

2020

Rural Practical Nursing Students' and Faculty Members' Perceptions of Supports and Barriers to Success

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Walden University

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Amy J. Randall-McSorley

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Rural Practical Nursing Students' and Faculty Members' Perceptions of Supports
and Barriers to Success

by

Amy J. Randall-McSorley

MMC, Franklin University, 2002

BA, Capital University, 2000

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2020

Abstract

Practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school (RCC) in the midwestern United States were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students faced toward graduation. The conceptual framework, Cross's model of barriers to adult learning, was used to identify institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers. A bounded case study design was employed to explore the perceptions of faculty and students regarding supports and barriers to successful graduation. Data were collected using an open-ended online survey of a purposeful sample of 20 students and 4 faculty members. Thematic data analysis followed an open coding process to identify 7 emergent themes: (a) support system, (b) class size, and (c) classroom experiences supported student success; and (a) stress, (b) responsibilities, (c) classroom experiences, and (d) access to technology were barriers to success. A deeper dive into the theme of classroom experiences revealed 5 subthemes: (a) workload, (b) fast pace, (c) class format, (d) class organization, and (e) teacher engagement. The resulting project was a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions covering the classroom experiences subthemes and an additional session on student assessments to help faculty support student success. This study and project have implications for positive social change through improved student learning outcomes and graduation rates leading to an increase of licensed practical nurses in the field.

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Dedication

I am dedicating this final project study and the achievement of my Degree of Doctor of Education to my husband, Gary McSorley. No one has ever believed in me the way that Gary does. He shared my desire to make a difference through this work. My name might be on the degree, but this was truly a journey we joined in together. It wasn't easy, but we did it. Gary always knew we would, and his vision provided me with the strength and power I needed to cross the finish line.

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I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Maureen Ellis. I had been on this journey for quite a while when Dr. Ellis took over as my chair. My world changed that day. Always quick to provide feedback and to very generously share her expertise, Dr. Ellis gave me the perfect maps to find my way down this path. I am indebted to her for believing in me, being my personal navigator, and so much more.

I am also grateful to Dr. Jeanne Sorrell who joined my committee as the second member when Dr. Ellis took over as the chair. While I did not have as many interactions with Dr. Sorrell as I did with Dr. Ellis, I am grateful for the feedback I received from her and the positive impact it provided.

I would also like to thank Dr. Salina Shrofel who I met at Walden University's residencies and also had as an instructor. I am grateful for her guidance. There was a point during this journey where Dr. Shrofel wrote to me, "Amy, you may not realize this, but you have the potential to be a star. I predict that with the right dissertation guidance, you will conduct a publishable study." I printed those words out and kept them on my desktop where they inspired me all the long hours of working on this project study.

While I cannot mention her name, I would also like to acknowledge the director of adult education at the school I refer to as RCC in this project study. I met the director in the early stages of my journey to achieve this degree. Her patience and generosity in sharing what information she could with me are invaluable. I am grateful to her and honored that this work might serve to help her students and school.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

The problem explored in this study was that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a low rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation (director of adult education, personal communication, August 11, 2018). Administrators and faculty members had not conducted research to gain an understanding of students' perceptions concerning supports and barriers to graduation success. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

The first section of this study includes a description of the local problem and rationale for the problem choice. Section 1 also includes definitions of terms, significance of the study, research questions, and a review of literature as it relates to the conceptual

framework and the broader problem. I close this section with the implications for the study project.

The Local Problem

The U.S. Census Bureau (2019) reported that the population in the rural county where RCC is located is approximately 58,000 with 15% of the households without computers and 32% without broadband internet access. Areas throughout the county do not have cellular phone signals. Additionally, there is no public transportation system within the county. The U.S. Census Bureau also reported that 12% of the county population is living in poverty and 87% of the population do not have a college degree. The U.S. Department of Labor (2018) reported that the national average for weekly wage earnings is \$1,184 and the average weekly wage earnings for the county where the study site is located is \$884. One of the programs that RCC offers to address the need for vocational training to improve employment opportunities and wage earnings is a practical nursing program.

The Council on Occupational Education set the minimum acceptable graduation rate for practical nursing programs at 60% (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). According to the director of adult education at RCC, the median graduation rate for students in the practical nursing program from 2014 through 2019 was 73%, and the anticipated graduation rate for 2020 is 63% or less, which put the school at risk of losing accreditation (personal communication, August 11, 2018, May 20, 2020). Table 1 includes the number of students enrolled in the practical nursing program at RCC, the number of students who graduated from the program each year from 2014 through 2019,

and the predicted graduation rate for 2020 (personal communication, August 11, 2018, December 12, 2018, May 20, 2020).

Table 1

Number of Students Who Were Enrolled and Who Graduated from the Practical Nursing Program at RCC

Fiscal year	Number of students beginning of class	Number of students who graduated	Percentage of students who graduated
2020	40	≤ 25	≤ 63%
2019	41	28	68%
2018	54	44	81%
2017	66	52	79%
2016	31	23	75%
2015	79	55	70%
2014	38	26	68%

Note. 2020 data are estimates as graduation has not occurred to date.

The director of adult education at RCC shared that, in addition to the problem with the low graduation rate for students in the practical nursing program, administrators and faculty members were also concerned about the passing rate for graduates who take the licensure exam (personal communication, August 11, 2018). The practical nursing program at RCC is overseen by a state board of nursing, which determines the status of programs based on compliance with state board of nursing administrative code. The nursing board requires programs to have 95% of the national median or greater passing rate for first-time candidates who have graduated from their nursing programs and have taken the licensing exam (State Board of Nursing, 2017). The 2017 national median passing rate for practical nursing program graduates taking the licensure exam was 81.17%, with RCC having a passing rate of 80% for the fourth quarter of 2017 (State

Board of Nursing, 2017). Although the 2017 fourth quarter passing rate for RCC was within the range, because it was 1.17% lower than the national median rate (State Board of Nursing, 2017), the director of adult education at RCC stated that the administrators and faculty members set a goal to improve the low graduation rate for nurses in the practical nursing program with the belief that the increased graduation rate would have a positive impact on the rate of graduates who go on to pass the licensure exam (personal communication, August 10, 2018).

Administrators and faculty members at RCC changed the admission guidelines in 2017 to improve the low graduation rate for students in the practical nursing program by requiring students to pass a preliminary class in order to gain admission to the practical nursing program (director of adult education, personal communication, December 12, 2018). The director stated that the purpose of the new preliminary class was to collect data that could be used to predict student success and then limit admission to the nursing program to those students they believed were likely to graduate, which could help reduce the school's risk of losing accreditation (personal communication, August 10, 2018).

Although the director of adult education noted that the graduation rate for practical nursing students increased from 79% to 81% from 2017 to 2018, the graduation rate for 2019 was 68%, (personal communication, December 12, 2018) and the anticipated graduation rate for 2020 is less than or equal to 63% (faculty member, personal communication, May 20, 2020), which indicates the new admission requirement has not been successful.

In addition to not improving the low graduation rate, the adult education director at RCC noted that the new admission requirement is having a negative impact on practical nursing program class sizes (personal communication, December 12, 2018). As shown in Table 1, 66 students were admitted to the practical nursing program in 2017, 54 were admitted in the 2018 class, 41 were admitted to the class in 2019, and 40 were admitted to the 2020 class. The decrease in class sizes over the last 3 years following the change to the admission guidelines is having a negative impact on financial sustainability for RCC. The director of adult education expressed concern that the reduced enrollment in the practical nursing program for the 2019 fiscal year resulted in a 15% income loss (personal communication, December 12, 2018).

The mission of RCC is to empower individuals to achieve their goals. The director of adult education at RCC expressed that the mission is being negatively impacted by the new admission requirements for the practical nursing program as fewer individuals are empowered to achieve their goals (personal communication, December 12, 2018). Additionally, the director has expressed concern that not only have the new admission requirements had a negative impact on the class sizes and commitment to the school's mission, but also decisions made to implement the program changes were made without administrators and faculty members understanding the students' perspectives of institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to success (personal communication, December 12, 2018).

There are many possible contributing factors for attrition (Beer & Lawson, 2018; Cross, 1988; Naylor, Baik, & Arkoudis, 2018). Among the barriers to nursing student

success are anxiety and time management skills (Ghiasvand, Naderi, Tafreshi, Ahmadi, & Hosseini, 2017). Nursing student experiences are also negatively impacted by workload stress (Naylor et al., 2018). Deeper descriptions of supports and barriers to student success are provided in the conceptual framework section of this study.

Education leaders are responsible for supporting student success (Jenkins, Lock, & Lock, 2018). RCC's director of adult education expressed that administrators and faculty members at the school are committed to student success; however, they had not conducted research to understand the perceptions of practical nursing students regarding institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to success (personal communication, December 12, 2018). Understanding the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC concerning supports and barriers to student success could lead to program changes to increase the graduation rate, reducing the school's risk to lose accreditation. Although the focus of this project study was to understand students' and faculty members' perceptions to help address the problem of the low graduation rate, the study findings might also inform decisions regarding admission criteria to increase class sizes, or decisions about program changes that might increase the number of graduates who pass the licensure exam. In the next section, information is provided concerning the rationale for this project study.

Rationale

The problem I explored in this study was that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the

Council on Occupational Education. Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation. The director of adult education at RCC stated that administrators and faculty members had not conducted research to understand institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to student success (personal communication, August 10, 2018). The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. The gap in practice was that the graduation rate for students in the practical nursing program at RCC was putting the school at risk to lose its accreditation when the graduation rate should have been meeting or exceeding the accreditation standards.

The director of adult education at RCC shared that the new admission requirements for the practical nursing program at RCC are not improving the low graduation rate and that the new requirements are resulting in decreased enrollment in the program and loss of income for the school (personal communication, December 12, 2018). Additionally, the director expressed concern that the new admission guidelines are in conflict with the school's mission to empower individuals to achieve their goals (personal communication, December 12, 2018). For the practical nursing program, student goals include graduating from the program, passing the licensure exam, and finding employment in the nursing field.

The state board of nursing where RCC is located reported that the United States will experience a shortage of 193,000 nursing professionals during the year 2020 (State Board of Nursing, 2015). The state board of nursing also reported that, from July 2015 through June 2016, the 67 practical nursing programs in the state where RCC is located had the capacity to enroll 9,014 students, however, the maximum enrollment was 5,242 students with 2,831 practical nursing students successfully graduating (State Board of Nursing, 2016). The lower than capacity enrollment identified at RCC and the state level is consistent with the national trend toward decreased classroom sizes due to the selection of students based on their likelihood to succeed (Kubec, 2017).

The director of adult education at RCC expressed concern that because the decision to implement new admission requirements to increase the graduation rate was made without administrators and faculty members understanding students' and faculty members' perceptions concerning institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to graduation success, the problem with the low graduation rate will perpetuate (personal communication, December 12, 2018). The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's low graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

Definitions of Terms

The following are brief explanations of terms associated with the problem:

Barriers: Obstacles that prevent successful learning (Cross, 1988).

Dispositional supports and barriers: Self-perceptions and attitudes of learners.

This category includes confidence, previous learning experiences, and ambition (Cross, 1988).

Institutional supports and barriers: Processes that support or thwart adults from participating in educational activities. Examples of institutional supports include funding, staff enthusiasm, and staff collaboration (King et al., 2017). Examples of institutional barriers include schedules that are not convenient for students, school locations that are difficult for learners to travel to, and course workload (Cross, 1988).

Licensed practical nurse (LPN): Members of healthcare teams who are required to be competent to practice nursing ethically and according to the legal latitude of their practice. LPNs must also practice effective infection control (American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, 2017). An LPN is usually supervised by a registered nurse (RN) and provides more basic care compared to that which an RN is licensed to provide (Practical Nursing, 2017). The guidelines for management of licensed practical nurses are determined by each state (American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, 2017).

Practical nursing programs: Education programs that last between one to two years and are designed to prepare students to pass the licensure exam and to be competent in the technical aspects of their roles as nurses (American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, 2017).

Situational supports and barriers: Supports and barriers that arise from an individual's life. Examples of this category include available time for school, responsibilities outside of school, finances, and, if needed, availability of childcare (Cross, 1988).

Supports: People or aspects that fulfill adult learners' needs and contribute to the achievement of successful learning (Knowles, Swanson, & Holton, 2005).

Significance of the Study

Although this project study was focused on a local problem, it may have a positive impact at a broader level. The demand for new nurses in the United States will grow 15% from 2016 to 2026 according to the U.S. Department of Labor (2018) and it is projected that 33 states will experience a shortage of licensed practical nurses by 2030 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, 2017). More information about the nursing shortage broader problem is provided in the literature review, including how the nursing shortage impacts delivery of health care. The local problem at the project study site is described next.

The local problem explored in this study was that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. Although administrators and faculty members at RCC implemented changes to the admission guidelines to the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students

were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation. Additionally, students who failed the program were not able to take the practical nursing licensure exam to become gainfully employed in the field and have a positive impact on the broader problem, the nursing shortage.

In a systematic review of 12 research articles, Harrison and Luckett (2019) noted that individuals have the right to have access to experts, to become experts themselves, and then to transform the essence of that area of expertise. Administrators and faculty members at RCC are committed to supporting the success of students to graduate and pursue careers in the nursing field; however, according to the director of adult education (personal communication, August 10, 2018, December 12, 2018), administrators and faculty members were challenged to maintain their commitment for student success. The director of adult education (personal communication, December 12, 2018) stated that the mission of RCC is to empower individuals to achieve their goals and that student success can also have a positive impact on the school's accreditation and the nursing shortage. The director (personal communication, December 12, 2018) noted that although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation.

As shown in Table 1, the graduation rate for the practical nursing program at RCC increased from 79% in 2017 to 81% in 2018, then decreased to 68% for the class of 2019 (personal communication, December 12, 2018), and is expected to decrease to 63% in

2020 (personal communication, May 20, 2020). The admission restrictions are not improving the graduation rate and are resulting in decreased class sizes, which, according to the director of adult education, is causing income loss for the school (personal communication, December 12, 2018).

The director of adult education at RCC (personal communication, December 12, 2018) stated that faculty members at RCC had not conducted research to collect information concerning the perspectives of students and faculty regarding supports and barriers to success to inform decisions regarding program changes to support student success. Naylor et al. (2018) noted that educators should monitor student experiences and risk of attrition. Because administrators and faculty members at RCC had not conducted a study to understand the perspectives of practical nursing program students and faculty, the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. Naylor et al. (2018) noted that educators should monitor student experiences and risk of attrition. The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's low graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation. The increased graduation rate could also contribute to an increased number of licensed practical nurses in the field.

Research Questions

The problem explored in this study was that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation. The director of adult education at RCC (personal communication, December 12, 2018) expressed concern that the problem with the low graduation rate would perpetuate because the decision to implement new program admission guidelines was made without administrators and faculty members understanding students' and faculty members' perceptions concerning supports and barriers to student graduation success. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's low graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

This project study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of students from the practical nursing program at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional factors for graduation success?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of students from the practical nursing program at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers to successful graduation?

RQ3: What are the perceptions of practical nursing program faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional factors supporting student graduation success?

RQ4: What are the perceptions of practical nursing program faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers to successful graduation for students?

Review of the Literature

This section includes a review of the literature concerning students not graduating from practical nursing programs. The conceptual framework describes Cross's (1988) model of categories of barriers to success for adult learners. I conducted the literature search through the Walden University Library using multiple databases, including Google Scholar, Academic Search Complete, Education Source, ERIC, CINAHL Plus, Thoreau Multi-Database Search, and ProQuest. At times during the literature research, I selected *all databases* to cast a broader net. The search terms used to explore the literature included *education, nursing, health science, barriers to adult learning, barriers to the success of nursing students, supports of success for nursing students, supports that impact the success of adult students, the nursing shortage, licensed practical nurses and the nursing shortage, attrition, pre-license nursing programs, rural education, responsibilities of schools, and the nursing faculty shortage*. The criteria for the search included articles published during and after 2016, academic journals, peer-reviewed

articles, and as much as possible articles related to the United States. I also used the reference sections of identified articles as resources to explore for additional articles that might be appropriate to refer to for my project study. The following sections include literature-supported descriptions of the conceptual framework for this project study and the broader problem.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that guided this project study was Cross's (1988) model, which aimed to synthesize other frameworks for adult learning such as andragogy (Knowles, 1980, 1984; Knowles et al., 2005). In Cross's model, there are three categories of barriers to success for adult learners: (a) institutional, (b) situational, and (c) dispositional. According to Cross, institutional barriers involve processes and procedures, situational barriers concern an individual's life, and dispositional barriers concern an individual's perceptions and attitudes. Knowles et al. (2005) identified the following assumptions concerning adult learners that form the andragogical model: (a) adults need to know why they need to learn, (b) adults believe they are responsible for their own decisions, (c) adults bring more and different experiences into a learning environment than youths, (d) adults are ready to learn, (e) adults have a task-centered orientation to learning, and (f) while adults respond to some external motivators such as higher salaries, they are more likely to be motivated by internal factors such as quality of life and self-esteem. Knowles et al. further noted that among the supports educators should provide adult learners are an environment conducive to learning, resources that are rich and accessible, and a reward system.

Although Knowles et al.'s (2005) theory involves assumptions related to successful learning, the categories of success factors are similar to the categories of barriers identified by Cross (1988). Table 2 illustrates the similarities between the assumptions of Knowles et al. concerning adult learners' characteristics and supports for success and Cross's model concerning the categories of learners' barriers to success.

Table 2

Comparison of the Theories of Knowles et al. (2005) and Cross (1988)

Knowles et al.	Cross
Adults need to know why they need to learn	Dispositional
Adults believe they are responsible for their own decisions	Dispositional
Adults bring more and different experiences into the learning environment than youths	Situational
Adults are ready to learn	Dispositional
Adults have a task-centered orientation to learning	Dispositional
Adults respond to internal and external motivators	Dispositional
Adults need an environment conducive to learning	Institutional
Adults need rich and accessible resources	Institutional & Situational
Adults need a reward system	Dispositional & Institutional

Cross's (1988) model describing barriers to learning provides categories consistent with the descriptions of supports for success provided by Knowles et al. (2005). Because Cross's model is conducive to qualitative research to identify trends, I chose this model as the framework for this project study. I applied the categories identified by Cross to both supports and barriers as they were described by the study participants to answer the research questions concerning their perceptions of institutional,

situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to students' successful graduation from the practical nursing program at RCC. A deeper description of the categories identified by Cross is provided in the following subsections.

