



Addressing Belonging and Retention Issues Upstream: The Effects of a Freshman Nursing Seminar

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Purpose

The purpose of this study is to provide early identification of students at risk for attrition from an undergraduate baccalaureate nursing program.

Specific Aims

- Evaluate the effect of freshman nursing seminar designed to increase a sense of belonging
- Assess underdeveloped academic skills through freshman nursing seminar
- Reduce doubled attrition rate through an increased sense of belonging and access to academic support
- Increase graduate nurse rates and develop a resilient nursing workforce
- Socialize students to collegiate life prior to core nursing curriculum

Methods

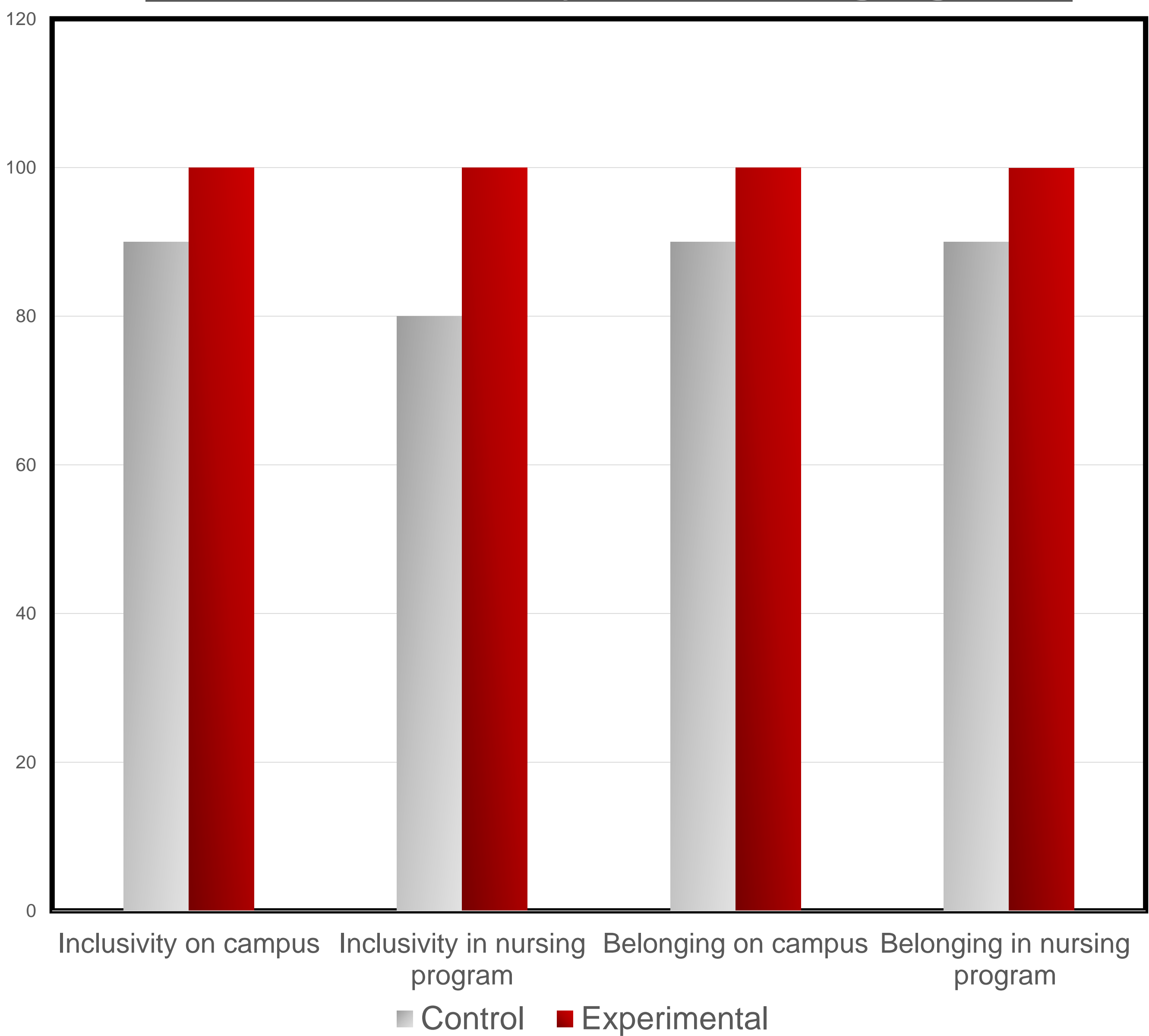
- Quasi-experimental study with purposive sampling
- Control group ($n=39$)
- Experimental group ($n=42$)
- Surveyed control and experimental groups for feelings of belonging using an adapted Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) tool
- Delivered inaugural freshman nursing seminar to experimental group
- Administered the Kaplan Admission Assessment to identify academically at-risk students in the experimental group

