

Transition to Practice: Supporting first year nurses within a collaborative faith based education program

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Introduction

Background to Research

- The St John of God Health Care (SJGHC) Group, the largest provider of private health care in Western Australia, is a not for profit provider within the context of catholic faith and values.
- Faith-based organisations play a major role in health care in Australia where local populations encounter a unique service supported by compassionate and concerned staff who work in opposition to the inflexibility that often exists in contemporary health care.
- In response to increasing demands placed on first year registered nurses, SJGHC in February 2016 introduced their 'Pathways to Practice' model to support nursing professional and clinical development.
- The implementation of the State-wide Graduate Nurse Program, provided in partnership with The University of Notre Dame (Notre Dame), Australia (Fremantle campus), engages students in academic and clinical learning to consolidate and support their first year of practice. On successful completion the Graduate Certificate in Clinical Nursing is awarded.
- This 12-month State-wide Graduate Nurse Program for first year registered nurses incorporates a comprehensive orientation program, various clinical rotations, paid study days, a preceptorship support program and on-line learning resources. In addition, this collaboration between SJGHC and Notre Dame provides an atmosphere for students in which community and pastoral care form the foundation for student success and growth as a comprehensive registered nurse. The course provides a pathway into further study at Diploma or Master level.

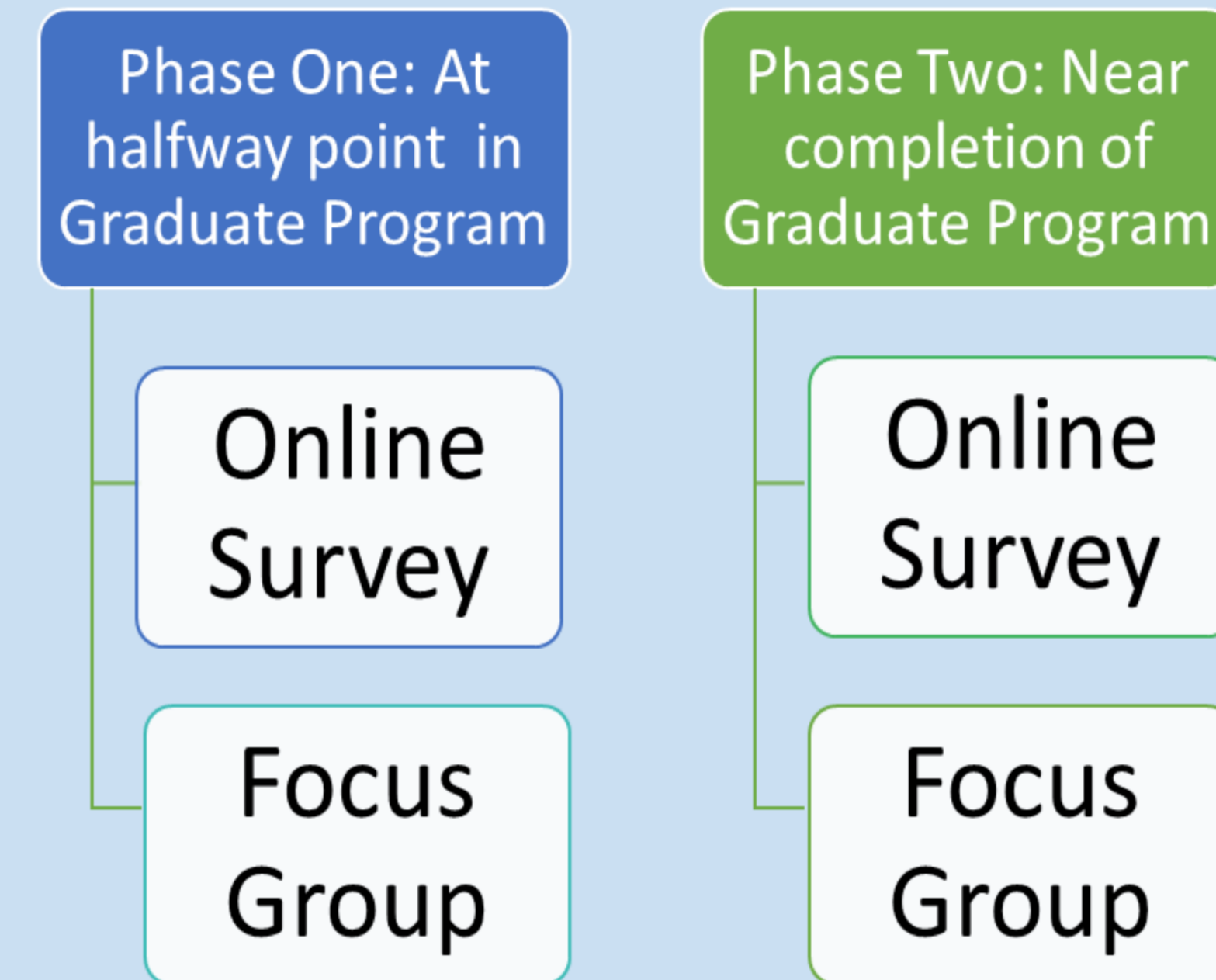
Aim and Research Method

Describe the impact of the SJGHC State-wide Graduate Program, on the learning and teaching culture, within a framework of catholic faith and values.

- Determine graduate nurse satisfaction with the SJGHC State-wide Graduate Program
- Identify barriers and enablers to graduate growth and professional development within the SJGHC State-wide graduate Program
- To explore the perceptions of the SJGHC State-wide Graduate Program on the graduates journey of learning within an environment of pastoral care.

Research Design

Phases



Participants

The population were newly qualified registered nurses employed in the Graduate Program at SJGHC.

The Graduate Program in 2016 had two intakes:

- Group 1 February/April 2016 (n= 47)
- Group 2 August 2016 (n=13)

Data Analysis

Quantitative – online survey

- The University of Tasmania's Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Evaluation Tool was used with permission from the WIL project team. The WIL Evaluation Tool provides the means to investigate how participants learn while undertaking a postgraduate qualification during their graduate program.
- The validated WIL Evaluation Tool measures, and reports on the participants perceptions of their learning including preparation prior to commencing WIL, engagement with active learning while on WIL and opportunities to develop a professional sense of self.
- The WIL Evaluation Tool provided quantitative data in a formatted report with statistical data and graphs

Qualitative – focus groups

