Factors Influencing Retention of Students in an RN-to-BSN Program

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Problem

• Justification
  – Retention a benchmark for program success
    ➢ Schools must identify reasons RN-to-BSN program students leave
      – Little to no evidence of studies

• Significance
  – RN-to-BSN enrollment up; attrition rates +50%
    ➢ Retention tracked; More data needed

• 80% of nurses should have BSN by 2020 (ANA, 2008 & IOM, 2011)
Purpose

• Describe factors that restricted or promoted retention among RN-to-BSN students
  – Examine any difference in the measure of these factors between juniors and seniors

• Ultimate goal to inform faculty
  – Develop and guide interventions
  – Assist universities to meet nursing organization suggestions
Theoretical Basis

• Philosophical underpinnings – Comte’s positivism concept
  – Goal of knowledge is only to describe the phenomena

• Conceptual framework
  – Jeffreys (2004) Nursing Undergraduate Retention and Success (NURS) model; Focus on retention
Review of Literature

• Few studies among RN-to-BSN students
  – Persistence, minority retention, and online orientation
  – Direct interaction of faculty & students a constant theme
  – Faculty availability and timely feedback most important

• Jeffreys – extensive research
  – Identified five factors that restrict/support student retention
    ➢ Environmental factors
    ➢ Institutional interaction and integration factors
    ➢ Personal academic factors
    ➢ College facilities factors
    ➢ Friend support factors
Methodology

• Research design
  – Non-experimental, descriptive, comparison study, using convenience sample from RN-to-BSN students at one liberal arts university

• Instrumentation
  – SPA-R and demographic questionnaire
    ➢ Reliability and validity

• Protection of human subjects – IRB approval
Study Setting

• Midwest liberal arts university
  – Two main campuses in separate states

• Learning environment
  – Face-to-face and blended
  – Geographically separated sites

• Learning cohorts
  – Community hospitals and community colleges
Overview of Results

• Invitation sent to 208 individuals
  – 84 (40.38%) entered survey site

• The sample
  – White females, mid-30’s, married, full-time jobs
  – Continuously enrolled with average grade of A
Research Questions

• Question 1 – What are the descriptive values for five identified factors among a sample of RN-to-BSN students?

• Question 2 – What is the rank order of the means of the scores for the measures associated with each of the five factors among this sampling?
### Descriptive Statistics for the Scores of the Research Variables (N = 77)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>range</th>
<th>$n$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental factors</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>-.80 to 1.40</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College facilities factors</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>-.40 to .80</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal academic factors</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>-1.20 to 2.00</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional integration factors</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>-.40 to 1.20</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend support factors</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.00 to 2.00</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Integration of Findings with Literature

• **Environmental Factors**
  – Least supportive factor; Congruent with Jeffreys (2007)

• **Institutional Interaction & Integration Factors**
  – Congruent with Jeffreys’ (2004, 2007) studies; Active mentoring by faculty seen as most beneficial

• **Personal Academic Factors**
  – Congruent with Jeffreys (2007)
  – Students challenged to balance responsibilities
  – Able to prioritize; Skill used daily in nursing practice
Integration of Findings with Literature (Cont’d)

• College Facilities Factors
  – Not perceived as most restrictive or supportive
  – Differences encountered in current study

• Friend Support Factors
  – Perceived as most supportive
  – Support of family and friends linked to retention

• Differences encountered in current study
  – None; Seen by juniors and seniors as key to staying in program
Implication of Findings

• **Nursing Education**
  – Study focused on infrequently studied students; Sensitize faculty to supportive and restrictive factors

• **Nursing Practice**
  – More emphasis needed on strategies other than financial aid

• **Nursing Research**
  – Low retention rates in degree completion programs *(AACN, 2010)*
  – Retention likely to lead to advanced nursing education
Limitations

• **Testing and instrumentation**
  – Low inter-item reliability
  – Survey items not specific

• **Generalizability**
  – One population
  – Small sample size
Recommendations For Future Studies

• Qualitative study

• Mixed methods study

• Increase sample size and/or calculate power analysis for a large effect size
Questions