several skills critical to editors should be considered a minimum requirement of guest editorships. While knowledge and skills to manage the editorial process system can be attained a priori or immediately after commencing the guest editorship, such is not the case with the life cycle of a manuscript. For most doctoral students and ECRs, knowledge about the life cycle of an article will have previously commenced as a lead author or co-author of a manuscript and developed as an invited peer reviewer of other manuscripts. Before guest editorship, this first-hand experience with both processes is imperative to understand that maintaining the integrity and credibility of the editorial process and high-standard scholarship are standards that should be adhered to at all times.

In an era of intensive focus on research methods training and techniques and less emphasis on philosophical and theoretical training during doctoral programs (Thorne, 2016), editors need to be well-versed in a range of philosophical perspectives and theoretical approaches that underpin nursing research. It was evident from our experience that engagement with nursing philosophy was important not only in assessing manuscripts with explicit or implicit theoretical standpoints steering the research methodology but also given the topic of our special issue.

Management skills and an understanding of the academic environment are necessary during guest editorships. Guest editors must be prepared to communicate with peer reviewers – especially when peer reviewer deadlines have expired –, appreciate the various roles faculty and clinicians hold and be open to extending these deadlines without losing track of the journal's reviewing timelines. Management of the peer review process also included assessing the suitability of the manuscripts for publication in the journal, allocating the number of peer-reviewers needed for each manuscript based on the reviewer's areas of expertise, and writing a recommendation about the outcome of the manuscript informed by reviewers' comments.

Although different opinions among reviewers arose, accepting the multiple and heterogenous views was paramount. Often when confronted with significant disparate viewpoints and recommendations from peer-reviewers (e.g. accepting versus rejecting), we found ourselves conducting an additional review of the manuscript before submitting our recommendation to the senior guest editor.

Guest editorship involves a significant time commitment, even when the editor is not required to conduct a review themselves. As a result, doctoral students should reflect on their availability to embark on such opportunities and seek advice from supervisors. As a team of five guest editors, we dedicated between one to four hours/per week to guest editor duties over the course of ten months; however, due to the unpredictable nature of the process, certain weeks required more time investment than others. Yet, our time is considerably less than current nurse editors, who may spend an average of 12.2 hours/per week on editorial duties (Waldrop & Likis, 2022). Among ECRs and MCRs, we recognize that due to competing demands, guest editorship is not sufficiently recognized or prioritized by institutions, albeit important, and is often carried out in one's own time. While there remains no workload allocation from employers or faculty or remuneration for guest editors, there is a personal and professional benefit.

Editors need the aptitude to make decisions beyond determining the outcome of a manuscript. As guest editors from historically made-marginalized groups and communities, we were responsible for ensuring a diverse perspective of voices and locations were reflected among the peer reviewers of our special issue in order to reduce publication bias. Yet, we rapidly recognized the increased representation of peer-reviewers from high-income countries, mainly in the Global North, and little representation from Black, Indigenous, Latinx and People of Color, although the latter proved difficult to establish due to a lack of race-based data. Nevertheless, we sought to redress the silence and exclusion of these voices from the margins. For instance, the first author leveraged her networks and invited doctoral students and ECRs from underrepresented groups with expertise in research topics and whose knowledges have been excluded from the canon of nursing scholarship. The appropriate skill mix for manuscripts with a doctoral student as a peer reviewer was achieved by pairing ECRs and/or LCRs in the field. Although our first-hand experience as guest editors is related to one journal, our observations likely reflect other high-impact journals in nursing education (and nursing writ large) and the continuous need to move beyond diversity statements without meaningful structural action.

Our guest editorship experience also elucidated the need for editors to hold excellent command over the English language. Yet, the English language can be both a liberatory and an exclusionary practice within eurocentric knowledges. While disseminating knowledge using the most common language widens the reach for authors when communicating their perspectives and research findings, we became aware that short and long-term support systems for authors without English as their first language should be made more accessible by academic journals. As guest editors, we were cognizant of our limitations in providing the academic writing mentorship that some authors needed to transform their manuscripts into published articles and advance current knowledge in nursing.

Recommendations for Universities and Journal Editors

Nurse editors are undervalued among academic leaders and nursing; however, they are essential in disseminating high-quality nursing research (Waldrop & Likis, 2022). There should be a way of acknowledging this benefit, as editorial work appears to largely be undertaken in the individual's own time and is at risk of being viewed as a pastime rather than a valuable academic and research skillset. Universities should capitalize on their faculty expertise as journal editors to offer doctoral students and ECRs editorship opportunities. Here we offer a word of caution to ensure these opportunities are available to all and that preference is not given to those from communities who have been historically privileged. For doctoral students, guest editorship can resemble other training opportunities with financial remuneration during doctoral education, such as Teaching and Research Assistantships.