Institutional Barriers

Cross (1988) described barriers at the school level that threaten the potential for adults to participate in educational activities as institutional barriers. Institutional barriers, as described by Cross, include admission restrictions, course schedules, and strict attendance policies. A literature review revealed deeper descriptions of institutional barriers, which are provided in the following paragraphs.

Admission restrictions. Nursing programs are accredited based on graduation rates and first time passing of licensure exams by graduates (Kubec, 2017). To address both measures of graduation and passing rates, Kubec (2017) noted that there is a trend by institutions to limit admissions to students identified as likely to succeed. Kubec further stated that the process of limiting admissions to students likely to succeed creates an institutional barrier for the students with a desire to go into the field of nursing but who are not granted admission to school. In contrast to limiting admissions, educators need to conduct research to identify effective strategies to support success for students who are interested in enrolling in nursing programs (Kubec, 2017).

Lack of student assessments. Assessments of students might reveal that the institutional barriers to student success include denied admission to programs (Kubec, 2017) class timetables, classroom allocations, learning resources, and communication in the classroom (McTaggart & Cavaliero, 2016). Additionally, student assessments might

reveal that institutions are lacking in providing needed support services for students (Arifin, 2018). Information gained from assessments of students can be used to support institutional decisions to support student success (Naylor et al., 2018), including decisions about the teaching methods used at the school.

Teaching method. In a multisite qualitative study exploring the perceptions of 220 millennial nursing students enrolled in traditional classroom settings, Cantrell and Farer (2019) found that the students reported feeling disengaged. Murray (2016) recommended that educators need to design pedagogical approaches to nursing education to support the success of students. Beyond the teaching method, institutional barriers can be related to the location of the school.

School location. Cherkowski and Schnellert (2017) found that institutional barriers may be different for schools in urban settings versus schools in rural settings. Classroom instructors in rural settings may feel challenged to collaborate with their colleagues because they may need to take on additional roles compared to educators in urban settings where there may be more staff (Cherkowski & Schnellert, 2017). Rural students may have a sense of estrangement from the school's faculty members (Qing, 2017). Students' perceptions might also include situational barriers to success as is described next.

Situational Barriers

Cross (1988) found that situational barriers arise from an individual's life. Cross further defined situational barriers to include limited finances, responsibilities at home and with work, lack of access to childcare and transportation, and lack of support from

family. Research-supported descriptions of situational barriers are provided in the following paragraphs.

Limited finances. Among the situational barriers that play a role in the failure of students is financial limitations (Beer & Lawson, 2018). There is a disparity between learners who do not have the financial means and access to higher education and learners who do have access and the financial means to attend school (Palmadessa, 2017). People with low incomes are challenged to afford school-related expenses such as books and tuition (Cross, 1988). School-related expenses also include childcare (Cross, 1988) so that students can take the time away from family obligations to attend class and to study. In a qualitative study involving the use of an online survey to explore the perceptions of 27 nursing students concerning resilience, Lekan, Ward, and Elliott (2018) also found that financial hardship is a top stressor for students. Additionally, family events such as death of a family member and marriage or divorce are top stressors for students (Lekan et al., 2018). More information concerning family is provided next.

Family obligations. Family obligations are one of the top reasons that students drop out of nursing school (Harding, Bailey, & Stefka, 2017). In a phenomenological study exploring the perceptions of eight nursing students through semistructured interviews, Alharbi, McKenna and Whittall (2019) found that nursing students struggle with conflicts between their families and their studies. Alternatively, Alharbi et al. (2019) also found that nursing students with family support felt motivated to succeed. In addition to family obligations, work obligations are also barriers to student success, as described in the next section.

Work obligations. In a descriptive pilot study to explore six nursing students' perceptions of stressors, Knowlton (2017) found that students have difficulty with complex work and school schedules. Additionally, Knowlton found that students reported feeling foggy from fatigue, especially in cases where the students needed to work night shifts in order to attend classes during the day. In addition to difficulty with managing multiple schedules, adult learners have reported that a top reason for their dropping out of school was the demands of their employer (Beer & Lawson, 2018).

Dispositional Barriers

Cross (1988) described dispositional barriers as those that are related to the learner's self-perceptions and attitudes. According to Cross, dispositional barriers include fear of being too old to go back to school, lack of confidence, and low energy. Richer descriptions of dispositional barriers are provided next.

Self-perceptions and attitudes. Adults with negative self-perceptions (Tsai, Li, & Cheng, 2017) or with negative emotional responses to school (Roosmaa & Saar, 2017) may have difficulty learning. Negative emotional responses to school can include a lack of a sense of belonging, which has been found to be a top indicator for risk of attrition (Naylor et al., 2018). Dispositional barriers also include anxiety, as is described next.

Anxiety. Dispositional barriers to the success of nursing students include anxiety (Ghiasvand et al., 2017). In research concerning nursing students' perceptions of tests, Liu and Xu (2017) found that nursing students reported feeling anxious and overwhelmed about taking tests. Potential contributing factors to test anxiety could be a lack of comprehension of subjects (Roberts & Campbell, 2017) as well as a lack of

understanding which tests are mandatory so that challenges to passing those tests can be addressed (Siddiqui, 2017). Villeneuve, Heale, Rietze, and Carter (2018) found that anxiety is not limited to test taking. In a correlational study designed to explore nursing students' perceptions concerning anxiety, Villeneuve et al. found that nursing students perceived heightened anxiety during clinical learning experiences. Villeneuve et al. also found that the level of anxiety reported by nursing students is higher than anxiety levels reported by students enrolled in college programs other than nursing programs.

The study approach, research question, data collection instruments and analysis process for this project study were consistent with Cross's (1988) conceptual framework. The decision to collect qualitative data for this project study was consistent with Cross's finding that barriers to learning fall into the categories of institutional, situational, and dispositional, and subsequent research into Cross's work provided a deeper understanding of the aspects that fall into these categories. Qualitative research allows for the collection of descriptive, narrative data from the study participants concerning their perceptions so that themes can be identified and the research questions can be answered.

The research approach was designed to collect information concerning the local problem that practical nursing program students at RCC were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards. Although the problem was local, it had a broader reach. The following section provides more information about the broader problem.

Review of the Broader Problem

The problem of students not graduating from practical nursing programs is not limited to RCC. In this section, I describe the literature from a broad perspective of the problem. The five themes concerning the broader problem that I identified during the literature review include: (a) the status of the nursing shortage, (b) the impact of the nursing shortage on the delivery of healthcare, (c) the nursing shortage in relationship to the failure of nursing students, (d) the impact of failure on nursing students, and (e) the responsibility of schools to support the success of nursing students. Literature supported descriptions of these themes are provided in the following sections.

Status of the Nursing Shortage

Projections indicate that 33 states will experience a shortage of licensed practical nurses by 2030 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration Bureau of Health Workforce National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, 2017). While the nursing shortage will continue to increase (Lloyd, 2017), the demand for new nurses in the United States is projected to grow 15% from 2016 to 2026 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2018). A survey of 838 hospitals conducted by Nursing Solutions, Inc. (2016) revealed that over 77% of hospitals anticipate growing staffing needs at a rate of 6%. The state board of nursing where RCC is located noted that by 2020 there will be 700,000 newly created nursing positions (state board of nursing web site, 2015). Additionally, by 2030, one million nurses will retire, leaving vacant positions (Buerhaus, Auerbach, Skinner, & Staiger, 2017). The negative impact of the anticipated number of registered nurses who will be retiring extends beyond the positions

they leave vacant to the loss of accumulated nursing experience at the facilities where they were employed (Sofer, 2018).

The loss of accumulated nursing experience in the field is coming when there is an increased need for that experience due to the population across the nation getting older and requiring complex medical care (Li, Pittman, Han, & Lowe, 2017). The nursing shortage also contributes to increased workloads for nurses (Li et al., 2017). Increased workloads resulting in an increase in overtime can have a negative impact on nursing wellness and patient outcomes (Wheatley, 2017).

The nursing shortage and the negative impact it is having on nurses in the field is evident throughout the United States in rural and urban community and ambulatory healthcare settings and will continue to increase (Snaveley, 2016). The negative impact of the nursing shortage extends beyond nurses in the field to an impact on hospitals (Li et al., 2017) and the economy of the United States (Snaveley, 2016). In addition, the nursing shortage is having a negative impact on the delivery of healthcare as is described next.

Impact of the Nursing Shortage on the Delivery of Healthcare

The nursing shortage is impacting the delivery of healthcare as it relates to patient ages (Prowle & Araali, 2017; Weaver et al., 2018) and to patient outcomes (Kear, 2018; Keers et al., 2018; Wheatley, 2017). Additionally, the nursing shortage is impacting the workload of nurses who are working in the field (Middaugh & Willis, 2018) and the distribution of the nurses in the field (Carnevale, Smith, & Gulish, 2018). Deeper descriptions of the impact of the nursing shortage on the delivery of healthcare related to

patient ages, patient outcomes, nursing workload, and nursing distribution are provided next.

Patient ages. In a combination study including qualitative data collection through interviews of 11 clinicians and policy makers from five developing countries and a review of literature and data from 11 references from 1991 through 2014, Prowle and Araali (2017) found that, while the nursing shortage continues, people are living longer due to advancements in healthcare and a greater percentage of the population is now considered elderly. Patients 65 and older use 34% of the healthcare services available in the United States and every minute nearly 8 Americans turn 65 (Nursing Solutions, Inc., 2016). The growth of the aging population is increasing the need for complex healthcare services in conflict with the availability of nurses to provide care (Sofer, 2018).

On the opposite end of the spectrum from aging patients, pediatric patients are also impacted by the nursing shortage. In a quantitative survey of 38 families, Weaver et al. (2018) found that the nursing shortage is having a negative impact on pediatric patients. Families of pediatric patients diagnosed with complex medical conditions who were receiving palliative and home health care reported that they believed that the nursing shortage was why they had negative experiences concerning quality of life, care costs, and psychosocial issues (Weaver et al., 2018). The negative impact of the nursing shortage extends to patient outcomes as is described next.

Patient outcomes. The influence of the nurse to patient ratio on patient outcomes has been the subject of multiple studies. Kear (2018) conducted a mixed methods study of 1,070 registered nurses working in nephrology, of whom 89% were between the ages

of 38 and 72 and who had spent an average of 24 years as registered nurses. After analyzing the 2,507 narrative responses by the registered nurses to open-ended questions, Kear (2018) identified a trend that registered nurses are concerned that inadequate staffing prevents them from spending an appropriate amount of time with their patients possibly resulting in negative patient outcomes. Of the 21 mental health nursing students who participated in a qualitative study by Keers et al. (2018), 20 also reported that one of the top reasons for medication administration errors was low staffing. Additionally, in a systematic literature review spanning 2004 to 2015 including 28 citations, Wheatley (2017) found that lower nurse to patient ratios increases the likelihood for errors in medication administration resulting in a negative impact on patient outcomes.

Alternatively, studies have shown that higher nurse to patient ratios improve patient outcomes (Kuwata, 2017; Martsolf et al., 2016). In a quantitative study of data spanning 2009 to 2011 from 341 hospitals, Martsolf et al. (2016) found that a higher number of nurses on staff contributes to a higher number of positive patient experiences. In a systematic literature and law review spanning 1987 through 2017, Kuwata (2017) noted that because higher nurse to patient ratios have a positive impact on patient outcomes, higher nurse to patient ratios should be federally mandated. The impact of nurse to patient ratios extends to nurse workloads as is described next.

Nursing workloads. Several authors have conducted studies concerning nursing workloads (Lanz & Bruk, 2017; Middaugh & Willis, 2018; Steege, Pinekenstein, Knudsen, & Rainbow, 2017). Exploring for a solution to nurse burnout through a systematic review citing eight articles, Middaugh and Willis (2018) found that workloads

for nurses and nurse managers include patient care, fulfilling physicians' expectations and requests, and assuming duties that would otherwise be assigned to ancillary staff if the additional staff was available. Middaugh and Willis (2018) also noted that nurse workloads can contribute to burnout, fatigue, insomnia, weight gain, anxiety, and difficulty focusing. In a mixed methods study including semistructured interviews of 21 nurse managers and leaders, Steege et al. (2017) identified that the types of fatigue that nurses experience at work are emotional, physical, mental, and compassion-related. According to Steege et al. (2017), nurse fatigue is related to occupational responsibilities including long hours, interruptions, and meetings. In a double wave quantitative study of 165 randomly chosen nurses across the United States from a wide variety of units during wave 1, and 97 nurse participants in wave 2, Lanz and Bruk (2017) also found that workload is a common stressor for nurses and that workload is impacted by patient complexity and dependency, amount of time in patient care, nursing intensity, and physical exertion.

Distribution of nurses in the field. Several studies have described the distribution of nurses in the field (Baernholdt et al., 2017; Both, Dijkstra, Klink, & Beersma, 2018; Buerhaus et al., 2017; Carnevale et al., 2018). In an analysis of data collected from 2001 through 2004 of 600,000 households, and from 2005 through 2015 of two million households, by the U.S. Census Bureau through the American Community Survey, Buerhaus et al. (2017) found that nurses are becoming increasingly more involved in supporting patient access to care in underserved and rural areas. In an analysis of data from 2009 from the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators

concerning 598 hospitals, Baernholdt et al. (2017) noted that 60 of those hospitals were in rural settings. Research has shown there are additional disparities in the distribution of nurses in the field as are described next.

In an integrated review of research citing 43 sources, Carnevale et al. (2018) found that the largest number of registered nurses (53%) work in hospital settings, the next largest (19%) work in non-traditional environments such as insurance companies, 10% work in long-term care settings, and 8% work in physician offices and ambulatory care settings. In an analysis of data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau through the American Community Survey from 2001 through 2015, Buerhaus et al. (2017) noted that registered nurses employed in hospital settings increased from 63% in 2001 to 64% in 2015 in contrast with the expectation that nursing care would be decreasing in hospitals and increasing in other health care settings. In an integrative review of research citing nine resources from 2014 through 2016, Both et al. (2018) projected that in time there will be a surplus of licensed practical nurses in hospital settings in the Netherlands and a shortage of nurses in nursing homes. Concluding that the nursing shortage is contributing to the imbalanced distribution of nurses in the field, Both et al. recommended that nurses should be encouraged to practice in home care and nursing home settings versus in hospital settings to address the problem with the distribution of nurses in the field.

Another approach to support a balanced distribution of nurses in the field is to increase the number of nurses who are graduating from nursing programs. My project study explored the perceptions of practical nursing students and faculty concerning institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to students' successful

graduation. The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's graduation rate, which could increase the number of nurses in the field.

The Nursing Shortage and the Failure of Nursing Students

In a mixed methods systematic review of literature concerning nursing student retention and strategies to reduce attrition citing 18 studies between 2002 and 2016, Kubec (2017) found that a contributing factor to the nursing shortage is student attrition in nursing programs. The problem with nursing student attrition is not limited to the United States. For example, Beer and Lawson (2018) conducted a content analysis of strategic statements spanning 2001 through 2015 from 37 Australian Universities and found that 62% of the universities included attrition in strategic plans and 69% are using attrition as a key performance indicator. Beer and Lawson also noted that the absence of attrition in university strategic statements does not necessarily indicate that attrition is not a concern. In the United States, the impact of the failure of nursing students on the education system extends beyond the individual schools to the nation as a whole as is described next.

In a meta-analysis review of data from 1966 through 2015 including 76 citations, Skolnik (2016) found that the failure of baccalaureate or higher degree nursing students not only has a negative impact on schools but also creates a negative impact on the United States' international educational ranking. Skolnik further noted that there is a presumed connection between education ranking and economic competitiveness. At the

same time the United States' educational ranking is challenged by attrition, following an analysis of data collected from 2001 through 2015 of 2,600,000 households by the U.S. Census Bureau through the American Community Survey, Buerhaus et al. (2017) noted that there has been an increase in class sizes due to participation in advanced education by the nursing workforce over the last 15 years.

Both increasing and decreasing class sizes can be accompanied with problems (Liu, Codd, & Mills, 2018; Nyoni & Barnard, 2016). Nyoni and Barnard (2016) reached data saturation after analyzing eight transcripts of semistructured interviews of general nurses and midwives from a rural hospital in Lesotho and found that when enrollment exceeds the availability of instructors, students might not be able to identify learning needs and the instructors may not be able to recognize teaching opportunities to address the learning needs of the students. Alternatively, Liu, Codd, and Mills (2018) conducted a quantitative study of 6,042 participants from 205 institutions located in 35 states in the United States and affirmed the trend of schools reducing class sizes because of the implementation of screening procedures designed to limit admission to those students predicted to succeed. While the admission screening process might improve graduation rates, a significant number of qualified applicants are not granted access to nursing programs (National League for Nursing, 2017). Fewer students gaining access to nursing programs means fewer nurses to graduate and become gainfully employed in the field. Student failure or denial into nursing programs not only impacts the nursing shortage but also the students themselves as is described next.

The Impact of Failure on Nursing Students

In addition to the missed opportunities to address the nursing shortage and the increasing demand for health care, nursing student failure impacts the students themselves (Foo et al., 2017.) One way that students are negatively impacted by failure is related to finances (Foo et al., 2017). In a mixed methods study of 48 students, 35 clinical educators, and six education coordinators for a physiotherapy class at an Australian University, Foo et al. (2017) noted that the cost per clinical education student who fails is over \$9,000 in U.S. dollars and that the students incur 49% of the expense. The project study site, RCC, reported that the cost for students to participate in the practical nursing program was \$12,150 in early 2019, but showed an increase to \$12,485 when the school's web site was revisited in October 2019 (RCC web site, 2019). In addition to building debt, students who fail also lose time and miss opportunities to supplement their income (Foo et al., 2017). Even though students who fail do not receive the degree they were pursuing, they still incur school-related expenses. Students who fail are also impacted emotionally and physically as is described next.

