The RN to BSN Transition: A Qualitative Systematic Review

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Nursing Education Abbreviation List

• RN = Registered Nurse
• ADN = Associate’s Degree RN (2 year program)
• RN to BSN = an ADN who returned to obtain a BSN (length varies)
• BSN = bachelor’s prepared nurse (traditionally 4 years)
Background

• 60% of RNs still enter practice with an associate’s degree (ADNs)
• There are now more than 700 RN to BSN programs in the United States
  – In 2013, about 40% of BSN graduates actually completed an RN to BSN program
• Current recommendation is to increase the number of BSNs in practice
• Leading healthcare organizations call for a “seamless transition” of ADNs to BSNs
Research Questions

a) What antecedents must exist prior to returning to school to earn a BSN degree?
b) What occurs while attending an RN to BSN program?
c) What do RNs identify as outcomes of earning a BSN degree?
d) Does a seamless transition for ADNs to become BSNs exist?
Qualitative Systematic Review (QSR)

- The use of existing qualitative findings as RAW data
- Then content analysis to develop a theory
- The QSR method pulls together qualitative findings so they can be:
  1. Synthesized
  2. Easily used in practice and policy creation

[Diagram showing three circles labeled 'Qualitative Findings (Study A)', 'Qualitative Findings (Study B)', and 'Qualitative Findings (Study C)' converging into a single arrow labeled 'Usable Theory']

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Step 1: Literature Review

• An expansive literature review + pearl growing:
  – Over 500 research reports (published and unpublished) in 4 databases were reviewed
  – 19 research reports met the following inclusion criteria:
    1. Sample included ADNs, RN to BSN students, and RN to BSN graduates
      This QSR includes approximately 445 practicing RNs
    2. Conducted after 2003
    3. Qualitative or Mixed Methods
Step 2: Content Analysis

Step 3: Report your Findings

- Find the findings
- Memo and Code
- Diagram
- Develop a theory

- Create Sampling Table
- Create Findings matrix
- Take Memos
- Code
- Drawing & Diagramming
- Revisit Research Questions
- Write Results
- Develop Theory
The RN to BSN Transition

ONGOING CHALLENGES

FINANCES

COMPETING PRIORITIES

WORKPLACE

INSTITUTION

WORKPLACE INSTITUTION FAMILY CLASSMATES

SUPPORT

BALANCE

TIME

MOTIVATION

PRICE

PROGRAM

ONLINE INSTRUCTION

RN TO BSN TRANSITION

DIFFERENCE MAKERS: KEY COURSES

FAMILY

COMMUNITY

LEADERSHIP

RESEARCH

BACHELORS OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

ANTICIPATED POSITIVE OUTCOMES MATCH IDENTIFIED POSITIVE OUTCOMES
The RN to BSN Transition

Taking the Steps:

Four Rights

1. Motivation
2. Time
3. Program
4. Price
The Transition is made with an umbrella of support used for support and balance:

- Families
- Classmates
- Institution
- Workplace
The Transition is made during ongoing challenges (during the decision making AND during school):

- Finances
- Competing Priorities
- Workplace
- Institution
There are difference makers: Online Instruction and Key Courses

- Family
- Community
- Leadership
- Research
There are positive outcomes: Anticipated Match Identified

- Personal
- Professional
- Practice
The RN to BSN Transition

- **Ongoing Challenges**
  - Finances
  - Competing Priorities
  - Workplace
  - Institution
  - Family
  - Classmates
- **Support**
  - Balance
  - MOTIVATION
- **Resources**
  - Time
  - Program
  - Price
- **RN to BSN Transition**
  - Difference Makers: Key Courses
  - Family
  - Community
  - Leadership
  - Research
- **Online Instruction**
- **Positive Outcomes**
- **Bachelors of Science in Nursing**
- **Anticipated Positive Outcomes Match Identified Positive Outcomes**
Implications of the model

The model reveals a “seamless transition” does not exist

The model is useful to

- ADNs when making the decision to return to school
- Schools of Nursing
- Healthcare organizations
Questions and Thank you!