

RN-BSN Education: Getting RNs Back to Class

Susan Davidson, Ed.D., R.N. and Richard Metzger, Ph.D.
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga



Abstract

The purpose of this project is to describe the success one School of Nursing experienced with a cohort structured program of study for RN-BSN students. After a period of modest success with a traditional classroom approach, we initiated a technology based hybrid format. Our success rate jumped dramatically and we report factors that influenced students' success in completing degree requirements in a timely manner.

Introduction

Problem

- Traditional classroom approach had limited success
 - 24 RN-BSNs in 5 years
- Needs assessment of RNs revealed they:
 - Were uncomfortable with traditional classroom
 - BUT did not want all online to avoid social isolation
 - Had limited time for on-campus meetings
 - Needed to maintain work & family obligations
- Community health care facilities wanted more BSN nurses

Goals

- Redesign curriculum to meet RN needs using technology
 - Hybrid on-line, classroom format
 - Provide opportunity for diverse learning rates and styles
 - Maintaining academic and clinical rigor
 - Encourage social support
- Improve tracking of RN progression
- Increase retention & graduation rates
- Increase the number of RN-BSN graduates

Program Design

- Financial Support
 - Seed money from a local hospital
 - Funding from HRSA
- Curriculum delivery by hybrid/online format
 - Three classroom meetings per course
 - All content and course requirements on-line
- Cohort based admissions and course progression
- Structured, sequential course offerings
 - 2 courses /semester
 - Program completion in 15 months

Hybrid Course Structure

- Each course has 3 face to face meetings
 - 6 hours meetings (18 Contact Hours)
 - First week, 3rd week, and Last week
 - Course Concepts using discussion, demonstration, power point lecture, video, guest speakers and student presentations
- Typically include group projects with on-line collaboration
- On-line delivered using Blackboard
 - Online assignments may include weekly
 - discussion topics
 - reading assignment
 - reflection papers submitted online



Participants

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3
Gender	20 Female, 5 Male	20 Female, 5 Male	27 Female, 4 Male
Race/Ethnicity (Self-Identified)	21 White, 3 Black, 1 Middle Eastern	24 White, 1 Black	28 White, 2 Black, 1 Hispanic
Age (Mean)	41	35	31
Years Experience (Mean)	1 – 36 (11.8)	1 – 36 (11.0)	1 – 32 (10.9)
Prior On-Line Learning Experience	25%	58%	55.5%

Outcomes

Critical Thinking (ATI Critical Thinking)

- Gateway Students were not different than traditional at Admissions or Exit
- Gateway students the same as national BSN at Admissions and significantly higher at Exit.
- Gateway students scored in the 90th percentile compared to national norms

Factors Rated as Important for Success

Factor	Rank
Time to Complete Program	1
On Your Schedule	2
On-Line/Classroom Format	3
Library On-line	4
Blackboard Use	5
Scheduling of Classes	6
Cohort Relationships	7
Opportunity to Learn More Nursing	8

On-Line Rated Higher than Classroom

	Classroom	On-Line
Useful	3.6	4.0
Interesting	3.8	3.8
Good Learning Experience	3.6	3.8
Well Managed	3.4	3.8
Worth My Time	3.4	3.8
Stimulated my interest in Nursing	3.8	3.9

Scale: 1 = Not at all, 5 = A great deal.

Summative Outcomes

Cohort	Percent Completing	Percent Entering UTC Graduate Programs
1	96%	20%
2	100%	11%
3	100%	13%
Combined	98%	

Conclusions

- Hybrid on-line classroom strategies provide a successful alternative to traditional and on-line only programs.
- Cohort-based, structured curriculum allows for consistent progress.
- Combination of factors lead to extremely high graduation rates