As nursing students are striving to succeed, they experience stress and anxiety (Manocchi, 2017). In a systematic review of literature spanning 1990 through 2017 including 26 citations, Manocchi (2017) noted that freshman nursing students experience stress and anxiety when they do not succeed. In 2013, Langtree, Razak, and Haffejee (2018) conducted a quantitative study of 248 freshman nursing students in South Africa and found that feelings of stress related to a desire to succeed can be amplified in situations where families expect the students in their home to pay for living expenses. In

the following paragraph, descriptions are provided concerning how the negative impact of student failure on the students extends beyond stress and anxiety to include other emotional and physical states.

In a phenomenological study of 11 associate degree nursing students in southeastern United States who succeeded after previously failing, Handwerker (2018) found that when a student realizes that failing is inevitable, he or she can experience feelings of sadness, uncertainty, shock, and lack of confidence. Students who are striving to be successful in school can also experience negative physical impacts (Sun et al., 2016). In a phenomenological study of 15 baccalaureate degree nursing students in Taiwan, Sun et al. (2016) found that in addition to experiencing anxiety, nursing students also experience physical discomforts including poor sleep, headaches, and stomach aches. In the next section, information is shared concerning how students do not bear the burden of successful graduation alone, but rather that schools are also responsible for student success.

Responsibility of Schools to Support the Success of Nursing Students

Following a systematic review of literature including 30 citations from 1938 through 2013, Scully-Russ (2016) noted that schools need to play a significant role in providing programs that prepare students with the skills and knowledge the students will need when they graduate and become employed professionals. Following a mixed methods systematic review of literature concerning nursing student retention and strategies to reduce attrition citing 18 studies between 2002 and 2016, Kubec (2017) noted that schools bear a responsibility for the success of nursing students for the sake of

their students, the school's standing as an educational institution, and for the positive impact the graduating nursing students might have on the nursing shortage. In a study involving the collection of qualitative and quantitative data from 2010 through 2015 from more than 5,000 newly graduated nursing students in a midwestern academic medical center setting, Kavanagh and Szweda (2017) noted that schools are responsible for addressing the competency crisis by graduating nurses prepared to pass the registered nurse licensing exam and work in the field. Additionally, in a quantitative study of 361 nursing students in a Swedish university, Rejnö, Nordin, Forsgren, Sundell, and Rudolfsson (2017) stated that successful graduation of nursing students helps to fulfill society's need for well-educated citizens.

In tandem with society's growing need for students to graduate from schools and enter the field of nursing, there is an increased demand for schools' accountability for educational outcomes (Fisher, 2016). In a retrospective research study of data from the Test of Essential Academic Skills administered to 6,402 nursing students from 204 institutions across 35 states from April 2013 to November 2016, Liu et al. (2018) found that the increased demand for accountability by schools has created a trend toward limiting admission to students predicted to succeed instead of conducting assessments to identify what could support success for the rejected students. In a systematic literature review including 62 citations from 1986 to 2015 to support the development of an assessment to help predict the competency of graduating nursing students, Heydari, Kareshki, and Armat (2016) noted that schools must conduct assessments to identify opportunities to support student success.

Assessments can provide information to inform decisions regarding program changes designed to support student success (Harding et al., 2017; Naylor et al., 2018; Popkess & Frey, 2016). In a study of archived quantitative data from 107 students who were readmitted to an associate degree nursing program in Ohio from 2009 to 2015 after previously failing the program, Harding et al. (2017) found that there is a relationship between the reason for original dismissal and the reason for attrition following readmission. In a quantitative study including 1,739 Australian university first-year students, Naylor et al. (2018) found that assessments provide an opportunity to recognize students who are considering leaving a program in time to take steps to prevent the students from dropping out.

In a quantitative study involving 37 newly graduated nurses, Bennett, Grimsley, Grimsley, and Rodd (2017) found that the majority of nurses believed that program changes were needed at the school level to support the success of nursing students. Implementation of intervention strategies, including providing student support, can have a positive impact on retention and graduation (Daw, 2017; Doggrell & Schaffer, 2016) as can the implementation of pedagogical instructional strategy (Murray, 2016). In a pre-post-test study of 800 graduate nursing students, Doggrell and Schaffer (2016) found that interventional program changes may reduce the failure of students. Another example of a program change to support success was a pilot study conducted by Jones (2017) who implemented a residency program involving 17 new graduate nurses and determined that a residency program is a cost-effective approach that can have a positive impact on the success of graduates.

Following the implementation of a program change to support nursing student success of which nine students attended, Latham, Singh, Lim, Nguyen, and Tara, (2016) determined that when designing intervention strategies, nursing schools need to pay attention to the needs of nontraditional nursing students. In addition to paying attention to the needs of nursing students, school leadership members need to pay attention to the needs of nurse educators (Daw & Mills, 2018).

Following a retrospective program evaluation of Maryland's nursing programs spanning 2007 through 2015 and including 245 nurse faculty fellowships, Daw and Mills (2018) concluded that there is limited research available to identify the best strategies to support nurse educators, a contributing factor to the faculty shortage. While admission screenings result in turning away students, faculty shortages are having a similar effect (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2017). Faculty shortages are among the reasons why 64,047 qualified students were turned away from nursing programs across the United States during 2016 (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2017).

Just as there is a relationship between the faculty shortage and the high rate of students being turned away from programs, there is a relationship between faculty satisfaction and student retention (Elliott, 2018). In a case study exploring a faculty-to-faculty mentoring program, Elliott (2018) found that there is a correlation between faculty experiencing meaningful work relationships and job satisfaction and student satisfaction. Because my project study involved the gathering of qualitative data through a survey of practical nursing students and faculty members at RCC, my study provided

the opportunity for participants to share their perspectives on barriers and supports to their success openly, which included their perceptions of faculty engagement.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. Once an understanding was gained concerning the institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers that impact the success of the practical nursing students at RCC, the information could be used to inform decisions concerning a project designed to support improvement of the program's low graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation. I considered three different possible projects to support practical nursing students at RCC.

A curriculum plan for an auxiliary nursing class to run in tandem with the main practical nursing program was a possible option. For example, if the participants in the study identified time management as a barrier to their success, the auxiliary program could include a time-management workshop. If the participants identified that a support to their success is understanding technology, the auxiliary program might include a technology workshop.

Another possible project considered was professional development training for the practical nursing program faculty members. For example, if data analysis revealed themes related to lack of integration of technology or active teaching methods, a professional development training program could address use of technology in the classroom or active teaching methods. The professional development training could take

place over three days during the week prior to the beginning of classes or could be provided in a series format.

A third possibility for a project could be a policy recommendation position paper. If the findings of this study revealed that students perceived the availability of specific resources such as technology or transportation impact student success, a policy recommendation position paper could provide information to support decisions concerning the allocation of technology and transportation related resources to support student success.

Thematic data analysis followed an open coding process to identify 7 emergent themes for the four research questions related to practical nursing program students' experiences supporting success and barriers. The emergent theme for all questions was classroom experiences. Based on the findings and emergent theme, the best option for a resulting project was to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions to support faculty complementing the curriculum with factors identified by the faculty members and students to support improved classroom experiences for the students. Improvement to the classroom experiences for students in the practical nursing program could lead to improved graduation rates and reduce the risk of the program losing accreditation. An in-depth discussion and detailed description of the professional development training series that is the outcome of the findings of the project study is included in Section 3, and the professional development training series is provided in Appendix A.

Summary

The problem addressed in this study was that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation. Administrators and faculty members at RCC had not conducted research to understand the perspectives of practical nursing program students and faculty concerning institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to success. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. I used the information gained through this study to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's low graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation. Although focused on a local problem, this project study has the potential to provide a positive impact on the broader problem of the nursing shortage that spans across the nation and around the world.

In Section 2 of this study paper, information is provided about the research design, which was a bounded case study involving the collection of qualitative data

through surveys of students and faculty members of the practical nursing program at RCC regarding their perceptions of institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to student success. Section 2 also includes information about my data collection and data analysis processes that involved identifying themes and trends concerning participants' perceived supports and barriers to student success.

Section 3 includes a description of the professional development training series that is the outcome of the findings of the project study. Also included in Section 3 are rationale and review of literature for the project, the evaluation plan for the project, and implications. Section 4 provides information about the strengths and weaknesses of the project; recommendations for alternative approaches; descriptions of scholarship, project development, leadership and change; and implications for the project.

Section 2: The Methodology

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation. Administrators and faculty members at RCC had not conducted research to gain an understanding of the perceptions of students and faculty members in the practical nursing program concerning institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to student success. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

Section 2 of this study includes descriptions of the research design and approach. I also provide information about the participants and access to the participants, as well as descriptions of the data collection and analysis processes. The descriptions are accompanied by references and information that support decisions concerning these aspects of the project study.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

In this section, I provide information about the problem and how the problem is aligned with the guiding research questions. A description of the qualitative research design is also given. Additionally, a justification for the decision to use the qualitative research design is provided.

Problem and Guiding Question Alignment

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation. The director of adult education at RCC shared that no research was done by the school's faculty members to gain an understanding of the perceptions of students and faculty members in the practical nursing program concerning institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to student success. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to

support improvement of the practical nursing program's graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

The guiding questions for this project study were

RQ1: What are the perceptions of students from the practical nursing program at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional factors for graduation success?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of students from the practical nursing program at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers to successful graduation?

RQ3: What are the perceptions of practical nursing program faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional factors supporting student graduation success?

RQ4: What are the perceptions of practical nursing program faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers to successful graduation for students?

Qualitative Tradition Description

I used a bounded case study qualitative research design for this project study. The bounded case study approach is applicable to situations where research involves a limited number of participants in a specific setting for a limited amount of time (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010). The bounding of my study included that it involved 20 practical nursing program students at RCC and four faculty members and that I surveyed the participants during the spring semester of 2020. Using a purposeful sample, I collected data from the 20 practical nursing students and four faculty members through online surveys that I created in the Survey Monkey platform (<https://www.surveymonkey.com>). The survey included close- and open-ended questions. Descriptions of the procedures I used to support accuracy and credibility are provided in

the Data Collection section. Justification for the decision to conduct qualitative bounded case study research is provided in the next section.

Research Design Justification

Although an understanding of a problem can be gained through quantitative research, a richer understanding of the perceptions of the study participants can be gained through qualitative research (Khalifa, Nasser, Ikhlef, Walker, & Amali, 2016). I decided to do qualitative research because this type of research is designed to help gain an understanding of the meaning participants assign to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and focuses on studying the multiple perspectives of the participants (Lodico et al., 2010). An example of gaining an understanding of the perceptions of students through qualitative research is the work of van Rhijn, Lero, Bridge, and Fritz (2016) who chose to collect qualitative data from 270 mature students to gain a deeper understanding of the students' perceptions of challenges to success. Van Rhijn et al. found that students perceived that access to resources, supports, services, and study flexibility, as well as feelings of being misunderstood and socially excluded, were barriers to student success. The findings of van Rhijn et al. are consistent with the categories of barriers to success as identified by Cross (1988), whose model is the conceptual framework for this study, and with the assumptions about adult learners formed by Knowles et al. (2005), which was considered when choosing Cross's model as the conceptual framework for this study.

Knowles et al. (2005) described assumptions about adult learners and the supports that educators should provide adult learners to help them succeed. There are similarities

between descriptions of characteristics of adult learners and supports for their success by Knowles et al. and the categories of student barriers identified by Cross (1988). Because Cross's model, which focuses on three categories of barriers to student success: (a) institutional, (b) situational, and (c) dispositional, is conducive for application of thematic analysis of qualitative data, Cross's model served as the conceptual framework for this project study.

Cross (1988) noted that the most popular approach used by researchers who seek to gain a better understanding of barriers to learning is to gather data directly from the participants through interviews and questionnaires. The collection of qualitative data through surveys with open-ended questions for this project study supported gaining a deeper understanding of the perceptions of former practical nursing students and faculty members of RCC regarding supports and barriers to student success. The decision to ask open-ended questions was based on the assumption that, because reality is based on the experiences of individuals, there are many realities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The decision to use a bounded case study was based on the problem and purpose of this project study. A bounded case study involves a specific setting, a limited number of participants and a limited amount of time (Lodico et al., 2010). The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education, so it involved a specific setting. This project study involved collecting data about the perceptions of 20 students of the practical nursing program at RCC and four faculty

members of the school, which was a limited number of participants. The project study was conducted during a limited period because the administrators and faculty members at RCC are hoping the findings and the outcome project from this research can be used to make changes to impact the practical nursing program within a year of the study's completion.

Before deciding on a bounded case study approach for this project study, I evaluated other possible research approaches. The two other qualitative research designs I explored were phenomenological and narrative inquiry. Lodico et al. (2010) noted that the phenomenological research approach involves the collection of large amounts of data through multiple group or individual interviews in an effort to gain an understanding of the meaning that the participants have assigned to their experiences. The purpose of my study was not to collect an expansive amount of data or understand meanings assigned to experiences, but rather to collect specific data concerning the participants' perceptions about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers they face toward graduation. Another reason why I decided to not conduct a phenomenological study is that phenomenologists are not interested in categorizing findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and I knew that I would be categorizing the data I collected so that I could identify themes.

The other qualitative approach considered for this project study was narrative inquiry. According to Lodico et al. (2010), narrative inquiry involves a significant relationship between the researcher and the participants. The participants are considered partners in the process and have say in what questions are asked (Lodico et al., 2010). I

knew that the interactions I would have with the participants would be limited to collecting the completed surveys and consent forms. Narrative inquiry also involves storytelling where the researcher collects the information, analyzes the information looking for cause relationships, and then retells the story in chronological order (Lodico et al., 2010). Narrative inquiry would not have been a fit for my study because I knew that I would be collecting the data in order to categorize the information and identify themes. In the next section, I provide information about the participants for this project study.

Participants

Using a purposeful sample, I collected data through a close- and open-ended question online survey that I created in the Survey Monkey platform to support the research questions. The survey was distributed during the Spring 2020 semester to current students in the practical nursing program and to faculty members at RCC. Twenty students and four faculty members responded to the survey. Participants were selected based on their willingness to share their perceptions concerning supports and barriers to student graduation. In this section, more information is provided about the criteria for selecting the participants and the number of participants, as well as about the procedures for gaining access to the participants, methods for establishing a researcher-participant working relationship, and the measures that were taken to protect the participants.

Participant Selection Criteria

Individuals who were invited to participate in this study included current students and faculty members of the practical nursing program at RCC. An online survey with

close- and open-ended questions provided qualitative data concerning the institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to student graduation. In the following sections, information is provided concerning the sample size for the study and how access to these individuals was gained.

Sample Size

This project study included 20 current student participants and four faculty members. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the ideal number of study participants is dependent upon the research questions, the data to be gathered, and the available resources. The number of students in the practical nursing program each year from 2014 through 2020 who graduated, and who did not graduate are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3

Numbers of Students Who Graduated and Who Failed the Practical Nursing Program at RCC

Fiscal year	Number of students who failed the program	Number of students who graduated
2020	≥ 15	≤ 25
2019	13	28
2018	10	44
2017	14	52
2016	8	23
2015	24	55
2014	12	26

Note. 2020 data are estimates as graduation has not occurred to date.

Because I knew I would not be able to gain access to former students, the goal of my study was to purposively sample from the current student population to enroll 12

students as participants in this project study. Additionally, I had set a goal to include 10 faculty members as participants. Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora (2016) concluded that researchers are content when a study provides new insights and that aspects such as the adequacy of the sample and the quality of the data are more important than the number of participants in a study. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic during the time I was collecting data for this project study, course delivery at RCC changed from in-person to online and faculty began working from home instead of coming to the school. Because of the changes at RCC during this time, I did not meet my goal of gaining access to 10 faculty members. However, I was able to recruit four faculty participants. I surpassed my goal of 12 student participants in the study by successfully enrolling 20 students from the 2019-2020 academic year. The data analysis section of this study shows that data saturation was achieved and trending themes were identified.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

I was compliant with all guidelines identified by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to safeguard the rights of individuals who participated in the study. I received appropriate permissions from Walden University including IRB approval (#01-24-20-0591250). After receiving IRB approval, I requested and received a letter of cooperation from the director of adult education at RCC. The director informed me that RCC does not have an IRB and that the letter of cooperation met the school's requirements for approval to conduct research studies involving the school's students and faculty members. The director also shared that, in compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the director was not permitted to share student contact

information with me. Therefore, the director of adult education at RCC directed her staff to send the invitations to participate in the project study to the students and faculty members along with the consent form and the link to the online surveys on my behalf. The invitations and consent forms including information concerning the researcher-participant relationship and protection of the participants are described in the next sections.

Researcher-Participant Relationship

Qualitative researchers determine to what degree they will be involved with the study participants (Lodico et al., 2010). Following approval from Walden University IRB, invitations to participate in the study were extended to practical nursing program students and faculty members at RCC. Consent forms and the link to the online survey were included in the invitations that were sent to the potential participants. The invitations and consent forms included information about my role as the researcher. The potential participants were informed that I was conducting research as a doctoral student and a third party to the school and that I have no relationship with Walden University other than as a student, and no relationship with RCC other than that I had permission to conduct the project study. I also shared that I had no supervisory or other relationships with the participants who would agree to participate in the study. During the project study, none of the participants expressed a desire to become social friends.

Protection of Participants

Ethical considerations concerning study participants include protecting the participants from harm, assuring confidentiality, and obtaining informed consent (Lodico

et al., 2010). The participants were informed that, to protect their confidentiality, the participants names would not be included in any reports of the study findings. Each person who agreed to participate in the study was provided an informed consent form for their signature and a copy to keep in their records. Additionally, the participants' consents to have their data collected was the first question in the online surveys and was a required question so that the participants could not complete the survey unless they affirmed that they were providing consent. In the following section, information is provided concerning the collection of data for this project study.

