PHILOSOPHY TO EVIDENCE: ADVANCED KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT AND THEORY CONSTRUCTION IN NURSING

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Teaching Challenge

First year of doctoral nursing students often **struggle to translate abstract philosophy and theory into concrete research decisions**, including:
- how to build a theoretical framework
- interpret and integrate theories
- justify why a study needs a specific theory

Course Aim and Learning Outcomes

Knowledge Development in Nursing (KDN) course prepares first-year doctoral students to connect

Philosophy → Theory → Evidence → Scholarly writing

By the end of the course, students can:
- Demonstrate strengthened philosophical and theoretical thinking in nursing
- Explicitly link philosophy, theory, and evidence to support research justification
- Develop competence in scoping review methodology and manuscript-level academic writing

Course Content Map

KDN provides a coherent knowledge-development journey, moving from foundations to application and writing.

A. Foundations of Nursing Knowledge
- Philosophy of science and why it matters for nursing knowledge development.
- Nursing as a discipline: epistemology and ontology (what counts as knowledge; what exists and can be known).
- Nursing's theoretical heritage and how theories evolve and are used.

B. Tools for Knowledge Development
- Concept analysis using Walker & Avant + critical appraisal of methods.
- Scoping review as an evidence-mapping tool with structured critique and application.

C. Scholarly Identity and Doctoral Thinking in EMI
- Reflection on the ICN revised definition of nursing: positioning nursing knowledge across research, education, and practice.
- "Journey of a nursing scholar" learning experiences to connect theory and the real world scholarship.

D. Writing Pathway
- Stepwise scoping review milestones and iterative manuscript development toward publication readiness.

Evidence of Impact
(Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Model)

- **Level 1 (Reaction):** High ratings (mostly 4.5–5.0/5); SR steps + AI lecture 4.9/5; SR Steps 1–3 applicability 5.0/5.
- **Level 2 (Learning):** Stronger nursing identity + theory–research linkage; improved scoping review skills, critical thinking, and academic English.
- **Level 3 (Behavior):** Students transfer skills to doctoral work—build theory-informed questions, synthesize evidence, argue academically, and revise through feedback cycles.
- **Level 4 Results:** 12 peer-reviewed scoping review publications + ongoing submissions.

Teaching Design

A Visible Learning Pathway (Core Uniqueness)

Philosophy → Theory → Evidence → Writing is taught as an explicit, repeatable framework. Students don't just "learn theory," they learn how to use it.

Performance-Based, Active Learning (Not Passive Listening)

Teaching strategies are intentionally designed to make abstract ideas learnable:
- Interactive lectures that emphasize structure, logic, and conceptual boundaries
- Critical reading + seminar-style discussion to develop analysis and synthesis
- Concept analysis practice (Walker & Avant)
- Scoping review training aligned with established approaches (e.g., Arksey & O'Malley / JBI)

Research-Integrated Learning (Authentic Doctoral Output)

Students work with topics aligned to their doctoral interests and repeatedly present, receive feedback, and revise, mirroring real scholarly practice.

AI Literacy as a Contemporary Scholarly Skill

A guest lecture supports students' development of scoping review work using AI-informed prompting (responsibly and academically).

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths
- A clear, structured pathway from philosophy to publishable evidence.
- Strong integration of teaching and authentic research practice.
- EMI environment that supports doctoral academic communication growth.

Challenges
- High cognitive demand of philosophical content.
- Mixed English proficiency in an international cohort.
- Time-intensive mentoring and manuscript development workload.

What Happens in the Classroom

Repeatable learning cycle used across major units:
1. Concept anchor lecture
2. Guided reading (theory/method exemplars)
3. Structured discussion (critique + synthesis)
4. Production task (scoping review output)
5. Peer + instructor feedback
6. Revision submission

Publication records

Students' Voice

"KDN demonstrates EMI teaching excellence by transforming abstract philosophy and theory into doctoral-level performance—critical thinking, academic English communication, and publication-ready scholarship."