

## Nursing Education Research Conference 2018 (NERC18)

### Accelerated Nursing Students Perception of Factors Influencing Retention

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The Institute of Medicine (IOM, 2011), set a goal to increase the percentage of the current nursing workforce holding a Bachelor of Science degree (BSN) to 80% by the year 2020. With the increased emphasis on preparing nurses at the baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate levels, the accelerated degree program is an innovative approach to nursing education, which is gaining momentum for non-nursing graduates (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, [AANC], 2014). Designed to build on previous learning experiences, accelerated nursing programs provide a way for individuals with undergraduate degrees in other disciplines to transition into nursing (AACN, 2014). Students admitted to accelerated nursing programs meet rigorous admission criteria; despite the rigor, the attrition rates remain unacceptably high (Rouse & Rooda, 2010).

Accelerated nursing programs have demonstrated an ability to increase the number of nurses entering the workforce. What is glaringly omitted from statistics about these programs is the rate of attrition. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and the National League for Nursing (NLN) are authorities on the state of nursing education programs in the U.S. Yet, these foremost authorities currently provide data on graduation rates only. A review of the literature reveals attrition rates are often speculated or unsubstantiated by data. However, when reported, data explaining the current state of attrition or retention in schools of nursing across the country is inconsistent (Lindsey, 2009; Meyer, Hoover, Maposa, 2006; Seldomridge & DiBartolo, 2005; Suplee & Glasgow, 2008). Reports indicate attrition rates internationally are as high as 27.6% (Buchan & Seccombe, 2011, Willis, 2015).

A new trend has emerged at a historically Black college and university (HBCU) located in the southeast region of the United States; a significantly large number of students failed or withdrew from major nursing courses (Adult Health Nursing – II) in the terminal semester of the program. The attrition rates for this course from 2012 to 2014 were 22.7%, 9.1%, and 27.1%, respectively. Informally, many of these students verbalized family stressors (i.e., moving, military deployment, or change in duty station, death of a family member, childcare, and family responsibilities), work responsibilities, and test anxiety as the major issues hindering their academic success (Lott, S., 2016, p. 12).

Regrettably, not every student admitted to a nursing program will complete the program in the allotted timeframe. Therefore, academic success and retention of nursing students is paramount to meet the need for a more qualified nursing workforce.

The author set out to explore students' perception of the factors, which influence their retention given the multifaceted and demanding nature of attending nursing school while maintaining balance within a family. The specific aims of this research were to identify accelerated nursing students' perception of the

restrictiveness or supportiveness of factors, determine the influence of academic variables and the correlation of demographic characteristics on retention.

Eighty-nine students enrolled in two accelerated/second-degree nursing programs identified the perceived factors, which influenced their retention. The Nursing Undergraduate Retention and Success (NURS) model was the conceptual framework that guided the research and the Student Perception Appraisal – Revised (SPA-R) was used to measure variables.

Self-reporting methodology was utilized to describe students' perception of the most influential, restrictive, and supportive variables. Accelerated nursing students' perceived transportation, family, and friend support as the greatest influencers of retention. The study neither substantiate students who perceived academic variables as greatly supportive would have lower grades, nor did it support the notion that underrepresented minorities in nursing would find environmental variables more restrictive of retention. Participants noted professional integration and socialization were neither supportive or restrictive of retention. Thus, strategies have been introduced to support students while matriculating and to ensure socialization and integration into the profession.

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**Title:**

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**References:**

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### **Abstract Summary:**

An exploration of accelerated baccalaureate nursing students' perception of factors that influence retention. Findings from this study will aid educators in identifying priorities to promote student success in an accelerated nursing program.

### **Content Outline:**

#### I Introduction:

A. The Institute of Medicine (IOM, 2011) in its landmark report *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* set a goal to increase the percentage of the current nursing workforce holding a BSN to 80% by the year 2020. To meet this increased demand for more highly educated and skilled baccalaureate prepared nurses, schools of nursing must admit more students and graduate the students enrolled. The recent economic downturn has led to an unprecedented rise in long-term unemployment (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010).