Data Collection

This section includes information concerning the type of data that were collected, justification for the data collection, and a description of the survey that was used as the data collection tool. Information is also provided concerning the relationship between the data that were collected and the research questions. Descriptions of the data collection processes, how access to the participants was gained, and the role of the researcher are also provided in this section.

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation. Administrators and faculty

members at RCC had not conducted research to gain an understanding of the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty members concerning institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to student graduation.

Collecting qualitative data through interviews helps researchers gain a deeper understanding of participants' perceptions (Cross, 1988; Khalifa et al., 2016). The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. The data were triangulated by collecting data from 20 current students and 4 current faculty members through an online survey.

The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's low graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation. Descriptions of the survey data collection instruments, the data analysis process, and the approaches that were used to support accuracy and credibility and to address discrepancies are provided in the following sections.

Online Survey

Qualitative researchers often create their own data collection tools to support flexibility and a naturalistic approach to collecting data (Lodico et al., 2010). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, I had planned to conduct semistructured interviews of the student participants and a focus group for faculty participants. Following a literature review and exploration of interview data collection tools used by other researchers, I created

interview protocols to use as data collection tools for semistructured interviews of students and a focus group of faculty members. I designed the interview protocols based on Creswell's (2012) findings that an interview protocol should include space for recording information about the study purpose, a minimal number of questions designed to collect basic participant information with the remaining questions pertaining to the research questions, and core and probing questions. The interview protocols and proposal for this study were submitted to my Walden University committee including the URR reviewer to confirm validity.

Before I was able to conduct the interviews and focus group, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) issued guidelines concerning the COVID-19 pandemic which included isolating at home when possible, social distancing, masking, and the temporary closings of schools and other businesses. In response to the CDC guidelines, the IRB at Walden University (personal communication, March 12, 2020) issued a statement that doctoral students who were attempting to collect data through face-to-face approaches were permitted to convert their plans to online approaches.

Students. To change my approach from conducting semistructured interviews of students to collecting data through an online survey, I used the interview protocol I had designed as the foundation to build the online survey on the Survey Monkey platform. The survey included close-ended and open-ended questions to collect qualitative data concerning the students' perceptions of supports and barriers to successful graduation. I developed the questions on the survey to be in alignment with the guiding research questions and I had based the research questions on the survey on Cross's (1988) model

concerning barriers to learning, which is the conceptual framework for this project study. Cross found that barriers to learning can be categorized into three areas: (a) institutional, (b) situational, and (c) dispositional. I included questions in the survey to allow for flexibility to accommodate full responses and responses that may not fall within the categories described by Cross (1988). I collected sufficient data to answer the research questions because I included questions directly related to the research questions, probes related to the categories of barriers as described by Cross (1988) and questions on the survey to accommodate any additional information that students wanted to share. I achieved saturation when the data collection process no longer resulted in the collection of new information.

Faculty members. When considerations concerning the COVID-19 pandemic meant that I could no longer collect data from faculty members via a focus group, I created an online survey on the Survey Monkey platform to function as my data collection tool. I used the interview protocol that I had previously designed to use during a focus group as the foundation for the online survey. The close-ended and open-ended questions on the survey were based on the research question and the conceptual framework. I collected sufficient data because the questions on the survey were directly related to the research questions and I achieved saturation when the responses to the survey were no longer resulting in the collection of new information. The next section provides information concerning the data collection process.

The Survey Data Collection Process

I collected data through online surveys of current practical nursing program students and faculty members of RCC. To maintain compliance with FERPA, the director of adult education at RCC distributed the invitations, consent forms and links to the surveys on my behalf. The surveys were distributed during the spring 2020 semester. Respondents included 20 current practical nursing program students at RCC and four faculty members.

Because the surveys were provided online, participants could respond from any location that was convenient for them. The invitations to participate and the consent forms which were sent to the study participants included information concerning the purpose of the study, my role as the researcher, and the protection of the participants. Participants could print or save the consent forms on their personal devices. I maintained copies of the electronic consents on a password protected computer in my secured office at home.

The student and faculty online surveys (see Appendix B & Appendix C) were administered through Survey Monkey and I exported the survey responses directly from Survey Monkey to my personal, password protected computer. I created a secure backup of the data through an external hard drive which is kept in a locked cabinet in my home office. I printed one of the data exports in the Survey Monkey to use as a tool during the data analysis process and secured that hard copy, along with all of the other project study materials, in the same locked cabinet in my home. I will maintain the data for five years

after which time I will delete the computer files and shred the hard copies of the data collection tools.

I copied and pasted the data from the Survey Monkey exports into a separate Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for data analysis purposes. During the analysis process, I identified and assigned codes to themes. I used keywords as the codes to maintain consistency. A deeper description of the analysis process is included in the data analysis results section of this study. The next section includes descriptions of my role as the researcher and how I gained access to the study participants.

Researcher's Role and Access to Participants

I provided each of the participants with the consent form which included a description of my role as the researcher. I do not have any past or current roles at RCC and I do not have any past or current relationships with the study participants. I was not aware of any personal biases that would have impacted this project study. I approached the project study assuming that there could be anywhere from one to many different supports and barriers to the successful graduation of students in the practical nursing program at RCC. Had I become aware of personal biases during the project study, I planned to document those biases in the spreadsheet where I transferred the data for analysis and to report my biases in the final project study paper with the findings. I did not identify any biases to include in the analysis spreadsheet or the project study paper. My role was a third-party researcher who conducted the project study as part of the requirement for the achievement of my doctoral degree in education and to provide information that might support decisions by the educators at RCC regarding program

changes designed to contribute to the successful graduation of students in the practical nursing program. I also used the information gained through this study to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's low graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

After I received approval from the Walden University IRB, I received a signed copy of the letter of cooperation from the director of adult education at RCC. I gained access to the participants through purposeful sampling of current students of the practical nursing program at RCC and current faculty members. To maintain compliance with FERPA, the director of adult education at RCC distributed the invitations, consent form, and links to the surveys on my behalf during the spring 2020 semester to current practical nursing program students and current faculty members. Twenty current students in the program volunteered to participate in the study by completing the survey. Four faculty members responded to the survey.

The invitations and consent form included information about my role describing that I was conducting research as a doctoral student and a third party to the school, that I would take specific measures to protect the participants' confidentiality, and that their names would not be used in any of the finding reports generated as a result of this project study preventing opportunities for participants to be treated any differently by the administrators and faculty members at RCC for participating in the study.

Data Analysis

The steps for data analysis in qualitative research can vary depending on the research approach and the research questions (Lodico et al., 2010). In this section, information is provided concerning how and when the data were analyzed. I also describe the procedures I used to assure accuracy, credibility, and to address discrepancies.

The Process of Data Analysis

Analysis of qualitative data is an inductive process where the collected data are analyzed while the researcher is still collecting data (Lodico et al., 2010) allowing for the identification of themes to carry across the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I began the analysis process as soon as I began collecting the data. The data analysis involved several steps. First, I exported the survey data in two formats directly from the Survey Monkey platform. One format was a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and the other format was a portable document format. To support accuracy, I copied and pasted the data directly from the Excel spreadsheet export onto my own spreadsheet for the purpose of data analysis. I included each survey question on the data analysis spreadsheet along with each participant's full responses.

I began the analysis process by reviewing the closed-ended questions to identify how the majority of the participants responded. Next, I reviewed the open-ended questions to identify themes and keywords to determine if the responses complemented or contradicted the responses to the close-ended questions. The conceptual framework of this project study is that barriers to successful learning fall into the categories of institutional (processes and procedures), situational (individual's life), and dispositional

(individual's attitudes and perceptions; Cross, 1988). Cross (1988) also identified subcategories for the three main barrier themes. Institutional barriers include inconvenient schedules, fees, and certain courses of study. Situational subcategories include home and job responsibilities, financial limitations, childcare, and transportation. Dispositional barriers include fear, energy, and hesitation. I applied the categories concerning barriers to success identified by Cross (1988) to data I collected concerning barriers as well as data concerning supports to successful graduation as I analyzed the data. After I identified how the majority of the participants responded to each of the research questions, I reviewed the data to identify subcategories within the emerging theme, which was classroom experiences. I complemented the frequency tables with documented testimonies, or responses, from the open-ended questions to help illustrate the findings.

Accuracy and Credibility

To support accuracy, I exported the data directly from Survey Monkey, the online survey platform, and copied and pasted the data into another spreadsheet for the analysis process. I also exported a portable document format of the survey responses, which I used as a tool to confirm accuracy of the data by comparing the portable document format to my analysis spreadsheet. In addition, I reviewed the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet several times during the analysis process to ensure I had not wavered from how I initially defined the theme codes. I triangulated the data collected from student participants by reviewing the survey responses from the faculty participants.

Discrepant Cases

Among the ways a researcher can support validity is through disclosing biases, presenting discrepant information in the findings and using an external auditor (Creswell, 2009). During this project study, I conducted a self-check to identify any biases that I might have had and planned to document them accordingly. I did not identify any biases during this project study.

In addition to addressing biases, researchers need to take measures to support validity or the accuracy of the data collection instrument (Lodico et al., 2010). Because my data collection was conducted through the use of online surveys, I received the data exactly as it had been reported by the participants. In order to ensure accuracy, I copied and pasted the data into another spreadsheet rather than manually entered the data into the spreadsheet for the data analysis process. Because I conducted this project study as a doctoral student, my external auditors were my committee members.

Project Study Data Analysis Process

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation. The director of adult education at RCC expressed concern that because the decision to change the admission guidelines

was made without administrators and faculty members conducting a study concerning students' and faculty members' perceptions about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to student graduation success, the problem with the low graduation rate would perpetuate (personal communication, December 12, 2018). The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation.

During the data collection phase of this project study, the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) included social distancing and staying at home to help address the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the guidelines of the CDC, and with approval from Walden University's IRB, I developed two online surveys in the Survey Monkey platform as well as electronic invitations for participation. One survey was for students of the practical nursing program at RCC and the other survey was for faculty members. The surveys were similar and included close-ended and open-ended questions related to the research questions for this project study. To maintain compliance with FERPA, the director of adult education at RCC distributed the invitations, consent forms and links to the surveys on my behalf. The surveys were distributed during the spring 2020 semester. Twenty current students in the program volunteered to participate in the study by completing the survey. Four faculty members responded to the survey.

Evidence of Quality

Responses from the participants were recorded directly into the Survey Monkey platform. I exported the data in two formats. One format was an Excel spreadsheet and

the other format was a portable document format. To support accuracy, I used the spreadsheet for copying and pasting data into my own spreadsheet for the analysis process. I used the pdf for easy reference and as an additional support for accuracy. After I copied all of the data into my Excel spreadsheet, I began the analysis process. When I completed the analysis, I revisited the original Survey Monkey exports as well as my thematic analysis to ensure I had maintained accuracy. Because the data were supplied directly from the participants, there was not a need to conduct member checks or resolve discrepancies.

Analysis Process

I copied the data I exported from the Survey Monkey platform and pasted it directly into my Excel spreadsheet. I began my analysis by reviewing the participants' responses to the close-ended questions. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016) coding with descriptive groups early in the analysis process will help the researcher later during the interpretation phase. I recognized that if I used codes for the responses I would risk consistency in categorizing the data and so I used keywords and phrases instead of codes. For example, instead of using letters or numbers to refer to *access to technology*, *sleep habits* or *transportation* for participants' possible responses to questions about situational supports and barriers to success, I used the words *technology*, *sleep habits* and *transportation*.

Next I created frequency tables to illustrate the occurrences of the keywords and phrases from the participants' responses to the close-ended questions. The close-ended questions focused on institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to

practical nursing student success and respondents were invited to choose as many factors as they felt were applicable and were also provided space to fill in any additional factors that were not mentioned on the survey. Respondents were not required to provide an answer to every question.

After I completed the frequency tables for the close-ended questions, I reviewed all of the responses to the open-ended questions to identify themes and keywords to determine if the responses to the open-ended questions complemented or contradicted the responses to the close-ended questions. I identified keywords in the responses to the open-ended questions and assigned thematic codes to them. As I did with the close-ended questions, I used keywords instead of numbers or letters to refer to the participant's responses. Using the keyword thematic codes, I created frequency tables for each of the open-ended questions. After I completed the creation of the frequency tables for each of the open-ended questions, I combined the tables to have a master frequency table. Next, I reviewed the master frequency table to identify which thematic codes had the highest frequency of responses. Once I identified the thematic codes with the highest frequency of responses, I revisited the responses to the open-ended questions to develop a deeper breakdown of the emergent theme, which was classroom experiences. In the next sections, I provide deeper descriptions of the results as they relate to the problem and research questions for this project study.

Project Study Data Analysis Results

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. The literature review which I conducted previous to collecting data revealed that there can be a variety of factors that are supports or barriers to student success. The conceptual framework for this study was Cross's (1988) model which describes the three categories of barriers to adult learning as: (a) institutional (processes and procedures), (b) situational (individual's life), and (c) dispositional (individual's attitudes and perceptions).

There were four research questions for this project study. The first two research questions addressed practical nursing program students' perceptions about institutional, situational, and dispositional factors that impact graduation success. The first question asked the students what institutional, situational, and dispositional factors they perceived to contribute to their success. The second question asked the students what institutional, situational, and dispositional factors they perceived as barriers to their success. The third and fourth research questions explored faculty members' perceptions about institutional, situational, and dispositional factors that impact student success. The third research question asked the faculty members what institutional, situational, and dispositional factors they perceive as contributing to student success. The fourth research question

asked faculty members what institutional, situational, and dispositional factors they perceive as barriers to student success.

The surveys that were provided to the student participants (see Appendix B) and the faculty member participants (see Appendix C) included close- and open-ended questions. The questions on the survey focused on institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to student success. The surveys provided opportunities for participants to identify supports and barriers that were not listed on the surveys.

Demographics of Participants

The participants for this project study were homogenous with the participant pool. Demographic data that was collected concerning the student participants was limited to whether the students were current or former students of the practical nursing program at RCC. All 20 students were current students of the practical nursing program.

Demographic data concerning the faculty member participants was limited to whether they were current or former faculty members at RCC and how long they had served as faculty at the school. Four faculty members responded to the survey. All four faculty members are current faculty members at RCC and all have been in their positions for less than five years. The following sections provide the results of the data collection analysis as they relate to the research questions and emergent themes related to practical nursing program students' experiences: (a) support system, (b) class size, and (c) classroom experiences supported success and barriers included: (a) stress, (b) responsibilities, (c) classroom experiences, and (d) access to technology.

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of students from the practical nursing program at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional factors for graduation success?

The first research question explored the perceptions of students from the practical nursing program about institutional, situational, and dispositional factors for graduation success. Survey questions four through six asked the student participants about situational factors that they perceive contribute to student success. Survey questions 10 through 12 asked the student participants about institutional factors they perceive contribute to their success. Survey questions 16 through 18 asked the students about dispositional factors they perceive to contribute to student success. Each set of questions for the institutional, situational, and dispositional categories included a close-ended question, an open-ended question inviting the participant to share more information about the close-ended question, and a question regarding what changes could be made to the factors that might contribute to student success. Tables 4 and 5 show the student participants' responses to the survey questions to answer RQ1.

Table 4

Institutional, Situational, and Dispositional Support Factors Reported by Students – Close-ended Questions

Factor	Responses
Institutional factors	
Class size	16 (84.21%)
Class experiences	9 (47.37%)
Class schedule	9 (47.37%)
Class topics	8 (42.11%)
Homework load	2 (10.53%)
Not applicable	1 (5.26%)
Situational factors	
Support system	15 (75%)
Technology	12 (60%)
Finances	9 (45%)
Physical environment	7 (35%)
Transportation	8 (40%)
Responsibilities	5 (25%)
Sleep habits	5 (25%)
Nutrition	3 (15%)
Dispositional factors	
Study habits	12 (66.67%)
Organizational skills	11 (61.11%)
Self-perception	8 (44.44%)
Stress or anxiety	4 (22.22%)
Other (COVID-19 pandemic)	1 (5.56%)
Not applicable	2 (11.11%)

Note. Institutional $n = 19$, Situational $n = 20$, Dispositional $n = 18$.

Table 5

Institutional, Situational, and Dispositional Support Factors Reported by Students – Open-ended Questions

Factor	Supports	Changes needed to supports
Institutional factors		
Class experiences	2	9
Class schedule	4	
Class size	7	
Class topics	2	
Communications		
Responsibilities		
Support system	2	
Situational factors		
Access to technology	6	2
Classroom experience	1	3
Finances	5	2
Internet	4	
Self-organizational skills		1
Responsibilities		
Sleep habits	4	1
Support system	13	
Transportation	3	
Dispositional factors		
Classroom experience		2
Self-organizational skills	3	
Self-doubt		
Stress	1	1
Study habits	6	1

Note. Institutional supports $n = 15$, Changes to institutional supports $n = 7$, Situational supports $n = 16$, Changes to situational supports $n = 10$, Dispositional supports $n = 10$, Changes to dispositional supports $n = 5$.

Three themes emerged to support the first research question. The first two themes were that most students responded that a small class size and having a support system contribute to their success. The third theme was that, of the factors identified by the students as supporting success, most students responded that changes were needed to classroom experiences. Deeper descriptions of the themes supporting the first research question are provided next.

Theme 1: Support system. There are a variety of support systems that can contribute to student success (Fynn & Van Vuuren, 2017). According to Fynn and Van Vuuren (2017) support systems include supervisors in the school where students are enrolled, fellow students, families and organizations. Student Participant 5 shared that “When having a great support system you feel as if you can achieve more.” Student Participant 11 remarked. “A good support system has been a major help in forms of study groups.” Student Participant 12 responded “I had a great support system between the teachers, other students, and family.” Additionally, Student Participant 18 shared that “Without a support system, I would not be able to get through nursing school.” The responses by the student participants that support systems are at school and home were consistent with the work of Fynn and Van Vuuren (2017).

