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

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OBJECTIVES

By the end of the session, the participants will be able to:

- Discuss a four non-academic characteristics of nursing students who are unsuccessful.
- Identify patterns and trends of struggling nursing students.
- Describe 1 approach for retaining nursing students experiencing non-academic stressors.
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.
Background

- Predicting success
- Attrition
- Nursing students’ perceptions
The nursing shortage continues to be a significant concern.
- Dissatisfaction among the nursing workforce
- Nurse graduates who are leaving the workforce
- And of course, the cost of attrition in nursing schools
Methods

- **Study design:** phenomenological study using a narrative inquiry methodology
- **Sample:** 34 students
- **Participants** took part in a sixty-ninety minute, face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher using a minimal amount of open-ended questions to allow for the participant to freely tell their story.

**Demographics**

- **Average age:** 22 (Range 19-58)
- **Females=27 and Males=7**
- **19 who identified as Hispanic, 13 who identified as White, 3 who identified as Black, and 2 who identified as Asian**
- **34 resident status, 3 International, non-resident status**
Analysis

• Interview data, written participant letters, and field notes and memos were all analyzed.

• The restorying process for this study involved transcribing data into field texts, verifying the field texts with the participants, analyzing and coding the field texts, and ending with final research texts.

• Data were analyzed with the help of NVivo qualitative data analysis software.
Although each participant had unique circumstances, four larger narratives emerged.

1. “life happens in nursing school.”
2. “planners have never been necessary for success.”
3. “I have never had to study until now”
4. “failure was not an option, but was the best thing for me.”
Conclusion and Recommendations

- Nursing students are struggling with issues other than academic requirements
- Outcomes indicates a need to develop policies and procedures to help nurse educators identify at-risk students, beyond academic performances
- Early alert systems should not be just for academics
- Self-care cannot just be lip service
References


