Factors Influencing Retention Rates for RN to BSN Students

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INTRODUCTION

➢ Attrition rates in nursing programs are high.
➢ Last year it was reported that 15% of RN to BSN programs turned away 8% of qualified applicants as there was not enough faculty available to teach them (NLN, 2014).
➢ This leads to a large gap in the production of qualified nurses graduating into the workforce each year.
➢ To help reduce this gap, online classes have evolved to enhance opportunities and enlarge the number of students taken into programs (CCRC, 2013).
➢ Though there has been a 25% increase in the development of online courses over the past several years, the attrition rates with fundamental classes may be up to 62% (CCRC, 2013).

SIGNIFICANCE/PURPOSE

➢ The objective of the proposed qualitative study is to explore, depict, and comprehensively understand the data collected to gain understanding of factors that influence retention for the purpose of identification and correction (Neuman, 2006).
➢ This study hopes to uncover the factors that influence nursing student retention.
➢ The focus will be to identify both positive and negative facets of the online educational program.
➢ Once identified, it is hoped that the information will be used to make changes to the existing online programs in our division and better support our students.

METHODS

➢ Survey data gained after being sent out via Qualtrics or a similar survey program to online RN to BSN students that will be graduating with less than 10 semester hours left to their degree completion.
➢ Demographic survey captured information about the number of years in the medical field, age, gender, specific field of medicine, and education classes taken.
➢ The surveys will be sent to with a purposeful sample to gain information from the intended group of RN to BSN students.
➢ The time-line for the study will be from December 1, 2014 through December 1, 2015.

RESULTS

➢ Overwhelmingly convenience was the factor in selecting this RN degree program of study. Commentary relating to fitting in with the students time schedule, pace of curriculum and self-paced learning were prominent.
➢ Conscientiousness has been consistently associated with academic success. (Conrad, 2006; Furnham, et all, 2003).
➢ Openness to Experience has also shown a positive relationship with post-secondary success (Rothstein, et all, 1994). This trait has also been shown to be a factor in intelligence measures.
➢ Neuroticism was found to be a negative factor in the study by (Furman and Chamorro-Premuzie, 2003), showing possible negative effects of anxiety and stress. Negative commentary was focused on courses that students felt were lacking motivation (motivators), filler/busy type work required in some course work and assignments that required excessive time to complete.
➢ Family support raked very high in the retention of the students in the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

➢ Career enhancement is ranked number one (1) for students in this study. This factor clearly indicates that opportunities for the nursing program to use this as a motivator and retention factor abound.
➢ Simple items like positive notes to key persons at the students place of employment (with the student’s approval) that may be placed in the students personnel file: notice of enrollment in the program; enthusiasm toward personal growth and study; health related projects worked on by the student; courses completed; significant achievement(s) by the student; progress toward completion of the program.
➢ Creating and ‘Advisory Council’ of local employer CEO’s and/or CNO's to the on-line nursing program to bring greater awareness of the program and opportunities to students, as well as possible research opportunities for faculty.
➢ Family involvement is a key factor in student retention. Some options to enhance this factor are; including key family members when possible in a portion of the interview process, to reinforce their importance and the importance of ‘time and space’ for the student and brief notes from faculty members or School Administration to the key family member(s) about the students’ positive progress in the program.
➢ Further research into the type of gamer personality will greatly assist in the understanding of the type student that will most readily adapt to on-line course work for an RN program.

References Available Upon Request