

Nursing Education Research Conference 2020

The Lived Experience of Nursing Students Who Fail: A Narrative Inquiry Study

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Purpose:

Historically, attrition rates among nursing students in the United States has been a significant problem (Merkley, 2015). Many studies have been published on pre-requisite requirements or curriculum and the link to success in nursing programs (Mooring, 2016; ten Hoeve, et al., 2017). However, little is known about the experiences of nursing students who are unsuccessful. Few studies point to stressors or mental health of students beyond academic requirements (Galvin, et al., 2015; Kukkonen, Suhonen, & Salminen, 2016). The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze the lived stories of unsuccessful nursing students, as told by the nursing students who have failed one or more nursing courses during their journey in nursing school.

Methods:

A narrative inquiry methodology was used to conduct the qualitative study. The criteria for participants was based on the criteria of enrollment in the baccalaureate nursing (BSN) program who were repeating a failed course or completion of a repeated course in the last semester of the study timeline. The purposive sampling included thirty-four students who met the criteria, 27 females and 7 males, from a BSN program located in the Southwestern United States. After receiving approval from the institutional board review, participants were recruited via email. Thirty minute, face-to-face interviews were conducted using open-ended questions. The interview schedules were structured to allow for completion. After the interview was complete, the participants were asked to complete a personal reflection. To ensure privacy, each interview profile was de-identified and placed into a numeric profile. The interview data, participant reflection, and field notes were then analyzed using the restorying concept to identify common storylines.

Results:

Although each participant had unique circumstances, seven storylines emerged, four larger narratives and three smaller threads. One of the most significant was "life happens in nursing school." All of the participants' narratives included reference to organizational skills such as "planners have never been necessary for success." Additionally, each profile indicated a storyline of "I have never had to study until now" and "failure was not an option." The last three storylines to emerge were smaller threads but included topics such as getting behind or not wanting to seek help.

Conclusion:

The need to transform the nursing education environment is evident. Nursing students are struggling with issues other than academic requirements (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2016). The findings of the study describe significant, non-academic challenges for nursing students which require nurse educators and administrators to heed notice. Additionally, the storylines support the rigor of nursing schools and the need for nursing students to have personal perseverance to be successful. The study outcomes indicates a need to develop policies and procedures to help nurse educators identify at-risk students, beyond academic performances. A model for student-centered,

individualized learning environments should be the goal of each nursing school. The call for change is imperative and nurse educators need to answer the challenge by creating educational spaces that support perseverance, self-care, while promoting success and professional expectations.

Title:

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Keywords:

mental health of nursing students, nursing student attrition and stressors of nursing students

Abstract Summary:

Attrition rates among nursing students in the United States has been a significant problem. The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze the lived stories of unsuccessful nursing students, as told by nursing students who have failed one or more nursing courses during their journey in nursing school.

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Author Summary: Amanda Veesart currently serves as the program director for a large, traditional program. She oversees 42 different faculty. The average age of her faculty is 42, which provides a multitude of data for cultural diversity in the educational workforce. Current research studies include, cross-cultural mentoring, cultural awareness in nursing students, generational cohesion, and effective mentoring for the young leader.