Informing Andragogy: Voices of Graduates From Accelerated, Second-Degree Programs in Nursing Concerning Faculty Teaching Practices

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Contemporary higher education and healthcare landscapes support the need to investigate evidence-based teaching strategies that prompt success among accelerated, second-degree prelicensure student nurses. The current socio-political-economic context impacting nursing curriculum is comprised of legislative action in the form of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) (2010), recommendations from the Consensus Report generated by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Initiative on the Future of Nursing at the Institute of Medicine (IOM, 2011), and the pervasive culture of assessment of student learning outcomes in higher education linked to accreditation standards. Nurse educators preparing students to deliver person-centered care to patients, families, communities and populations must enhance learning environments to meet the needs of veteran learners (Finch, 2012) who will comprise the future nursing workforce. Outcomes of student learning cannot be improved if nurse educators fail to examine the processes of education employed to develop learners (Banta, Jones & Black, 2009). Accelerated, second degree prelicensure students represent seasoned learners who enter schools of nursing for a myriad of reasons, all ultimately aimed at earning a bachelor’s degree to qualify them for writing the licensure examination. This study was designed to examine this cohorts’ perceptions of the andragogical practices employed by faculty that prepared students best to begin practice as entry-level professional nurses. The study further sought to identify the ways in which andragogical practices used by faculty incorporated the students’ prior learning and life experiences as the student accrued knowledge of the art and science of nursing. Through interviews with 24 participants six themes were derived from the data. They included: (a) range of experience and perception, (b) the context of knowledge, (c) checking in versus checking out, (d) it’s not just about strategy: The influence of passion and connection, (e) practice in action, and (f) program demands as preparation for career demands. Through analysis of these findings, it was learned that although faculty implementation of teaching strategies does influence learning and the ability of the graduate to engage in clinical reasoning once working as a professional nurse, elements external to strategy also influence the experience of learning. Two significant findings of this study were that faculty attributes of passion and expert knowledge hold prime importance for a student and that student exposure to program plans of study designs of accelerated, second-degree programs facilitate transition to the professional practice role. This research adds to the existing body of literature related to the education of accelerated, second-degree prelicensure baccalaureate students. Findings of this study can be used to inform faculty about best practices for teaching this particular cohort of students who seek nursing as an alternate career and assist with construction of innovative curricular designs to meet the needs of this unique group.

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**Abstract Summary:**
This study examined accelerated, second-degree prelicensure baccalaureate graduates' perceptions of andragogical practices employed by faculty that prepared students best to begin practice as entry-level nurses. An emic perspective from graduates emerged representing six themes characterizing their educational experience. Findings may inform teaching practices of faculty working with these veteran learners.

**Content Outline:**

1. **Background**
   1. Introduction & Expansion of Accelerated Second Degree Prelicensure Programs
   2. Seeking Evidence for Faculty Teaching Practices
2. **Research Questions Posed**
   1. In what ways do andragogical practices used by faculty to teach second degree prelicensure students incorporate the students’ prior learning and experience?
   2. What are the perceptions of accelerated, second-degree prelicensure graduates regarding andragogical practices that assisted them best to attain program outcomes once matriculated in their nursing program?
   3. How do andragogical practices used by faculty influence the accelerated, second-degree prelicensure graduate’s perception of preparedness to use clinical reasoning as an entry-level professional nurse?
3. **Significance of the Study**
4. **Research Method**
5. **Validation and Reliability Strategies**
6. **Sampling Methods and Procedures**
7. **Deriving Themes though the Use of Concept Maps**
1. Range of Experience and Perception
2. The Context of Knowledge
3. Checking In versus Checking Out
4. It's Not Just About Strategy: The Influence of Passion and Connection
5. Practice in Action
6. Program Demands as Preparation for Career Demands
8. Limitations of the Study
9. Implications of Study Findings and Future Work

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Professional Experience: Mary Hanson-Zalot has over 28 years of experience in nursing education. Her work primarily focuses on design and assessment of curricular plans of study for undergraduate programs. Additionally, she has developed and delivered educational programs for faculty in both the didactic and clinical arenas. She has been a member of STTI since 1982 and currently serves on the Board of Delta Rho, the Thomas Jefferson University Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau as well as on the Bucks/Montgomery Chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society. She is a member of multiple honor societies and professional organizations.

Author Summary: Mary Hanson-Zalot is a Director at Thomas Jefferson University. She holds a doctoral degree from Widener University. Her research interests include second degree student learning, innovative teaching strategies, curricular models and programmatic assessment. She was awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award from Jefferson in 2016, is a former recipient of the James B. Erdmann Award for Excellence in Interprofessional Education and a former Fellow of the Leadership in Academic Nursing Programs of the AACN.