Theme 2: Class size. Because classes that include laboratory assignments and papers and projects may require more feedback from instructors, class size might impact the instructor’s ability to provide the needed feedback (Bettinger, Doss, Loeb, Rogers, & Taylor, 2017). Student Participant 1 stated, “I like the (sic) the class size is smaller than a normal university.” Student Participant 3 also commented positively about the class size

responding, “The small class lets everyone connect, and a smaller group I feel like people can understand better, more one on one if needed.” Student Participant 9 also perceived the class size supports success by responding, “Smaller class size allows for the teachers to be more personable with you. Allows you to make those connects when you don’t understand.” The responses of the student participants were consistent with the findings of Bettinger et al. (2017) that smaller class sizes can have a positive impact on learning.

Theme 3: Changes are needed to the classroom experience. According to Nel (2017) instructors should actively work to understand their students’ perspectives and experiences to make changes in the classroom to support student success. Student Participant 4 shared that “More time spent on a topic to help us better understand the concept.” Similarly Student Participant 14 responded, “To have the instructors go slower during lectures and give actual examples other than just reading from a power point.” Student participants also shared that the organization of the class should be changed to support student success. Student Participant 5 stated, “Having the teacher create a plan and following the plan created.” Student Participant 12 responded “Be better organized.” The responses by the student participants were consistent with the work of Nel (2017) that students’ perspectives can inform decisions to improve the learning environment.

Research Question 2

What are the perceptions of students from the practical nursing program at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers to successful graduation?

The second research question explored the perceptions of students from the practical nursing program about institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers to

successful graduation. Survey questions seven through nine asked the student participants about situational factors that they perceive as barriers to student success. Survey questions 13 through 15 asked the student participants about institutional factors they perceive as barriers to their success. Survey questions 19 through 21 asked the students about dispositional factors they perceive as barriers to their success. Each set of questions for the institutional, situational, and dispositional categories included a close-ended question, an open-ended question inviting the participant to share more information about the close-ended question, and a question regarding what changes could be made to the factors that might contribute to student success. Tables 6 and 7 show the student participants' responses to the survey questions to answer RQ2.

Table 6

Institutional, Situational, and Dispositional Barriers Reported by Students – Close-ended Questions

Factor	Responses
Institutional factors	
Class experiences	7 (36.84%)
Homework load	7 (36.84%)
Class schedule	6 (31.58%)
Class topics	3 (15.79%)
Class size	2 (10.53%)
Other (travel to clinicals)	1 (5.26%)
Not applicable	7 (36.84%)
Situational factors	
Sleep habits	11 (55%)
Physical environment	9 (45%)
Finances	8 (40%)
Responsibilities	8 (40%)
Support system	5 (25%)
Technology	2 (10%)
Nutrition	2 (10%)
Not applicable	4 (20%)
Dispositional factors	
Stress or anxiety	12 (60%)
Study habits	5 (25%)
Self-perception	4 (20%)
Organizational skills	1 (5%)
Not applicable	5 (25%)

Note. Institutional $n = 19$, Situational $n = 20$, Dispositional $n = 20$.

Table 7

Institutional, Situational, and Dispositional Barriers Reported by Students – Open-ended Questions

Factor	Barriers	Changes needed to barriers
Institutional factors		
Class experiences	10	8
Class schedule	4	
Class size	1	
Communications	1	
Responsibilities	1	
Situational factors		
Classroom experience	4	1
Finances	1	2
Self-organizational skills		2
Responsibilities	7	2
Sleep habits	4	2
Support system	1	3
Dispositional factors		
Classroom experience	3	2
Self-organizational skills	1	1
Self-doubt	1	
Stress	5	
Study habits	1	
Support system		2

Note. Institutional barriers $n = 11$, Changes to institutional barriers $n = 8$, Situational barriers $n = 11$, Changes to situational barriers $n = 8$, Dispositional barriers $n = 10$, Changes to dispositional barriers $n = 6$.

Three themes emerged to support the second research question. The first two themes were that most students responded that stress and responsibilities are barriers to their successful graduation. The third theme was that classroom experiences are a barrier to success and that changes should be made to classroom experiences. Deeper descriptions of the themes supporting the second research question are provided next.

Theme 1: Stress. According to Langtree et al. (2018) the variety of factors that contribute to stress for nursing students include finances, illnesses, and the long hours needed to study difficult subjects. Student Participant 4 responded “There are many stressors that contribute such as not getting enough sleep, kids, household duties, homeschooling (thanks covid).” Student Participant 1 remarked, “It’s stressful because we learn a new chapter every day and I feel it’s really fast paced, hard to take it all in.” Student Participant 12 shared, “All of the work is a lot of stress.” Responses by the student participants were consistent with the findings of Langtree et al. (2018) that nursing students experience a variety of stressors.

Theme 2: Responsibilities. Zerquera, Ziskin, and Torres (2018) found that working students are balancing multiple responsibilities and roles outside of their school responsibilities. Student Participant 1 stated,

It’s always taking me hours to do homework and stuff I have to read and take my time to get this stuff down so it sticks. So that made it to where I was up till 2:30 or 3 in the morning and then going to bed and being back up at 7 or 8 to take kids to school and then go to school.

Student Participant 12 confirmed how responsibilities can be barriers to success by

sharing, “It’s hard to work while doing the program. You really need to have a lot of time to focus and study because it’s so fast paced.” The responses by the student participants were consistent with the findings of Zerquera et al. (2018) that students are juggling other responsibilities in addition to their schoolwork.

Theme 3: Classroom experiences. Shatto, L’Ecuyer, and Quinn (2017) found that an active teaching approach improved student performance and satisfaction. Student Participant 4 shared that “Allowing more time to talk about lecture and ask questions instead of rushing through lecture...” would support student success. Student Participant 9 stated that another change to support student success would be to have “More hands on homework rather than just giving us a book and turning us loose.” Student Participant 12 shared that a change to support success could be “Less homework, more together work.” While the changes that the student respondents recommended may have not been implemented yet at RCC, the work of Shatto et al. (2017) indicates that the changes the students recommend could lead to student satisfaction and success.

Research Question 3

What are the perceptions of practical nursing program faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional factors supporting student graduation success?

The third research question explored the perceptions of faculty members about institutional, situational, and dispositional factors for student graduation success. Survey questions four through six asked the faculty participants about situational factors that they perceive contribute to student success. Survey questions 10 through 12 asked the faculty participants about institutional factors they perceive contribute to their success. Survey

questions 16 through 18 asked the faculty participants about dispositional factors they perceive to contribute to student success. Each set of questions for the institutional, situational, and dispositional categories included a close-ended question, an open-ended question inviting the participant to share more information about the close-ended question, and a question regarding what changes could be made to the factors that might contribute to student success. Tables 8 and 9 show the faculty member participants' responses to the survey questions to answer RQ3.

Table 8

Institutional, Situational, and Dispositional Support Factors Reported by Faculty Members – Close-ended Questions

Factor	Responses
Institutional factors	
Class size	3 (75%)
Class experiences	3 (75%)
Class schedule	3 (75%)
Class topics	3 (75%)
Homework load	3 (75%)
Situational factors	
Support system	4 (100%)
Technology	4 (100%)
Finances	4 (100%)
Physical environment	3 (75%)
Transportation	3 (75%)
Responsibilities	3 (75%)
Sleep habits	3 (75%)
Nutrition	2 (50%)
(Other – support from school)	1 (25%)
Dispositional factors	
Study habits	4 (100%)
Organizational skills	4 (100%)
Self-perception	2 (50%)
Stress or anxiety	3 (75%)

Note. N = 4.

Table 9

Institutional, Situational, and Dispositional Support Factors Reported by Faculty Members – Open-ended Questions

Factor	Supports	Changes needed to supports
Institutional factors		
Class experiences	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
Class schedule	1 (25%)	
Class size	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
Workload	2 (50%)	1 (25%)
Situational factors		
Access to technology	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
Classroom experience	2 (50%)	3 (75%)
Finances	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
Support system	3 (75%)	1 (25%)
Dispositional factors		
Classroom experience		1 (50%)
Organizational skills	1 (25%)	
Support from school		1 (50%)
Stress	1 (25%)	
Study habits	2 (25%)	

Note. Institutional supports N = 4, Changes to institutional supports N = 4, Situational supports N = 4, Changes to situational supports N = 4, Dispositional supports N = 4, Changes to dispositional supports n = 2.

Two themes emerged to support the third research question. The first theme was that support systems contribute to student success. The second theme was that classroom experiences contribute to student success. The theme concerning classroom experiences had the subcategory theme that changes should be made to the classroom experiences. Deeper descriptions of the themes supporting the third research question are provided next.

Theme 1: Support systems. Dewitty, Huerta, and Downing (2016) found that support from faculty was a top contributor to student success and that family responsibilities were a top barrier to student success. Faculty Participant 1 stated “Support from their school- if they feel things are in order. If their home life is stable they are able to perform better.” Faculty Participant 4 shared, “...you need a good support system at home in order to maintain focus.” When asked about changes that could be made to situational supports, Faculty Participant 4 responded, “... as far as a support system maybe they just need to talk to somebody.” The responses by the faculty participants were consistent with the findings of Dewitty et al. (2016) that support systems can exist both at school and at home.

Theme 2: Classroom experiences. Hanson (2016) found that flipping the classroom can be beneficial to students especially if communications about the flipping of the classroom are made clear before the changes are made to the classroom. Faculty Participant 2 stated, “We have the students provide feedback after each class. We review these questionnaires and as a faculty make changes to these classes. We also have student reps who participate in the faculty meetings.” When asked what changes should be made to institutional factors to support student success, Faculty Participant 2 shared “Continue to listen to the students' feedback.” The responses of the faculty participants are consistent with Hanson's (2016) finding that it can be beneficial to include students in decisions regarding changes to the classroom experience.

Research Question 4

What are the perceptions of practical nursing program faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers to successful graduation for students?

The fourth research question explored the perceptions of faculty members about institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers to student success. Survey questions seven through nine asked the faculty participants about situational factors that they perceive as barriers to student success. Survey questions 13 through 15 asked the faculty participants about institutional factors they perceive as barriers to student success. Survey questions 19 through 21 asked the faculty members about dispositional factors they perceive as barriers to student success. Each set of questions for the institutional, situational, and dispositional categories included a close-ended question, an open-ended question inviting the participants to share more information about the close-ended question, and a question regarding what changes could be made to the factors that might contribute to student success. Tables 10 and 11 show the student participants' responses to the survey questions to answer RQ2.

Table 10

Institutional, Situational, and Dispositional Barriers Reported by Faculty – Close-ended Questions

Factor	Responses
Institutional factors	
Class experiences	1 (25%)
Homework load	1 (25%)
Class size	1 (25%)
Not applicable	2 (50%)
Situational factors	
Technology	4 (100%)
Finances	3 (75%)
Responsibilities	3 (75%)
Support system	2 (50%)
Sleep habits	1 (25%)
Physical environment	1 (25%)
Transportation	1 (25%)
Dispositional factors	
Stress or anxiety	3 (75%)
Study habits	3 (75%)
Self-perception	3 (75%)
Organizational skills	3 (75%)
Not applicable	1 (25%)

Note. N = 4

Table 11

Institutional, Situational, and Dispositional Barriers Reported by Faculty – Open-ended Questions

Factor	Barriers	Changes needed to barriers
Institutional factors		
Class experiences		1
Class size	1	
Situational factors		
Access to technology	2	2
Finances	1	
Support system	2	1
Dispositional factors		
Any number of factors	2	
Support from school		1
Classroom experience		2

Note. Institutional barriers $n = 1$, Changes to institutional barriers $n = 1$, Situational barriers $N = 4$, Changes to situational barriers $N = 4$, Dispositional barriers $n = 2$, Changes to dispositional barriers $n = 3$.

Two themes emerged to support the fourth research question. The first theme was that most faculty participants responded that access to technology can be a barrier for student success. The second theme was that faculty participants responded that classroom experiences can be a barrier to student success. The classroom experiences theme also had a sub-theme that changes are needed to classroom experiences to support student success. Deeper descriptions of the themes supporting the fourth research question are provided next.

Theme 1: Access to technology. Uğur, Koç, and Koç (2016) found that students are interested in mobile learning and that faculty should explore ways to incorporate mobile devices in learning in the classroom and remotely. Faculty Participant 4

responded, “ Be sure the student has proper equipment, access to computer systems whether it be at the school or at home.” Faculty Participant 3 stated, “I think they need chrome books instead of ipads. This would allow them to use all the technology available.” When responding to the question about changes that should be made to situational barriers, Faculty Participant 4 responded, “Provide students with I-Pads, so they have access whether at school or at home.” The responses of the faculty participants are consistent with the findings of Uğur et al. (2016) that technology can support learning at home and in the classroom.

Theme 2: Classroom experiences. Gwynne et al. (2020) found that when teachers understand students’ needs, students are better able to succeed. Faculty Participant 2 responded to a survey question about changes by stating “Listening to students' feedback and seeing what additional services we could offer as a school.” Faculty Participant 3 stated, “Ongoing advising sessions with students to check in on progress.” Responses from faculty participants were consistent with the findings of Gwynne et al. (2020) that understanding students’ needs can contribute to student success.

Summary of Findings

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing students at a rural vocational school, referred to as RCC, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional

supports and barriers students face toward graduation. Cross's (1988) model that identified barriers to adult learning as institutional, situational, and dispositional, was used as the conceptual framework for this study. There were four research questions for this study. The first two questions concerned practical nursing program students' perceptions of supports and barriers to successful graduation. The other two research questions concerned faculty perceptions of supports and barriers students face toward graduation. The emergent theme for all four research questions was that classroom experiences can support student success and that changes are needed concerning classroom experiences for the practical nursing students at RCC. Because changes to classroom experiences can support student success (Hanson, 2016; Shatto et al., 2017) and perceptions of students can provide information for changes to classroom experiences to support student success (Gwynne et al., 2020; Nel, 2017), I decided to take a deeper dive into the data I had collected concerning students' perceptions of classroom experiences.

To identify the highest trending themes concerning students' perceptions about supports and barriers to success as they relate to classroom experiences, I revisited the open-ended question responses from the student participants related to classroom experiences and conducted a deeper thematic analysis. The sub-themes I identified were workload, pace, teacher engagement, class format, and class organization. Table 12 shows the frequencies for the classroom experiences sub-themes I identified.

Table 12

Classroom Experiences Sub-Themes as Reported by the Student Participants – Open-ended questions

Factor	Supports	Barriers	Changes needed	Total mentions
Workload	0	13	4	17
Fast pace	0	5	5	10
Class format	0	2	8	10
Class organization	2	2	5	9
Teachers engaged & meeting student needs	1	2	5	8

The classroom experiences sub-themes described by the participants indicate that a deliverable project as an outcome for this study is a professional development training series. The professional development training includes the five themes shown in Table 12 as well as a session on assessments. In the next section, I will provide a brief description of the project deliverable as an outcome of the project study results.

The Project

The theme that emerged from the data analysis for this study was the need for changes in classroom experiences. Participants in this study responded to a survey indicating that the classroom experiences subthemes, which are workload, pace, teacher engagement, class format, and class organization, are barriers to student success and that there is a need for change. Professional development programs support institutional change and student success (Graham, 2017). The project for this study is a 3-day professional development training series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions

for the practical nursing program faculty members at RCC. The course includes the topics of workload, pace, teacher engagement, class format and class organization. Training on these topics is focused on tactics that support student success in relationship with the class curriculum. Because student assessments had not been conducted prior to this project study, the topic of assessments was added to the professional development series. More information about the professional development training series is provided in Section 3.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The problem explored in this study was that practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school (RCC) in the midwestern United States were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation. The inadequate improvement in these rates may be attributable to the lack of research done before administrators and faculty changed the program admission guidelines. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation.

The first two research questions for this study concerned students' perceptions of institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to graduation success. The third and fourth research questions concerned faculty perceptions of institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to students successfully graduating. Using a purposeful sample, I collected data using an open-ended online survey from 20 students and four faculty members to answer the four research questions. Thematic data analysis followed an open coding process to identify emergent themes related to practical nursing program students' experiences. Of the seven emergent themes, one theme was

consistent for each of the research questions: classroom experiences. A deeper dive into the data revealed that the subthemes to classroom experiences were: workload, pace, teacher engagement, class format, and class organization. The project for this study is a 3-day professional development training series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions for the practical nursing program faculty members at RCC. The course includes the classroom experiences subthemes of workload, pace, teacher engagement, class format, and class organization. A session about assessing student needs is also provided. Training on these topics is focused on tactics that support student success in relationship with the class curriculum. The rationale, review of literature, project description, project evaluation plan, and project implications are provided in this section of the project study paper.

Rationale

The professional development training series provides a solution to the problem this study explored which is that practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States (RCC) were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. Faculty at RCC had not conducted research to understand why students were failing and, therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. Based on the information gained through this study, I created a 3-day professional development series taking place over 6 monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC

could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's low graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

Professional development programs support student success (Graham, 2017). M. D. Miller, Dickson, and Koch (2019) found that student success is dependent upon the faculty involved in the students' education and that faculty who participate in professional development training are inclined to change their practices to support student success. Key to successful outcomes of professional development training is the inclusion of students' perceptions (M. D. Miller et al., 2019). My professional development training series is built upon the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty concerning supports and barriers to student success.

The content for the professional development training series project for this study was determined by the results of the data collection. The emergent theme from the data collected to answer the four research questions concerning student and faculty perceptions of institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to practical nursing program student success at RCC was classroom experiences. A deeper dive into the data revealed that the subthemes to classroom experiences were workload, pace, teacher engagement, class format, and class organization. Because the administrators and faculty members had not conducted a study concerning students' perceptions about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to graduation success (personal communication, December 12, 2018), a session concerning assessment of student needs was added to the professional development series.

Review of the Literature

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at a rural vocational school referred to as RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's low graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

The content for the professional development training series project for this study was determined by the results of the data collection. The emergent theme from the data collected concerning supports and barriers to student success was classroom experiences. Classroom experiences subthemes, which were workload, pace, teacher engagement, class format, and class organization, served as the topics for the 3-day professional development series taking place over 6 monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's low graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation. A session on the assessment of student needs was added to the professional development series. To support the creation of the professional development series, I conducted a literature review.

