

**Nursing Education Research Conference 2020**  
**Nursing Students Who Fail After Successful Admission to an Associate Degree Program**

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to explore the use of a Grit Assessment Tool as a predictor of future success in associate degree nursing (ADN) programs and identify characteristics in those students who pass pre-admission tests and sustain their efforts over time by successfully completing their nursing program. Although the Institute of Medicine (2010) calls for increasing baccalaureate-prepared nurses, to meet the projected demands for nurses, ADN programs are a necessity in providing nurse graduates to ameliorate the shortage and contribute diversity within the profession (Olsen, 2017). Ensuring student retention remains elusive and challenging for nursing programs (Jeffreys, 2015); with a persistent challenge plaguing ADN programs (Olsen, 2017).

**Methods:** A two-year multi-site, longitudinal mixed-methods study of students entering an ADN program within a Midwestern state's technical college system was launched. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained and protocols regarding confidentiality and informed consent were adhered to. In addition to completing the Grit Assessment Instrument at the time of admission, some of the participants who were unsuccessful while in their ADN program volunteered to be interviewed over the phone. All interviews (N=15) were audio recorded and then transcribed by a professional transcription service. A semi-structured interview guide was used during each interview with follow up probing questions to understand their experience. During and after each interview the researcher wrote field notes and reflective journaling regarding the interviews to provide a written audit trail. Interviews were analyzed by the research team using thematic analysis. Three key themes with exemplars will be presented in this poster.

**Results:** Three key themes with exemplars were found: 1) Unrealistic Expectations of Workload, 2) The Burden of Unanticipated Personal Issues, 3) Fundamentals and Thinking Like a Nurse as a Barrier to Success. Each theme will be correlated back to known qualities of Grit. Finally, implications from this ongoing work for program admissions processes as well as nursing faculty will be presented.

**Conclusion:** Grit, defined as "perseverance and passion for long-term goals", encompasses effort over time despite adversity and setbacks, and sustained interest in achieving goals over time (Duckworth, 2016). Grit is associated with happiness, persistence, self-control, performance in competitions (Duckworth), higher grade point averages, and higher educational attainment (Dixson, Roberson, & Worrell, 2017). A study by Author A and Author B (2019) suggests the concept of grit may contribute to academic success and persistence towards obtaining a nursing degree among Black nursing students. Findings from that study demonstrated that characteristics of grit including perseverance, passion for long-term goals, effort over time irrespective of setbacks, and maintained interest in achieving goals were evident in the participant's success toward achieving their nursing degree (Author A & Author B). Grit may be able

to answer the question that continuously challenges nursing program admission decision making processes of *who will be successful?*

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**Title:**

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**Keywords:**

Failure, Grit and Nursing Program Admission

**Abstract Summary:**

Presentation of preliminary qualitative results of a multi-site, longitudinal mixed-methods study exploring use of grit as a predictor of academic success among associate degree nursing students. Themes will be correlated back to known qualities of Grit. Implications from this ongoing work for program admissions processes and faculty will be presented.

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**Author Summary:** Amber Young-Brice, Assistant Professor, College of Nursing at Marquette University, holds a PhD in Nursing. She's the 2018 NLN Ruth Donnelly

Corcoran Research Award winner, using the funding to study grit as a predictor of academic success among associate degree nursing students. She has published in the Journal of Nursing Education, Nurse Educator, and Nursing Education Perspectives from her dissertation study exploring experiences of ethnic minority nursing students in a predominantly White undergraduate nursing program.

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**Author Summary:** Dr. Dreifuerst's research is at the forefront of disciplinary efforts to investigate how teachers can be prepared to use evidence-based methods including simulation and debriefing to enhance teaching. The debriefing method she developed, Debriefing for Meaningful Learning, has been adopted by schools of nursing across the US, Canada, Australia and United Kingdom for use in simulation and other clinical settings. She is the recipient of numerous awards recognizing the many contributions of her research.