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Adult RN to BSN nursing students persisting toward degree completion

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Student persistence is a substantial concern to many postsecondary institutions. Colleges and universities across the World are paying close attention to retention rate data and other outcome measures centered on the issue. Premature student departure is especially distressing for nursing programs that are under pressure to supply and replenish the nursing workforce, which, in the United States, is projected to need an additional one million nurses by 2020. Therefore, supporting nursing students' progression is an essential ingredient required to aid workforce capacity and to refill the nursing pipeline to meet the growing demand for healthcare. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the experiences of adult students who overcame challenges commonly found in this student population and were able to graduate from a registered nurse (RN) to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) completion program. Aspects were explored that surrounded RN to BSN student retention at this facility and the components that helped these students reach completion. This examination also focused on the external factors affecting these participants and the particular program and institutional components that contributed to their successful completion. The findings of this qualitative case study produced six major themes and 41 subthemes. The main themes uncovered in the case study are: institutional and program fit, role of current professional climate and decision to pursue BSN, institutional support systems and the role of critical bonds, critical bonds formed among peers, family support and the role of the critical insider, and the personal characteristics that contribute to the students' ability to complete. The findings of this study add to the limited RN to BSN nursing retention literature and help illustrate why this student subpopulation persists to degree completion rather than depart an institution. The learning objectives were to: evaluate the experiences of students who overcame challenges commonly found in the adult student population, yet were still able to complete the adult RN to BSN accelerated nursing completion program; recognize the faculty-driven indicators which play a role in supporting the adult RN to BSN student population; understand the role of institutional support systems and a high-touch environment play on nursing student retention; and identify the role of critical bonds play in fostering an RN to BSN students ability to reach completion.

Biography

Margaret C Delaney received her BSN from Loyola University in Chicago, IL, Master's in Science, as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner from DePaul University, Chicago IL and completed her Doctorate of Education in Higher Education and Organizational Change from Benedictine University, Lisle, Illinois. She is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Nursing and Health at Benedictine. Her course specialties are family health, population-based health, community, and leadership clinical, health assessment, advances pediatrics and nursing leadership. She served as a Clinical Educator and Clinical Research Coordinator where she oversaw unit and institutional education initiatives, as well as multiple clinical research studies, and assumed the role of Nurse Practitioner caring for the pulmonary/asthma and allergy population. She is an active Board Member of Sigma Theta Tau, a Member of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, and the American Nurses Association.

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