I conducted the literature search through the Walden University Library using multiple databases, including Google Scholar, Academic Search Complete, Education Source, ERIC, Thoreau Multi-Database Search, and ProQuest. Search terms used during the literature review included *professional development, faculty development, nursing student success, student success, assessments, evaluations, teacher engagement, class organization, organizational skills, class format, pedagogy, interactive learning, learning pace, classroom pace, teaching pace, student workload, and homework load*. The criteria for the search included articles published during and after 2015, academic journals, and peer-reviewed articles. I also used the reference sections of articles as resources to help me identify additional articles to help support my creation of the professional development series. I accessed Ulrich's Periodicals Directory to confirm that the articles I found were in peer-reviewed journals. The following sections include literature-supported descriptions supporting my creation of professional development training designed to support success of practical nursing program students at RCC.

Professional Development

Faculty professional development programs can have a positive impact on student success (A. Miller et al., 2019). Similar to my project, A. Miller et al. (2019) described professional development training in a series format. Participants of professional development programs may implement some of the tactics they learn into their own classrooms (Senyshyn & Smith, 2019). In a study conducted by Senyshyn and Smith (2019) of 38 faculty members who participated in a professional development series, faculty members reported that they could transform what they learned in the series to

their classrooms to support student success. These same faculty members averred that they believed it was important for students' perceptions to be included in changes made to teaching approaches (Senyshyn & Smith, 2019).

Professional development programs that engage faculty participants can result in a change in teaching methods (Salter, Rushe, & Jacobs, 2019). A mixed methods study conducted by Salter et al. (2019) revealed that faculty members are highly engaged in professional development programs designed with Conceptual Change/Student Focus. Further, faculty who participate in a Conceptual Change/Student Focus professional development program report that, as a result of their participation, they began to rethink their teaching approach to improve the learning experience (Salter et al., 2019).

Pelletreau et al. (2018) found that a change in faculty teaching approach can result in an improvement in student learning. The 16 faculty members from five institutions who participated in a professional development training designed to use student data and address time and resource limitations implemented what they learned in their classrooms (Pelletreau et al., 2018). A pre-test and post test revealed an improvement in student achievement as a result of the changes to the classroom (Pelletreau et al., 2018).

Professional development training can result in changes in the classroom (Czajka & McConnell, 2019). In a study of 8 faculty members, Czajka and McConnell (2019) provided the participants with student-centered teaching materials during professional development training. Czajka and McConnell found that faculty members who participate in professional development training focused on student-centered teaching might incorporate related teaching methods into their own classrooms.

Professional Development and Student Assessments

There is limited literature available concerning students being considered valuable contributors in the course design process (Miles & Fogget, 2016). In a systemic review of 28 sources, Miles and Fogget (2016) noted that students' insights should be considered when implementing changes to improve classroom experiences. Miles and Fogget also found that professional development for faculty who are designing the curriculum is critical to student success.

McCartin, Falcone, and Smith (2018) also found a link between professional development and student insights. In a study of university librarians, McCartin et al. implemented a professional development training program focused on student assessments and conducted a follow-up study to measure the impact of the professional development training. Respondents to the follow-up study conducted by McCartin et al. reported that the professional development training provided them with the knowledge they needed to conduct student assessments, and also made them feel more comfortable with providing the assessments.

Frequent assessments support the identification of student needs and faculty effectiveness (Hill, Wong, & Thal, 2019). Identification of barriers to student success allows for opportunities for interventions to support student success (Hill et al., 2019). In a survey of nursing students who participated in frequent assessments, Hill et al. found that the nursing students preferred that the frequent assessments continue.

An understanding of how to design assessments can influence teachers to change their classroom approach (Ebert-May et al., 2015). In a study of 201 postdoctoral fellows

who participated in professional development that included design of classroom assessments, Ebert-May et al. (2015) found that the fellows developed a more learner-centered approach to teaching versus a teacher-centered approach. Self-assessments by postdoctoral fellows who participated in the study indicated knowledge gained and an improvement in active teaching skills (Ebert-May et al., 2015).

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. The director of adult education at RCC expressed concern that because administrators and faculty members had not conducted a study concerning students' perceptions about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to graduation success, the problem with the low graduation rate would perpetuate (personal communication, December 12, 2018). Additionally, one of the classroom experiences subthemes that emerged from the data analysis was that faculty meeting student needs supports student success. Including the topic of assessments in the professional development project will help faculty understand students' needs so that faculty can make changes to the program to support student success.

Professional Development and Teacher Engagement

There is a link between teaching competencies and teacher engagement (Dong et al., 2019). From an online survey of 458 teachers, Dong et al. (2019) found that teachers become more engaged when they believe that they are competent. Dong et al. concluded

that Professional development programs should be designed to support competency of teachers, and therefore support an improvement in teacher engagement.

Teachers' expectations can vary from student to student and those expectations can impact student-need teaching (Hornstra, Stroet, van Eijden, Goudsblom, & Roskamp, 2018). In a survey of 276 students, Hornstra et al. (2018) found that there is a relationship between teacher expectations and student motivation and that the relationship is impacted by student perceptions of teacher behaviors. An understanding of how teacher expectations relate to student characteristics can help improve student-need teaching (Hornstra et al., 2018). The professional development series for my project study includes discussion to help teachers understand how their expectations impact student perceptions of teacher engagement and student-need teaching.

Following a review of literature including 63 references, A. Miller et al. (2019) designed a study focused on the implementation of professional development quality teaching rounds. The quality teaching rounds were designed based on the understanding A. Miller et al. gained that professional development training that includes teacher engagement supports student success. Because one of the classroom experiences subthemes that emerged from the data analysis of my study was that teacher engagement supports student success, I have included teacher engagement as a topic in the professional development series that is the project for my study.

Professional Development and Class Organization

In a qualitative study of teachers, Bermúdez Salamanca and Carreño Rueda (2018) reported that teachers perceived that classroom planning and structure were

important for student success. Classroom activities organized in a structured manner support students' ability to understand learning goals and achieving those goals (Bermúdez Salamanca & Carreño Rueda, 2018). Additionally, Bermúdez Salamanca and Carreño Rueda noted that teacher training plays an important role in teachers understanding how to organize classrooms to address student needs.

Planning, organization, and communication skills enable teachers to manage their classes to support student success (Ergin, 2019). In a study of 788 university students, Ergin (2019) found that teaching training programs need to include classroom management. Ergin further stated that a teacher's classroom management skills are the most important factor contributing to student success.

Ineffective classroom organization has a negative impact on student classroom experiences (Phillips & Chetty, 2018). In a qualitative study of 29 faculty members and 61 postgraduate students, Phillips and Chetty (2018) found that extended teacher training programs allow for attainment of teaching skills that support student success. Phillips and Chetty further concluded that is critical for teaching education to include the teaching process.

In addition to classroom organization impacting student success, the organizational skills of the student can impact the student's success (McKenna et al., 2018). In a quantitative study of 200 students, McKenna et al. (2018) found that a student orientation that includes organizational skills supports student success. Because the classroom experiences subthemes that emerged from the data analysis of my study

included classroom organization and organizational skills, I have included these topics in the professional development series that is the project for my study.

Professional Development and Class Format

In a quasi-experimental study of 168 teacher students, Mutrofin, Degeng, Ardhana and Setyosari (2017) found that a group discussion class format resulted in better student learning outcomes than a lecture class format. Mutrofin et al. also found that student teachers with greater teaching talent performed better than student teachers with less teacher talent. The professional development training series I have created is designed for teachers with experience. Professional development training for faculty not only needs to be designed to support the teachers learning, but also needs to be designed to help the teachers support their students in learning as I will describe next.

The proper use of heuristics in training programs can also support students learning how to make clinical decisions (Feufel & Flach, 2019). In a systematic literature review including 48 references, Feufel and Flach (2019) found that medical education is more productive when it is focused on every day decision making. Feufal and Flach also noted that because trial and error is a natural way to learn, but that because an error in the field can have dire consequences, it is important to train teachers to include the consequences of decisions made in error in their curriculum.

In a two-staged mixed methods study involving document review of institutional policies, assessments, focus groups and interviews, Schendel (2016) explored the perspectives of a total of 220 university students on critical thinking. Schendel found that students were not learning how to develop their critical thinking skills. Schendel noted

that professional development training can help teachers learn how to support students developing critical thinking skills. Schendel further stated that professional development plays a critical role in pedagogic reform. Because one of the classroom experiences subthemes that emerged from the data analysis of my study was that changing the class format will support student success, I have included class format as a topic in the professional development series that is the project for my study.

Professional Development and Class Pace

There are several ways that faculty can help support student success in accelerated programs (Radler & Bocianu, 2017). In a study involving 558 undergraduate students and 62 faculty members, Radler and Bocianu (2017) found that teachers support student success in fast-paced learning environments by including a variety of visual and audio media as well as by incorporating personalized learning styles into the classroom. Radler and Bocianu also noted that faculty members stated that professional development along with access to technological tools and a supportive infrastructure would help them address fast-paced classes.

Flipping fast-paced classes also supports student success (Barral, Ardi-Pastores, & Simmons, 2018). In a quantitative study of 84 students in an accelerated biology class, Barral et al. (2018) found that students who participated in a flipped classroom setting that included the use of videos and hands-on learning performed better than students who were in a traditional classroom setting. El-Banna, Whitlow, and McNelis (2017) also found that flipped classrooms support student success in accelerated programs and added that faculty should explain to the students why the class is being flipped. Because one of

the classroom experiences subthemes that emerged from the data analysis of my study was that class pace was a barrier to student success, the professional development series I created for this project study will include the use of active teaching and a flipped classroom to support student success in an accelerated program like the practical nursing program at RCC.

Professional Development and Student Workload

Nursing students can benefit from understanding their studying habits (Reinke, 2018). In a mixed-methods study of 84 nursing students who worked an average of 12 hours a week, Reinke (2018) found that when students completed a questionnaire about their schoolwork habits the students identified areas for improvement. Further, Reinke found that the majority of nursing students perceived that a condensed timetable for lectures made it difficult for them to digest the information. Reinke concluded that helping students develop their self-regulated learning skills will help those students keep up. The professional development series that I have created for this project study will include information to help faculty at RCC assist students in developing their self-regulated learning skills to support the students' success.

Students maintaining classwork logs complement by nudges from faculty can support student success (Sherr, Akkaraju, & Atamturktur, 2019). In a study involving 162 human anatomy and physiology course students in a flipped classroom, Sherr et al. (2019) found that students who were asked to keep an assessment log and then received weekly reminders to complete the log were more likely to succeed. Sherr et al. noted that the reminders faculty sent to the students were more effective than the assessment logs,

but that might have been because the reminders were not sent enough in advance to allow the students to complete the assessments when they were due. The professional development series that I have created for this project study will include information about sending reminders to students to help the students manage their workloads.

Karaca, Yildirim, Ankarali, Açikgöz, and Akkuş (2017) conducted a study of 967 students from four nursing schools in Turkey and found that the perceived top causes of stress for nursing students are instructors, nursing staff, assignments and workload. Karaca et al. further noted that faculty need to be aware of what students perceive as inducing stress, including that related to workload, so that the information can be used by faculty to help find solutions. Because one of the classroom experiences subthemes that emerged from the data analysis of my study was that workload is a barrier to student success, the professional development series that I have created for this project study will include information to help faculty at RCC understand perceived stress related to workload and to assist students in developing solutions.

Project Description

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school (RCC) in the midwestern United States were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation. The purpose of this study was

to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. Thematic data analysis revealed the emergent theme across the research questions that classroom experiences were a barrier to student success. A deeper dive into the classroom experiences theme revealed the subthemes of teacher engagement, class organization, class format, class pace, and student workload. The resulting project (see Appendix A) was a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions to support faculty complementing the curriculum with the classroom experiences subthemes identified in this study. Because research had not been conducted by faculty at RCC prior to my study to gain an understanding of student perceptions concerning supports and barriers to success, an additional session focused on assessments was added to the series.

Session 1 of the professional development series is focused on assessments and includes lecture, video viewing, discussions, and an interactive exercise. An evaluation is provided at the end of the session which includes feedback concerning the goals and objectives. The objectives for Session 1 are that attendees will gain an understanding of the purpose of student perception assessments, descriptions and different types of assessments, and student perception assessment tools. The goals for Session 1 are that attendees will incorporate assessments into their practice, attendees will use the knowledge gained through assessments to create change to improve student success, and that the student graduation rate will increase.

Session 2 of the professional development series is focused on teacher engagement and includes lecture, video viewing, discussions, and an interactive exercise. An evaluation is provided at the end of the session which includes feedback concerning the goals and objectives. The objectives for Session 2 are that attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of teacher engagement, descriptions of teacher engagement, and teacher engagement changes to improve the classroom experience. The goals for Session 2 are that attendees will incorporate teacher engagement into their practice to create change to improve student success and that the student graduation rate will increase.

Session 3 of the professional development series is focused on class organization and includes lecture, video viewing, discussions, and an interactive exercise. An evaluation is provided at the end of the session which includes feedback concerning the goals and objectives. The objectives for Session 3 are that attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of class organization, descriptions of class organization and organizational skills tools, and organizational skills to support student success. The goals for Session 3 are that attendees will incorporate organizational skills tools and tactics into their practice to create change to improve student success and that the student graduation rate will increase.

Session 4 of the professional development series is focused on class format and includes lecture, video viewing, and discussions. An evaluation is provided at the end of the session which includes feedback concerning the goals and objectives. The objectives for Session 4 are that attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of

class format, descriptions of class formats, and class formats to support student success.

The goals for Session 4 are that attendees will incorporate knowledge gained from this session into their practice to create change to improve student success and that the student graduation rate will increase.

Session 5 of the professional development series is focused on class pace and includes lecture, video viewing, discussions, and an interactive exercise. An evaluation is provided at the end of the session which includes feedback concerning the goals and objectives. The objectives for Session 5 are that attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of class pace, and tactics to support student success in accelerated programs. The goals for Session 5 are that attendees will incorporate knowledge gained from this session into their practice to create change to improve student success and that the student graduation rate will increase.

Session 6 of the professional development series is focused on student workload and includes lecture, video viewing, discussions, and an interactive exercise. An evaluation is provided at the end of the session which includes feedback concerning the goals and objectives. The objectives for Session 6 are that attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of workload and tactics to support student success with workload. The goals for Session 6 are that attendees will incorporate knowledge gained from this session into their practice to create change to improve student success and that the student graduation rate will increase.

Needed Resources and Existing Supports

The resources needed for the professional development series include a location from which to launch the program that will have the technology to allow for the display of the PowerPoint and audio from the moderator as well as from the videos that are embedded in the PowerPoint presentations. Because the series will be launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that face-to-face gatherings will not be advisable. Therefore, faculty at RCC will need to utilize the technology they use for online live classes to make the series accessible to faculty attendees. Needed resources also include the faculty members who have a direct impact on supporting student success and will be attending the series to gain knowledge to help support the work they do for student success.

Existing supports include the dedication and commitment of faculty at RCC. The director of adult education has generously shared her time, knowledge, and specific information about the practical nursing program at RCC during the years it has taken to complete this project study. Other faculty members at RCC played an instrumental role in helping to disseminate the project survey to the student participants and I am confident they will be equally engaged in supporting the successful implementation of the professional development series.

Potential Barriers and Potential Solutions to Barriers

Potential barriers. The potential barrier to the implementation of the professional development series is the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the related CDC guidelines are social distancing, wearing masks, and limitations on social gatherings. At

the time that this project study is being finalized, COVID-19 is rapidly spreading and the situation could be more dire when faculty members at RCC are ready to implement the professional development series. It may be unsafe to hold the professional development series in a face-to-face setting.

Potential solutions to barriers. Because the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a sudden movement toward online meetings and gatherings, technology for these approaches has improved and become more available. Faculty members at RCC have already converted face-to-face meetings to online formats and will have this as an option for the implementation of the professional development series. Providing the series online will preserve the ability to launch the series while doing so in a safe manner.

Implementation and Timetable

The professional development series will be launched during the 2021 spring semester. The series will take place once a month for six months in four-hour sessions. The goal of faculty at RCC is to improve the low graduation rate as quickly as possible. Faculty members will be encouraged to use the knowledge gained from attending the sessions to make changes to support student success as soon as the faculty members begin attending the sessions. Some changes, like the real-time classroom assessments, are changes that can be implemented quickly. Other changes, including flipping classrooms, would take longer.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

The roles and responsibilities I hold as the student, and novice researcher, for this project are to conduct this project study within the guidelines and parameters set by my

committee and Walden University IRB. It is also my responsibility to work within the limitations provided by the research site, which is RCC. It is the responsibility of the faculty at RCC to use the information I provide them, including the project, which is the professional development series, in an ethical manner, which includes not identifying and contacting the participants for the study.

Project Evaluation Plan

Evaluation of the professional development series will be conducted in a formative manner with evaluations at the end of each of the six sessions. The formative approach will allow for the opportunity to make changes to the series while it is still in process should it be deemed necessary to make those changes. The stakeholders for the project are the students and faculty members of the practical nursing program at RCC. The students stand to potentially benefit from changes being made to the practical nursing program that could support students' successful graduation. The faculty members would benefit from the potential increase in the graduation rate which would help to remove the school from risk of losing accreditation.

The overall goal of the project is to increase the low graduation rate for the practical nursing program at RCC and remove the school from being at risk to lose accreditation and also increase the number of nurses practicing in the field. The goal of the increased graduation rate is the goal that each of the six professional development sessions holds in common. Each session also has related objectives and goals:

Session 1 - Assessments

Objectives: Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of the purpose of student perception assessments, descriptions and different types of assessments, and student perception assessment tools.

Goals: Attendees will incorporate assessments into their practice, attendees will use the knowledge gained through assessments to create change to improve student success, and the student graduation rate will increase.

Session 2 – Teacher Engagement

Objectives: Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of teacher engagement, descriptions of teacher engagement and teacher engagement changes to improve the classroom experience.

Goals: Attendees will incorporate teacher engagement into their practice to create change to improve student success and the student graduation rate will increase.