- The focus group data collection technique used interviews with a group of five to 10 graduate nurses to elicit opinions and experiences simultaneously (Polit & Beck, 2014). The focus group interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.
- The online survey findings informed the direction of discussion, allowing the interviewer the flexibility to follow topics in-depth, ask additional questions and expand on issues raised by the participants with the freedom to seek clarification (Doody & Noonan, 2013).
- The interviewer guided the discussion on the WIL and first year nursing experience within the faith-based organisation.
- The qualitative data, including the open ended survey questions and the focus groups, was examined to identify emergent ideas and themes (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Microsoft Word was used to manage the data, ideas and create visual representations for the presentation of relationships.

Findings

Overall Findings

Overall, the experiences of the participant's across the 12-month program was positive. In particular, the opportunity to rotate through different ward areas, and work with nurses who displayed a positive culture of support assisted in their learning. The learning and development staff were a key support structure, and the graduate certificate, embedded into the program provided an opportunity to gain a formally recognised qualification. Whilst participants did not feel that the catholic faith and values were prominent, they did flow through to patient care, describing this as pastoral care, alongside the pastoral care volunteers, sisters and priests who visited the hospitals. There were frustrations at the lack of access to the learning and development nurses, the short shifts that resulted in less time to complete care when being the junior on the ward, and trying to learn in a busy environment. Participants were also confronted by some aspects of working in a private organisation, the term 'business' was often articulated.

Conclusion

The St John of God Health Care State-wide Graduate Program in collaboration with The University of Notre Dame Australia School of Nursing and Midwifery has provided a positive learning experience and support structure for its first year registered nurses. The 12-month program provided a point of entry into the health service that supported this group of novice nurses as they developed confidence and ability in their practice. The opportunity to work in multiple clinical areas provided different experiences that grew confidence and ability; the learning and development nurses and study days supported this. The Graduate Certificate of Clinical Nursing provided a sense of achievement for the additional work undertaken during the program, and promoted critical thinking of nursing actions, whilst appreciating a greater understanding of the wider health care sector standards and processes.

References

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The managers, they really display the values, and they make you feel like you're a family on the wards, and the SDNs as well

I feel like, because I've been sent to other wards as well, I'm more versatile... I know how to adapt



Going straight from university to working at a hospital, I think the program was great... you were kind of taken under the hospital's wing.

I would probably say even the grad cert that we've done was the most important thing, because you come out with the extra qualification.