Findings

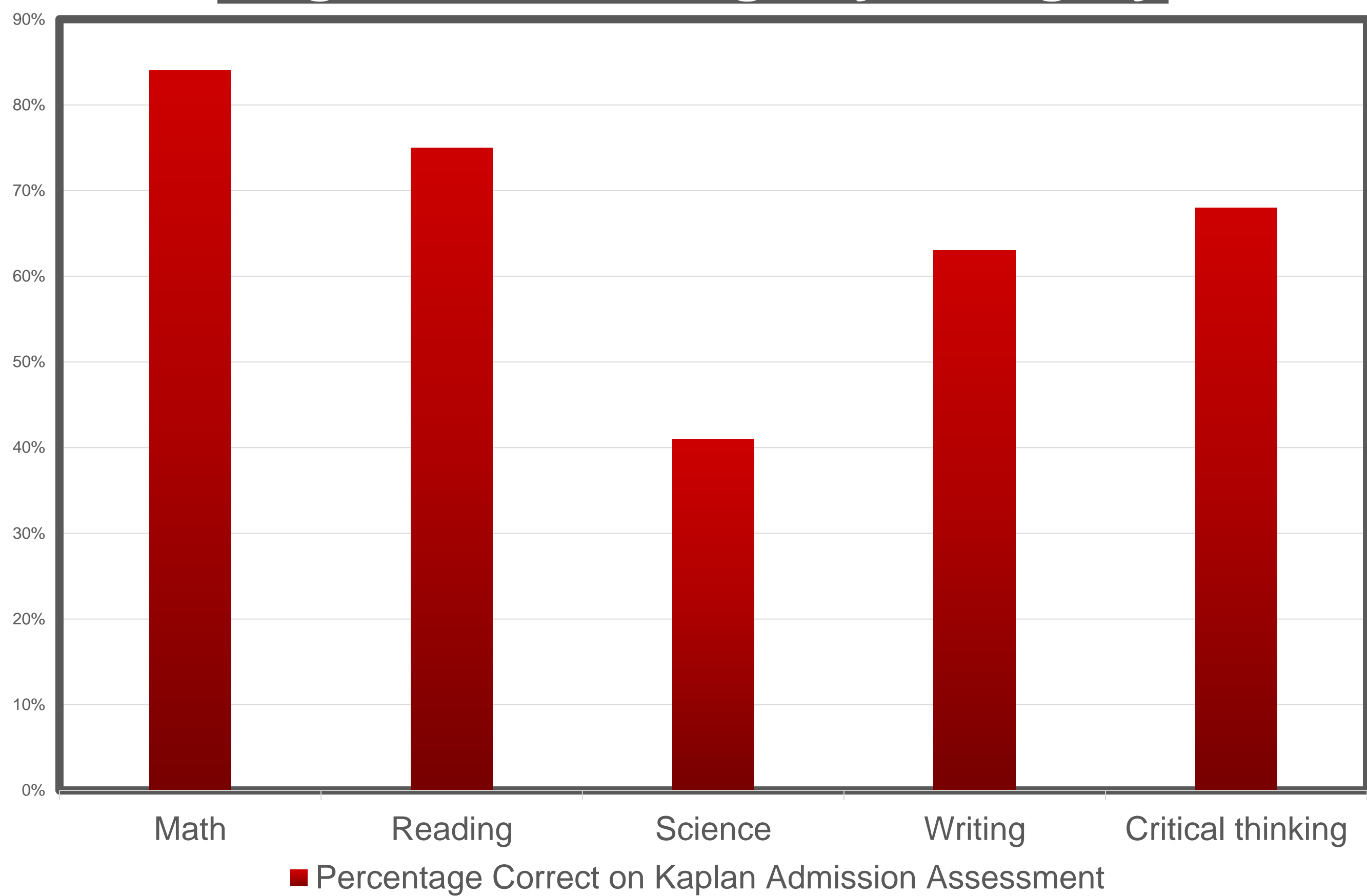
Diminished feelings of individual value and belonging both in the nursing program and on campus by the control group demonstrates a potential for attrition from the nursing program. Additionally, the control group was not screened for academic support needs, thus placing them at a disadvantage for retention moving into core nursing curriculum as compared to the experimental group.

Following participation in a freshman nursing seminar, the experimental group reported increased value as individuals within the nursing program and on campus. Additionally, the experimental group received screening to identify needed academic supports to improve long-range success with improved cognate knowledge.

Effects of Freshman Nursing Seminar on Inclusivity and Belonging



Cognate Knowledge by Category



Conclusion

Analysis of study results indicate a freshman nursing seminar in the fall of 2019 improved feelings of belonging in the nursing program and on campus earlier than a previous cohort. Results also align with a need for increased preparation in cognate knowledge to support academic success. This indicates a potential for reduced attrition.

Further research and educational changes can benefit from following both the control and experimental student groups longitudinally from freshman year to graduation. A focus should include academic struggles, feelings of belonging, benefits of the seminar course, retention, and graduation rates. Understanding a reduction in attrition through an increased sense of belonging and access to academic support will increase graduate nurse rates and develop a resilient nursing workforce.

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