Session 3 – Class Organization

Objectives: Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of class organization, descriptions of organization/ organizational skills tools, and organizational skills to support student success.

Goals: Attendees will incorporate organizational skills tools and tactics into their practice to create change to improve student success and the student graduation rate will increase.

Session 4 – Class Format

Objectives: Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of class format, descriptions of class formats, and class formats to support student success.

Goals: Attendees will incorporate the knowledge gained from this session into their practice to create change to improve student success and the student graduation rate will increase.

Session 5 – Class Pace

Objectives: Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of class pace and tactics to support student success in accelerated programs.

Goals: Attendees will incorporate the knowledge gained from this session into their practice to create change to improve student success and the student graduation rate will increase.

Session 6 – Student Workload

Objectives: Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of workload and tactics to support student success with workload.

Goals: Attendees will incorporate the knowledge gained from this session into their practice to create change to improve student success and the student graduation rate will increase.

Project Implications

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low

rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation.

The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's low graduation rate. The implications of this project are that the improved graduation rate will reduce the school's risk of losing accreditation. The improved graduation rate might mean more nurses can pursue the career they desire and an increased number of nurses in the field, which would be a positive impact on the nursing shortage.

The social change implications are local and broader. For the school, the change is that students who might have been failing the nursing program could pass and pursue the career they desire. From a broader perspective, this project could be replicated at other schools to improve graduation rates. Additionally, the improved graduation rates could help to improve the nursing shortage that spans the globe through an increased number of nurses in the field.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

The problem I explored in this study was that practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation. The director of adult education at RCC expressed concern that because the decision to change the admission guidelines was made without administrators and faculty members conducting a study concerning students' perceptions about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to graduation success, the problem with the low graduation rate would perpetuate (personal communication, December 12, 2018).

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions. The professional development series was designed for the educators at RCC to implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

Strengths

Professional development programs support change at the institutional level to support student success (Graham, 2017; M.D. Miller et al., 2019). The strengths of my project study include that it was designed specifically to support decisions regarding change at the institutional level that would have a positive impact on student success. The data collected were specific to the problem that this study was focused on, and those same data were then used to design the professional development series. To help ensure that professional development training is successful, decisions regarding the design of the training should be based on students' perceptions (M.D. Miller et al., 2019). The data I collected included student perceptions about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers to success.

Although this project was designed to address a problem with a specific nursing program, the project can be implemented at other nursing programs. A literature review including at least 25 references informed decisions that supported the creation of the project. The project was designed in a manner so that any nursing program faculty member could lift it from this paper to launch the program.

The strength of this project is not limited to the professional development series. Assessments of student perceptions also help to identify barriers so that faculty can explore opportunities to make changes to support student success (Hill et al., 2019). The survey tool that I created for this project study can be used by other schools to collect data to understand perceptions of students and develop interventions to support student success.

Limitations

The conceptual framework for this project study was Cross's (1988) model that described barriers to learning as institutional, situational, and dispositional. Cross noted that one of the best ways to collect information about perceptions is to collect qualitative data through interviews. While I was able to collect qualitative data, because of the COVID-19 pandemic limiting my ability to contact the participants, I was not able to collect the deep descriptions about their perspectives that I had desired. A limitation of this project was that it was not only based on data collected concerning a specific location, but also that data were not as rich as I had desired. I addressed this limitation by basing the actual construction of the professional development series on information gained through a literature review and exploring other resources.

When faculty members are engaged with professional development programs they are more likely to make changes in the classroom (Salter et al., 2019). Therefore, in an effort to create an engaging professional development series, I mixed the methods of delivery of information. I included lecture, videos, discussions and interactive exercises in the series to support engagement by participants. However, a potential limitation of the series is that the design is not one that will engage the faculty participants.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Although I decided to address the problem of this study through the creation of a professional development series, there are other potential solutions. A professional development series could have been created for a combined audience of faculty and students. Another possibility could have been a collaborative conference where panels of

students and faculty provided presentations about their perceptions of student success and then discussion could ensue to identify changes that could be made to support student success. There are a couple of the topics covered in the professional development series that could be pulled out as independent projects. One of those topics is assessments. A project could be to conduct frequent assessments in the classroom to provide opportunities for faculty to identify barriers to student success in time to implement interventions. Another topic that could be pulled out as an independent project is class organization.

The problem explored in this study was that practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. Data collection revealed the emerging theme of classroom experiences as a barrier to student success. A deeper dive into the data revealed that students perceived that class organization was a negative classroom experience for them. Alternatively, faculty members reported that the students were not organized. A two-pronged solution could be an organizational skills workshop for the students and the development of a planning tool that faculty could use to help communicate to the students how to plan for the work ahead including how much time students should plan to read and how to organize homework assignments.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Cross (1988), whose work formed the conceptual framework for my project study, stated, “Lifelong learning is not a privilege or a right; it is simply a necessity for

anyone” (p. ix). As I worked on this project study, I realized that I was striving to continue my journey as a lifelong learner while also working to support other learners be able to do the same. Cross identified three categories of barriers to learning: situational, dispositional, and institutional. Before I collected the data that would inform the project, I assumed that the emergent theme could fall under any of these categories and that new categories could be identified. Stepping back from that thought, I knew, or hoped, there would be an emergent theme. Even though I anticipated the data would provide a clear path for the direction of the project, I was excited and somewhat surprised when that occurred.

Once the emergent theme was identified, I conducted a deeper dive to identify subthemes. The information gained helped me determine that the project would be professional development. I decided to stretch out the training into six sessions to help support faculty availability to attend. I, again, was surprised by this realization because I had identified six topics to include in the professional development series. As I searched literature to support the development of the professional development project topics, I experienced another surprise.

During the literature reviews for this project, I came across many articles that mentioned that very little research was available about a topic. I had not experienced this until I was conducting the literature review for the professional development project. I felt a connection to the researchers whose work I had been reading knowing that I was experiencing something similar to that which they had experienced.

As I was building the professional development project, I thought about one of the classroom experience subthemes that had emerged from the data analysis. Student participants had responded that class format was a barrier to success. Some students shared suggestions of changes that could be made to support success. Those changes included changing the class format from lecture to include other types of teaching approaches. Therefore, when I created the professional development series, I included lecture, videos, interactive exercises, and discussions.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

I began my relationship with the director of adult education at the research site when I first began my journey as a doctoral student, nearly five years prior to my completing the data collection phase for this study. When we first met, and throughout the years since, I have said to her that while I would be doing this project study to fulfill the requirements to earn my doctoral degree, I was equally excited, committed, and honored to know that this project could support student success at her school.

It is difficult to put in a paragraph or two all that I have learned through working on this project. I have grown as a writer, scholar, and critical thinker. I am hopeful that both the information gained through this project study as well as the project itself, the professional development series, might have a positive impact on the research site school and its students. It has been a great deal of work, and well worth it if even one more student graduates from the practical nursing program than would have without the project in place. I am hopeful that the reach will be more than one student, though, and I will share more about that next.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The problem this study explored is that practical nursing program students at RCC, a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. The emergent theme from data analysis was that classroom experiences was a barrier to student success and further analysis revealed subthemes to the emergent theme of classroom experience. The resulting project was a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly 4-hour sessions to support faculty complementing the curriculum with factors identified by the faculty and students to change classroom experiences to encourage student success. This study and project have implications for positive social change through improved student learning outcomes and graduation rates. The improved graduation rates will mean that more individuals will be able to pursue the career they desire in nursing. The improved graduation rates will also reduce the risk of the school losing accreditation. While the focus is on the local implications, it is possible that the implications could have a broader reach through an increase of licensed practical nurses in the field.

There are also methodological implications for this study. The tool that I developed for data collection could be used by faculty at the research site to conduct further research. I would recommend that quality data continue to be collected and that, if

possible, through one-on-one semistructured interviews, as I had planned to do before the COVID-19 pandemic removed that as an option. I also recommend that future research be focused on classroom experiences as that was the emergent theme from the data collected to answer all four research questions. A deeper understanding of students' perceptions of classroom experiences could lead to the creation of a project different from the professional development series I created for this project study, and perhaps one more specifically addressing the factor that the students perceive to be the prominent barrier to their success.

Conclusion

The key takeaway for this project study is that when a researcher is exploring a problem about a specific population, collecting information directly from that population group will provide a clearer picture of the problem. For this project, data collected from faculty members, in some instances, were in conflict with the data collected from the student participants. Administrators and faculty can make assumptions about why students are facing barriers to successfully graduating, but when they conduct research and collect data that provides a truer picture of the reality, they are better able to develop an intervention to support student success.

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Appendix A: The Project

Introduction

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school, referred to as RCC, were graduating at a low rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational, and dispositional supports and barriers students face toward graduation. Thematic data analysis revealed the emergent theme across the research questions that classroom experiences were a barrier to student success. A deeper dive into the classroom experiences theme revealed the subthemes of teacher engagement, class organization, class format, class pace, and student workload. The resulting project was “Faculty Professional Development for Student Success,” a 3-day professional development series taking place over six monthly, 4-hour sessions to support faculty complementing the curriculum with the classroom experiences subthemes identified in this study. Because research had not been conducted by faculty at RCC prior to this study to gain an understanding of student perceptions concerning supports and barriers to success, an additional session focused on assessments was added to the series.

Purpose

The purpose of the “Faculty Professional Development for Student Success” professional development series is to support the improvement of the practical nursing program student graduation rate and, thereby, reduce the school’s risk of not meeting the

accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education. The professional development series was developed based on the results of the project study that explored the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty concerning supports and barriers students face toward graduation. Incorporating the results of the study into the professional development series supports the ability of the series to address the barriers identified by the school's students.

Goals

The goals of the "Faculty Professional Development for Student Success" professional development series are as follows:

1. Attendees will incorporate the knowledge gained through the professional development series into their practice.
2. The incorporation of the knowledge gained through the professional development series into practice will create change to improve student success and the graduation rate.

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives of the "Faculty Professional Development for Student Success" professional development series are as follows:

1. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of the purpose of student perception assessments, descriptions and different types of assessments, and student perception tools.

2. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of teacher engagement, descriptions of teacher engagement and changes to teacher engagement to improve the classroom experience.
3. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of class organization, descriptions of organization and organizational skills tools, and organizational skills to support student success.
4. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of class formats, and class formats to support student success.
5. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of class pace and tactics to support student success in accelerated programs.
6. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of student perceptions of workload and tactics to support student success with workload.

Resources

The following is a list of resources that supports the content of the “Faculty Professional Development for Student Success” professional development series:

Research Articles and Books

1. Barral, A. M., Ardi-Pastores, V. C., & Simmons, R. E. (2018). Student learning in an accelerated introductory biology course is significantly enhanced by a flipped-learning environment. *CBE - Life Sciences Education*, 17(3). doi:10.1187/cbe.17-07-0129
2. Cross, K. P. (1988). *Adults as learners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
3. Ebert-May, D., Derting, T. L., Henkel, T. P., Maher, J. M., Momsen, J. L.,

- Arnold, B., & Passmore, H. A. (2015). Breaking the cycle: Future faculty begin teaching with learner-centered strategies after professional development. *CBE - Life Sciences Education*, 14(2). doi:10.1187/cbe.14-12-0222
4. Ergin, D. Y. (2019). Developing the scale of classroom management skills. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 7(4), 250–258. doi:10.11114/jets.v7i4.4024
 5. Hill, R. , Wong, J. & Thal, R. (2019). Formative assessment and its impact on student success. *Nurse Educator*, 44(1), 4. doi: 10.1097/NNE.0000000000000530
 6. Hornstra, L., Stroet, K., van Eijden, E., Goudsblom, J., & Roskamp, C. (2018). Teacher expectation effects on need-supportive teaching, student motivation, and engagement: A self-determination perspective. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 24(3–5), 324–345. doi: 10.1080/13803611.2018.1550841
 7. McKenna, B., Finamore, D., Hewitt, E. V., Watson, L., Millam, L. A., & Reinhardt, M. (2018). The effect of a multifactor orientation on student performance: Organizational skills, goal setting, orientation to classroom, and academic support. *Online Learning*, 22(4), 265–276. doi:10.24059/olj.v22i4.1207
 8. Miller, M. D., Dickson, K. L., & Koch, R. L. (2019). Empowering faculty to support academic persistence through a blended, scholarship-based faculty

professional development program: The persistence scholars program. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 19(1), 96–116. doi:

10.14434/josotl.v19i1.26786

9. Mutrofin, Degeng, N. S., Ardhana, W., & Setyosari, P. (2017). The effect of instructional methods (lecture-discussion versus group discussion) and teaching talent on teacher trainees student learning outcomes. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(9), 203–209. Retrieved from <http://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP>
10. Radler, D., & Bocianu, I. (2017). Accelerated teaching and learning: Roles and challenges for learners and tutors. *ELearning & Software for Education*, 2, 601–608. doi:10.12753/2066-026X-17-170
11. Reinke, N. B. (2018). The impact of timetable changes on student achievement and learning experiences. *Nurse Education Today*, 62, 137–142. doi:10.1016/j.nedt.2017.12.015
12. Salter, D. J., Rushe, S. E., & Jacobs, G. (2019). Basics and beyond: Faculty development as a professional learning journey. *Journal on Centers for Teaching & Learning*, 11(1), 39–61. Retrieved from <http://jctl.miamioh.edu>
13. Senyshyn, R. M., & Smith, P. (2019). Global awareness dialogue project: Exploring potential for faculty transformation through a professional development series. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 17(4), 318–336. doi: 10.1177/1541344619833342
14. Sherr, G., Akkaraju, S., & Atamturktur, S. (2019). Nudging students to

succeed in a flipped format gateway biology course. *Journal of Effective Teaching in Higher Education*, 2(2), 57–69. Retrieved from <https://jethel.org/index.php/jethel>

Videos

1. 4 Steps to Accelerate Learning (<https://youtu.be/Sq1-Wk1nyjc>)
2. Assessment in Education: Top 14 Examples (<https://youtu.be/zTkQjH-97c>)
3. Changing Roles of teachers and learners (<https://youtu.be/nuYWUPirkqQ>)
4. Classroom Management Styles: What's Your Style? (<https://youtu.be/CiIcptKYNh4>)
5. Clinical Teacher Effectiveness | Five Principles of Positive Feedback (<https://youtu.be/cwOlaoi6esI>)
6. Engaging' and 'Inspiring' Teachers. | Amjad Ali | TEDxNorwichED (<https://youtu.be/mC6LNBWpMCE>)
7. Flipped Classroom in Nursing School - LOVE it or HATE it? (<https://youtu.be/K9VAI-WaPZQ>)
8. Flipping the Classroom - A Nursing Perspective (<https://youtu.be/qhh0o4Vq8qc>)
9. Formative Assessments: Why, When & Top 5 Examples (<https://youtu.be/-RXYTpgvB5I>)
10. How a student changed her study habits by setting goals and managing time | Yana Savitsky | TEDxLFHS (<https://youtu.be/z7e7gtU3PHY>)
11. How adult education changed my life | Overcoming doubt | Mohammed's story (<https://youtu.be/rva0m0GGitY>)
12. How I Organize My Studies - tips for student organization (<https://youtu.be/0qVwPXHwNVU>)
13. How To Multiply Your Time | Rory Vaden | TEDxDouglasville (<https://youtu.be/y2X7c9TUQJ8>)

14. How to Survive Nursing School with a Family | Nursing Student Tips Vlog | Alyssa All Day (<https://youtu.be/CrYs4lPeNmM>)
15. Life Skills for Teachers: Getting Organised (https://youtu.be/ynmhh_noUHU)
16. Proactively Supporting Students To and Through College | Lindsay Page | TEDxWilmingtonED (<https://youtu.be/pYgENucOQFQ>)
17. Problem Based Learning (<https://youtu.be/bUCbCoDpwD0>)
18. Real-Time Assessment: Providing a Window Into Student Learning (<https://youtu.be/ZB8LHwqRcaU>)
19. Strategies to Set Up Your Students for Academic Success (<https://youtu.be/3T5wKYnLPLY>)
20. Teaching Medical and Nursing Students With Mnemonics | Picmonic in the Classroom (<https://youtu.be/MgySRJla0Qc>)
21. The first 20 hours -- how to learn anything | Josh Kaufman | TEDxCSU (<https://youtu.be/5MgBikgcWnY>)
22. The Flipped Classroom for Medical Students V2 (<https://youtu.be/MvIMCvtrbD0>)
23. The One Thing All Great Teachers Do | Nick Fuhrman | TEDxUGA (<https://youtu.be/WwTpfVQgkU0>)
24. The Real Secret Behind Every "Accelerated Learning" Expert (https://youtu.be/du_-Tae042g)
25. Things Nursing Students Say (<https://youtu.be/6S59PBZw1qE>)
26. What makes a good teacher great? | Azul Terronez | TEDxSantoDomingo (<https://youtu.be/vrU6YJle6Q4>)

Budget

The budget implications for the professional development series include copying costs for the materials and space rental. An optional lunch following each session could support opportunities for faculty members to network and discuss that day's session. An estimated budget is provided below.

Description	Cost
Copying of handout materials (.06 per page x 80 pages x 20 faculty members)	\$100.00
Space rental (school auditorium)	0
Lunch (\$15.00 per lunch for 20 faculty members)	\$300.00
Total cost	\$400.00

Agenda

The "Faculty Professional Development for Student Success" series includes six monthly, four-hour sessions. An outline of the overall agenda is provided below.

