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A Mentoring Program for Licensure Success

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Background: In the United States, successful completion of the licensure exam has become synonymous with the quality of educational preparation received by students in baccalaureate programs. Pass rate serves as a key indicator of the achievement of a program's academic goals and it is incorporated into state board approval and the accreditation process of programs. The licensure exam provided in the United States for entry into practice as a registered nurse is the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Licensure Exam (NCLEX-RN).

Program: In order to improve upon the program's pass rates, a comprehensive mentorship program was instituted. Mentoring in academia has been reported as an effective way to increase self-confidence and promote professional development. Based on the parent university's mentoring model, the School of Nursing used gaming strategies, content reviews, computerized integrative testing and learning packages, to assist students preparing for the licensure exam. Faculty team leaders were assigned to oversee and coordinate student learning. Groups of eight to nine students were assigned to each team. This program is implemented with senior students who must achieve a specific pass rate on their comprehensive predictor exam and meet a specific masterly level score on their computerized NCLEX style questions before graduation.

Results: The Comprehensive Mentoring Program has been implemented over a three year period of time and modified for improvement annually. A variety of data points were used to assess prediction of NCLEX-RN success as defined by first-time pass rate. Pass rates have improved each year from baseline of 79.17% in 2014, to 83.82% in 2015, and 90.14% in 2016. Logistic regression analysis revealed that overall college grade point average ($p = .002$) and a comprehensive exam in the NCLEX-RN format ($p = .001$) were significant predictors of NCLEX-RN success.

Biography:

Deborah Zbegner was appointed dean of the first independent Passan School of Nursing at Wilkes University in January 2015. Dr. Zbegner has 21 years of teaching experience on the undergraduate and graduate level acting in various leadership positions. Dr. Zbegner served as Director of Graduate Programs and has been responsible for strategic planning, overseeing operations and supervising curriculum, faculty loading, and student enrollment and retention for the nurse practitioner concentrations and the Doctor of Nursing Practice program. Deborah Zbegner also has 30+ years of professional experience in nursing which includes obstetrical, gynecological, and infertility nursing, ultrasound, university teaching, and governance. She has 28 years of clinical practice as a nationally board certified women's health nurse practitioner. Dr. Zbegner works in a collaborative physician practice caring for women across the life span and also serves as a clinical preceptor for nurse practitioner students within her practice site. She provides a dynamic learning environment that promotes high quality patient care from a holistic perspective. Dr. Zbegner's academic knowledge, clinical expertise and national board certifications validate her commitment for promoting clinical excellence in all programs of the Passan School of Nursing. She is a member of the PA Coalition of Nurse Practitioners of Northeastern Pa., National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH), the Association of Women's Health, Obstetrics, and Neonatal Nursing (AWHONN), and Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. She earned her Doctorate at Widener University, Master's in Nursing at University of Pennsylvania, and her undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Nursing from DeSales University.