Evaluation of a BSN Senior Practicum Distant Study Program

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Background Information

Early Years

- Final Course
- Student Choice
- 144 Clinical Hours
- Portland Metropolitan Area
- Weekly Faculty Supervision

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Background Information

Years of Change

• Shortage of Nurses
• Enrollment Soared
• Competition for Clinical Sites
• More Commuter Students
Goals for Distant Study Program

- Practice in Own Community
- Reduce Pressure for Metro Clinical Sites
- More Control Over Career Pathway
- Global and Multicultural Clinical Experiences

Photo: Army Maj. Wendy Rodgers 2010 via Flickr (CC-BY)
Birth of the Distant Study Program, 2008

- Selective Process
- Limited to 8 Students/Semester
- Classroom Theory Video Streamed
- Online Clinical Seminars
- Online Faculty Supervision

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Domestic Clinical Sites

- Oregon
- Washington
- Montana
- Colorado
- Massachusetts
- Alaska
International Clinical Sites

Totonicapán, Guatemala
Kenya, Africa
Auckland, New Zealand
Christchurch, New Zealand
Purpose of Study

Evaluate experiences with the distant study program by querying alumni participants, faculty and administrators.
Research Questions

• What are the experiences of student nurses in distant study clinical sites and how well are we serving their needs?

• What are the experiences of faculty and administrators who coordinate and supervise these placements?
Research Questions

• What are the strengths and limitations of this program?

• How could the program be improved for all stakeholders?
Research Design

- Review of Literature
- Mixed Method Study
- Focus Group Interview: Representative Purposive Sample of Alumni
- Focus Group Interview: Faculty and Administrators
- Online Alumni Questionnaire
Procedure

- Professional Development Grant Award
- Research Approval
- Focus Group Interviews
- Online Alumni Questionnaire
Focus Group: Alumni Participants

- N = 10
- 8 Females
- 2 Males
- Ages 24-35
- Primarily Caucasian
Focus Group: Faculty and Administrator Participants

- N=5
- All Caucasian Females
- Ages 49-65
- 4 Faculty
- 1 Administrator
Online Survey:
Alumni Participants

• 58% Response Rate (n= 29)
• 22 Female
• 2 Male
• Ages 22-45
• Primarily Caucasian
Instruments

• Semi-Structured Focus Interviews

• Online Alumni Questionnaire
Analysis of Data

• Descriptive Statistical Data (e.g., frequencies)

• Use of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Trouble spots Tool (SWOT)

  (Humphrey, 2005)
Strengths of Program

- Strong Support to Continue Program
- Enhanced Global Perspective
- Enriched Multicultural Experiences
- Community-Minded Thinking
- Access to Nursing Jobs
Strengths of Program

- Practice Opportunity in Own Community
- Practice in Area of Interest
- Positive Effect on Agencies
- Visibility for Linfield College
Limitations of Program

- Time Intensive Set-up
- Additional Electronic Training
- Budget and Workload Issues
- Relies on Primarily Informal Channels
- Communication Challenges
- RN Licensure Issues
Recommendations

• Continue the Distant Study Program
• Develop Protocol Manual
• Provide Consistent Leadership
• Formalize Communication Channels
Recommendations

- Technology Training for Clinical Faculty
- Formalize Multifaceted Marketing Program
- More Workload to Faculty
- Clinical Fee for Placements
- Seek Program Funding
Limitations of Study

• Unable to Locate all Alumni Participants
• Some Missing Data from Online Survey
“What I really loved about the distant study program is that I was able to learn and live in my home community.”
“The distant study program allowed me to pursue and secure a senior practicum in critical care which is a highly sought after and competitive clinical rotation.”
“I absolutely enjoyed every minute of my senior practicum. I enjoyed spending time in Colorado and was so happy with the practicum in the NICU.”
“I had a life changing experience in New Zealand and it is something I will remember for the rest of my life.”
“The distant study program allowed me to experience the culture of nursing in New Zealand. I was able to see how nursing varies across borders while still reaching similar patient outcomes.”
“First and foremost, thanks for giving me an experience of a lifetime here in Guatemala!”
“What I especially loved about the distance program was the diversity of experiences I had while in Kenya. I was exposed to rich cultural experiences, I was living among the natives and building trust-based relationships with my patient population.”
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Questions?