B. Accelerated nursing programs have demonstrated an ability to increase the number of nurses entering the workforce.

#### II. Statement of the Problem

A. Students admitted to accelerated nursing programs meet rigorous admission criteria; despite the rigor, the attrition rates remain unacceptably high (Rouse & Rooda, 2010). According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing ([AACN], 2014), the number of students enrolled and graduating from ABSN programs has increased steadily over the past 10 years (2014).

B. Despite these strides toward meeting the IOM's goal of 80% of the nursing workforce having a BSN by 2020, high rates of attrition in schools of nursing persists (Abele, Penprase, & Ternes, 2011, in press; Jeffreys, 2012b; Johnson, Johnson, Kim, & McKee, 2009; Newton & Moore, 2009; Salamonson et al., 2011), especially for students enrolled in ABSN programs (Lindsey, 2009; Suplee & Glasgow, 2008).

C. According to Lindsey (2009), "Attrition from accelerated programs typically is due to the rapid pace and intensity of the program, the program not being what the students expected, or students having unexpected personal issues" (p. 280).

D. High rates of attrition (22.7 - 27.1%) in an accelerated program at an HBCU in the southeast region of the U.S.

### III. Research Purpose and Specific Aims

- A. Explore accelerated nursing students perception of factors influencing their retention
- B. Identify students' perception of factors supportive or restrictive of retention

Loftin and colleagues (2012) found a lack of emotional moral support was perceived to be a key barrier by minority nursing students. Use of one's social support system is an effective tool in managing the effects of stress and promoting individual well-being (Reeve, Shumaker, Yearwood, Crowell, & Riley, 2013).

- C. Identify the influence of academic variables and demographic characteristics on retention

Academic factors are defined "as the students' primary involvement with the academic process at the college" (Jeffreys, 2012, p. 78). Within the NURS model, specific academic factors have been identified as having the most impact on undergraduate nursing student retention.

### IV. Conceptual Framework

- A. Jeffreys Nursing Undergraduate Retention and Success Model

### V. Methodology

- A. Descriptive study which used self-reporting assessment with the Student Perception Appraisal - Revised (SPA-R)

b. SPA-R is a "27-item questionnaire to measure and evaluate how restrictive or supportive select academic, environmental, and professional integration and socialization variables influenced retention in nursing courses as perceived by students at the end of the course" (Jeffreys, 2012, p. 8).

### VI. Conclusion

A. Study participants found that environmental, academic and friend support variables all influenced accelerated nursing students' retention. However, participants noted that professional integration and socialization strategies neither supportive or restricted retention. Hamner (2007) suggests socialization into the culture of nursing school should not be left u to chance, with the growing incidence of incivility it is imperative that nursing programs and educators implement strategies to socialize students into the profession (Lott, 2016).

B. Strategies include mentoring programs (formal and informal), roll-play (conflict resolution), classroom management and faculty development. A few strategies include:

1. Self-examination of how they may contribute to civility or incivility.
2. Assess how faculty, staff and students treat each other
3. Do not tolerate rumors and gossip
4. Be kind and polite, say thank you and promote a atmosphere of respect and engage in acts of kindness.
5. Look for common ground in dealing with conflict

6. Encourage the practice of forgiveness
7. Make it safe for staff to ask questions and discuss problems (Lower, 2012)

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**Professional Experience:** I am a certified nurse educator with 19 years of nursing education experience (LPN, RN) nursing programs. Strong advocate for students, promoting success, retention and academic excellence.

**Author Summary:** Dr. Lott has spent the majority of her nursing career as an intensive care nurse in the areas of trauma, medical and cardiovascular, and post-anesthesia care nursing. Her goal is to align nursing education with the teaching-learning process in the healthcare environment to promote excellent health care outcomes. A consummate educator who dedicates time and attention to mentoring students to become competent and committed nurses.