Partnerships with nursing journals may be a solution for universities without faculty occupying editor positions. Yet, this demands investment from journal editors to develop pathways that support guest editorship, such as the development programs in the American Journal of Maternal Child Nursing, Advances in Nursing Science and the Journal of Advanced Nursing. In the absence of such pathways, other models of editorship, such as ours (Fig 1.), are a possible alternative to develop a cadre of nurses who understand and appreciate the editor role.

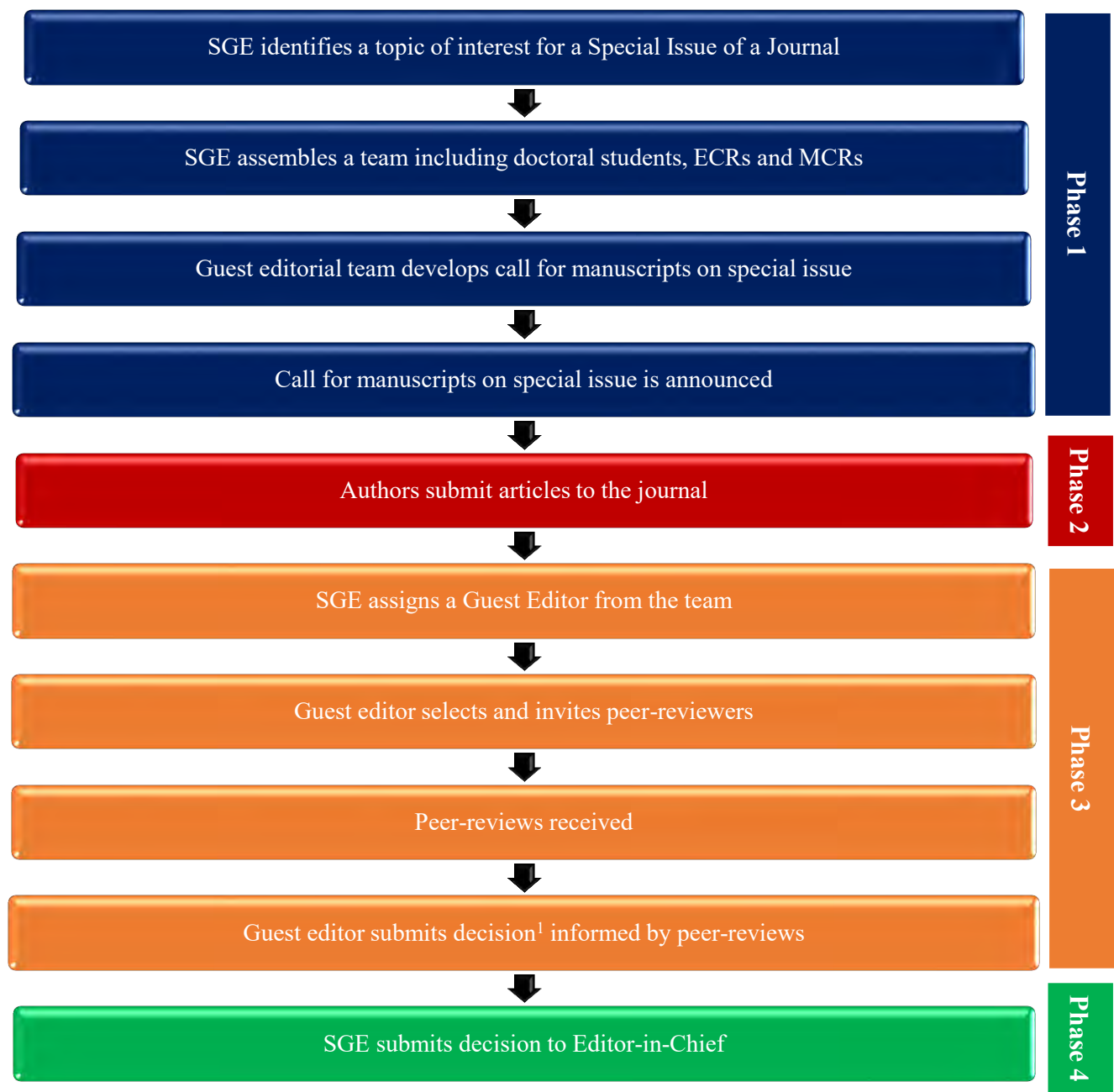
Conclusion

An editor provides a major contribution to the scientific community by ensuring that sound knowledge is disseminated. To achieve this, the individual will possess a skillset in their subject discipline and have an in-depth understanding of research, a broad approach to social justice, for example, gender and race as bias in publication. Editors are responsible for creating opportunities for early, middle and late-career researchers to engage in editorship training and development. We acknowledge that most editors and reviewers are not paid, and finding the balance between employers' work and editing can be difficult. Our experience has been mainly positive and demonstrates the benefits of engaging in this role and training.

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Fig 1 – Diagram of Guest Editorship Model



Legend:
SGE, Senior Guest Editor
ECRs, Early-career researchers
MCRs, Middle-career researchers
¹Accept, Reject, Minor or Major Revision