Session 1 – Assessments

8:00 – 9:40 a.m.	Presentation and Videos
9:40 – 10:40 a.m.	Interactive Exercise and Discussion
10:40 – 11:15 a.m.	Presentation and Videos
11:15 – 11:50 a.m.	Discussion
11:50 a.m. – 12:00 noon	Evaluation

Session 2 – Teacher Engagement

8:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Presentations, Discussions and Videos
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Interactive Exercise and Discussion
11:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Presentation and Videos
11:30 – 11:50 a.m.	Discussion
11:50 a.m. – 12:00 noon	Evaluation

Session 3 – Class Organization

8:00 – 9:30 a.m.	Presentations, Discussions and Videos
9:30 – 10:45 a.m.	Interactive Exercise and Discussion
10:45 – 11:15 a.m.	Presentation and Videos
11:15 – 11:50 a.m.	Discussion
11:50 a.m. – 12:00 noon	Evaluation

Session 4 – Class Format

8:00 – 11:50 a.m.	Presentations, Videos, Problem-Solving Discussions
11:50 a.m. – 12:00 noon	Evaluation

Session 5 – Class Pace

8:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Presentations, Discussions and Videos
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Interactive Exercise and Discussion
11:00 – 11:50 a.m.	Videos and Discussion
11:50 a.m. – 12:00 noon	Evaluation

Session 6 – Student Workload

8:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Presentations, Discussions and Videos
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Interactive Exercise and Discussion
11:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Videos and Problem-Solving Discussion
11:30 – 11:50 a.m.	Discussion
11:50 a.m. – 12:00 noon	Evaluation

Detailed agendas, PowerPoint presentations, interactive exercises and evaluations for each session are provided in the following sections.

Session 1. Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Student

Perception Assessments

- 8:00 – 8:30 a.m. **Welcome, Background, and Study Results (slides 1-8)**
Attendees will receive handout materials which will include a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, handout for the interactive exercise, and session evaluation form. Welcome will include the objectives and goals for the session.
- 8:30 – 8:40 a.m. **Video (slide 9)**
Attendees will watch a video about student perception assessments: Real-Time Assessment: Providing a Window Into Student Learning (<https://youtu.be/ZB8LHwqRcaU>)
- 8:40 – 9:40 a.m. **Assessment Purpose, Descriptions, and Tools (slides 10-18)**
Presentation will include the purpose and effectiveness of student perception assessment tools as well as provide descriptions and examples of different assessment tools.
Videos:
Assessment in Education: Top 14 Examples
(<https://youtu.be/zTkQjH-97c>)
Formative Assessments: Why, When & Top 5 Examples
<https://youtu.be/-RXYTpgvB5I>
- 9:40 – 10:10 a.m. **Interactive Exercise (Handout) (Slide 19)**
Attendees will participate in an interactive exercise concerning the use of an assessment tool.
- 10:10 – 10:40 a.m. **Discussion about Exercise**
- 10:40 – 11:15 a.m. **Assessment Outcomes (slides 20– 24)**
Presentation will include examples of how assessments impact classroom experiences and student success.
Videos:
Strategies to Set Up Your Students for Academic Success

<https://youtu.be/3T5wKYnLPLY>

How adult education changed my life | Overcoming doubt |

Mohammed's story <https://youtu.be/rva0m0GGitY>

11:15 – 11:50 a.m.

Discussion

Open discussion about the topic covered today, respond to questions, and provide feedback about how plan to use assessments in the classroom.

11:50 – 12:00 noon

Evaluation

Attendees will complete a brief evaluation about today's session.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series

Session 1: Assessments

Welcome

- Agenda review
- Objectives
 - Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of:
 - The purpose of student perception assessments
 - Descriptions and different types of assessments
 - Student perception assessment tools
- Goals
 - Attendees will incorporate assessments into their practice
 - Attendees will use the knowledge gained through assessments to create change to improve student success
 - Student graduation rate will increase

Background

Problem

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, referred to as RCC, were graduating at a rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education.

Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Assessments

3

Background

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational and dispositional supports and barriers they face toward graduation.

The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over 6 monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Assessments

4

Background

- You are attending this session because:
 - RCC is your school
 - The changes made to the admission guidelines in 2017...
 - Did not improve the graduation rate
 - Were not based on assessments

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Assessments

5

Study Results

The theme that emerged from the data analysis for this study was classroom experiences.

Data analysis revealed 5 classroom experiences subthemes:

- Teacher engagement
- Class organization (and student organizational skills)
- Class format
- Class pace
- Student workload
- workload, pace, teacher engagement, class format, and class organization, are barriers to student success and that there is a need for change.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Assessments

6

Study Results

Along with the **classroom experiences** theme and the 5 subthemes, participants identified that there is a need for change to support student success.

This professional development series is designed to support that change.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Assessments

7

Assessments

Session 1 of 6

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Assessments

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Assessments

8

Assessments

Video:

Real-Time Assessment: Providing a Window Into Student Learning

<https://youtu.be/ZB8LHwqRcaU>



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Assessments

9

Assessments

Student Perception Assessments

Purpose

The purpose of student perception assessments is to gain an understanding of students' perceptions of supports and barriers to their success.

The knowledge gained from student perception assessments can be used to inform decisions concerning change to support student success.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Assessments

10

Assessments

Student Perception Assessments

Description

Assessments should include:

- Open-ended questions to allow for deeper understanding of student perceptions
- Close-ended questions to identify trends
- Opportunities for students to provide:
 - Additional information about their responses
 - Additional information beyond the survey/interview questions

Assessments

Student Perception Assessments

Description

Assessments should include (continued):

- Information about how student privacy will be protected
- Assurance that students will not be treated differently because of their responses
- The purpose of the assessment and what will be done with the results
- Information about the person conducting the assessment

Assessments

Student Perception Assessments Description

Assessments can be:

- Formative – given throughout class/program
- Summative – given when program has been completed

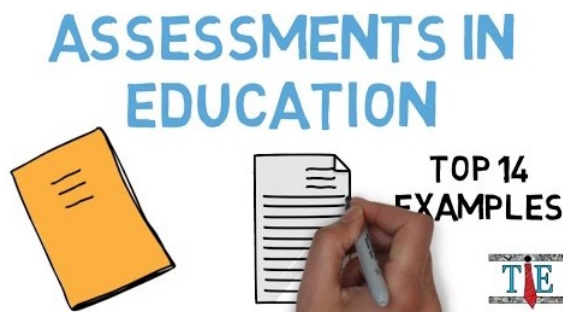
Assessments

Student Perception Assessments Description

There are a variety of different kinds of assessments.

Video: **Assessment in Education: Top 14 Examples**

https://youtu.be/zTkQjH-_97c



Assessments

Student Perception Assessment Tools

There are a variety of student need assessment tools:

- Informal - not data based, impromptu conversations, quick questions in the classroom, etc.
- Formal – data based, online surveys, paper surveys, etc.

Assessments

Student Perception Assessment Tools

The tool used for the study that informed this professional development series was Survey Monkey.

Questions on the survey asked faculty and students about their perceptions concerning situational (individual's life), dispositional (individuals' attitudes) and institutional (school processes and procedures) supports and barriers to success.

Assessments

Student Perception Assessment Tools

Because the emergent theme was classroom experiences, and because the practical nursing program is accelerated, formative assessments would be the best fit.

Assessments

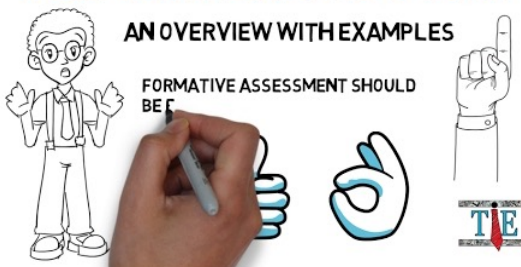
Student Perception Assessment Tools - Formative

Video: **Formative Assessments: Why, When & Top 5 Examples**
<https://youtu.be/-RXYTpgvB5I>

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

AN OVERVIEW WITH EXAMPLES

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT SHOULD
BE



Assessments

Student Perception Assessment

Interactive Exercise

(see handout)

Assessment Outcomes

“Assessments are critical to the educational process. Without them, teachers would never know when to move onto the next subject, or how to help students understand concepts better.”

NWEA.org



Assessment Outcomes

Outcomes: Assessment Data Can Impact Classroom Experiences

- Changes / or perceived changes in the subthemes of our study's classroom experiences emergent theme:
 - Teacher engagement
 - Class organization / organizational skills
 - Class format
 - Class pace
 - Workload

Assessment Outcomes

Outcomes: Assessment Data Can Impact Classroom Experiences

- Flipping classrooms
- Adjusting curriculum
- Knowing when to press forward or devote more time to a subject
- Create camaraderie
- Improve student engagement

Assessment Outcomes

Outcomes:

Assessment Data Can Impact and Student Success

Strategies to Set Up Your Students for Academic Success

<https://youtu.be/3T5wKYnLPLY>



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Assessments

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Assessment Outcomes

Outcomes:

Assessment Data Can Impact Classroom Experiences and Student Success

Success Story:

How adult education changed my life | Overcoming doubt | Mohammed's story <https://youtu.be/rvaomoGGitY>



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Assessments

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Evaluation

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series Session 1: Student Perception Assessments

Please complete your evaluation form and turn it in to the moderator.

Thank you!

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series
Session 1: Student Perception Assessments
Interactive Exercise

Problems

- 1) Curriculum Level 1 – Nursing Principles and Practice.
 - a. What type of formative assessment would you use to identify whether or not students understand the concept of secondary health?
 - b. If the formative assessment revealed that students were not understanding what secondary health care is, what would your next steps be?

- 2) Curriculum Level 1 – Nursing Principles and Practice.

What type of formative assessment would you use to identify whether or not students understand the concept of “working phase”?

- 3) If the formative assessment concerning the “working phase” results were that students responded that they understood this to be when the nurse is collecting patient data and listening to patient concerns, yet during a quiz most students failed this question, what would be your next steps?

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series**Session 1: Student Perception Assessments****Evaluation****1. Were the session objectives met?**

Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of:

- The purpose of student perception assessments
- Descriptions and different types of assessments
- Student perception assessment tools

2. Do you believe this session will help with you/your school meeting the goals:

Attendees will incorporate assessments into their practice

- Yes No

Attendees will use the knowledge gained through assessments to create change to improve student success

- Yes No

Student graduation rate will increase

- Yes No

3. How would you rate your overall experience in participating in this session?

(1 = the least satisfied, 5 = most satisfied)

- 1 2 3 4 5

4. What are your key takeaways / how will you use the information that was shared today?

Name (optional): _____

Date of session: _____

Session 2. Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

- 8:00 – 8:30 a.m. **Welcome, Background, and Study Results (slides 1-8)**
Attendees will receive handout materials which will include a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, handout for the interactive exercise, and session evaluation form. Welcome will include the objectives and goals for the session.
- 8:30 – 9:00 a.m. **Video (Slide 9)**
Attendees will watch a video about teacher engagement.
Video: Clinical Teacher Effectiveness | Five Principles of Positive Feedback <https://youtu.be/cwOlaoi6esI>
Discussion about video
- 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. **Teacher Engagement Description and Tactics (slides 10 - 13)**
Video: Engaging' and 'Inspiring' Teachers. | Amjad Ali | TEDxNorwichED <https://youtu.be/mC6LNBWpMCE>
- 10:00 – 10:30 a.m. **Interactive Exercise (Handout) (slide 14)**
Attendees will participate in an interactive exercise concerning teacher engagement.
- 10:30 – 11:00 a.m. **Discussion about Exercise**
- 11:00 – 11:30 a.m. **Teacher Engagement Outcomes (slides 15 – 17)**
Presentation will include descriptions and examples of how teacher engagement impacts student success.
Video: What makes a good teacher great? | Azul Terronez | TEDxSantoDomingo <https://youtu.be/vrU6YJle6Q4>
- 11:30 – 11:50 a.m. **Discussion**
Open discussion about the topic covered today, respond to questions, and provide feedback about how plan to enhance teacher engagement in the classroom.
- 11:50 – 12:00 noon **Evaluation**
Attendees will complete a brief evaluation about today's session.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series

Session 2: Teacher Engagement

Welcome

- Agenda review
- Objectives
 - Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of:
 - Student perceptions of teacher engagement
 - Descriptions of teacher engagement
 - Teacher engagement changes to improve the classroom experience
- Goals
 - Attendees will incorporate teacher engagement into their practice to create change to improve student success
 - Student graduation rate will increase

Background

Problem

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, referred to as RCC, were graduating at a rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education.

Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

3

Background

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational and dispositional supports and barriers they face toward graduation.

The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over 6 monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

4

Background

- You are attending this session because:
 - RCC is your school
 - The research study revealed that changes need to be made to classroom experiences to support student success

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

5

Study Results

The theme that emerged from the data analysis for this study was classroom experiences.

Data analysis revealed 5 classroom experiences subthemes:

- **Teacher engagement**
- Class organization (and student organizational skills)
- Class format
- Class pace
- Student workload
- workload, pace, teacher engagement, class format, and class organization, are barriers to student success and that there is a need for change.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

6

Study Results

Along with the **classroom experiences** theme and the 5 subthemes, participants identified that there is a need for change to support student success.

This professional development series is designed to support that change.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

7

Teacher Engagement

Session 2 of 6

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

8

Teacher Engagement

Video:

Clinical Teacher Effectiveness | Five Principles of Positive Feedback

<https://youtu.be/cwOlaoi6esI>



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

9

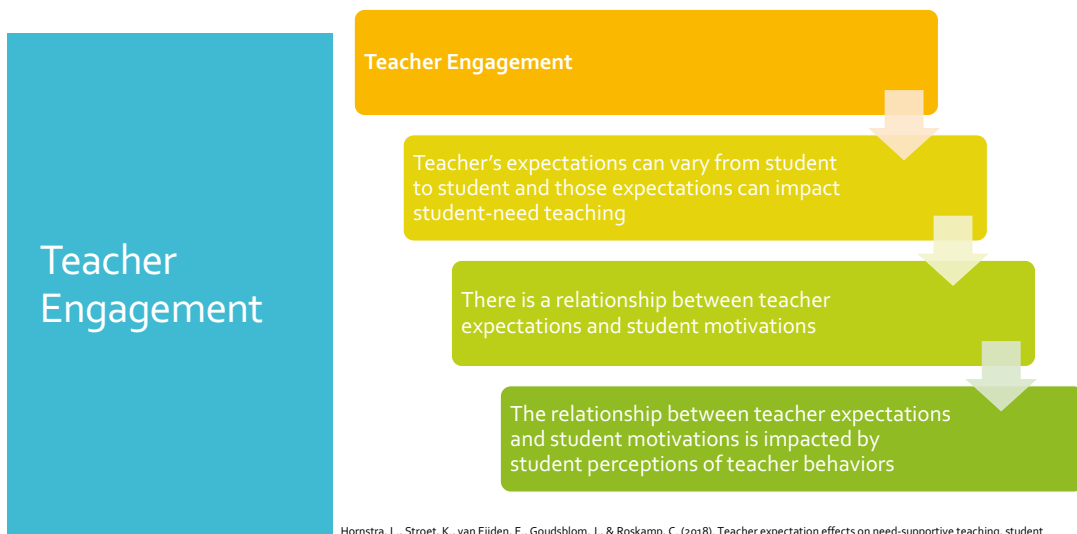
Teacher Engagement

Student Perception Teacher Engagement

- Discussion about video:
 - Teacher engages with student to not only provide expertise and guidance but also to show cares about student success
 - Taking the time to incorporate “lecture” and “self-directed” learning

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

10



Hornstra, L., Stroet, K., van Eijden, E., Goudsblom, J., & Roskamp, C. (2018). Teacher expectation effects on need-supportive teaching, student motivation, and engagement: A self-determination perspective. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 24(3-5), 324-345. doi: 10.1080/13803611.2018.1550841

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

11



Teacher Engagement Tactics

- Not letting teacher expectations impact engagement
- Can range from making verbal/non-verbal contact with each student to joining in detailed conversations
- Students are motivated when they perceive their teachers care about the subject and about them
- Actively engage students in discussion versus straight lecture
- Invite questions

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

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Teacher Engagement

Engaging' and 'Inspiring' Teachers. | Amjad Ali | TEDxNorwichED

<https://youtu.be/mC6LNBWpMCE>

There is a link between teaching competencies and teacher engagement

Dong, Y., Xu, C., Song, X., Fu, Q., Chai, C. S., & Huang, Y. (2019). Exploring the effects of contextual factors on in-service teachers' engagement in STEM teaching. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher (Springer Science & Business Media B.V.)*, 28(1), 25–34. doi:10.1007/s40299-018-0407-0



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

13

Teacher Engagement

Teacher Engagement Interactive Exercise

Pair up, or join in small groups and work on the interactive exercise (see handout)

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

14

Teacher Engagement Outcomes

A
“no excuses”

MENTALITY MEANS THAT EVEN IF YOU BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE STUDENTS' JOB TO BE ENGAGED, YOU ACCEPT THAT IT'S *your job to engage them.*

ERIC JENSEN

<https://threeteacherstalk.com>

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

15

Teacher Engagement Outcomes

What makes a good teacher great? | Azul Terronez | TEDxSantoDomingo
<https://youtu.be/vrU6YJle6Q4>



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Teacher Engagement

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Teacher Engagement

Discussion about video:

- Listen to students
 - Ask more questions to promote more information sharing
- Learn to speak their language
- Show students that you, as a teacher also want to learn

Evaluation

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series Session 2: Teacher Engagement

Please complete your evaluation form and turn it in to the moderator.

Thank you!

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series
Session 2: Teacher Engagement
Interactive Exercise

- 1) Reflect on a past instructor of yours who displayed heightened teacher engagement**

- 2) What are elements of your personality that you could portray to the students to make them feel that you are more engaged with them.**

- 3) What elements of your personality would you enhance to promote teacher engagement?**

- 4) Share an example of when you felt you were engaged with your students.**

- 5) Share an example of when you could tell that your students did not perceive you to be engaged.**

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series**Session 2: Teacher Engagement****Evaluation****1. Were the session objectives met?**

Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of:

- Student perceptions of teacher engagement
- Descriptions of teacher engagement
- Teacher engagement changes to improve the classroom experience

2. Do you believe this session will help with you/your school meeting the goals:

Attendees will incorporate teacher engagement into their practice to create change to improve student success

- Yes No

Student graduation rate will increase

- Yes No

3. How would you rate your overall experience in participating in this session?

(1 = the least satisfied, 5 = most satisfied)

- 1 2 3 4 5

4. What are your key takeaways / how will you use the information that was shared today?

Name (optional): _____

Date of session: _____

**Session 3. Faculty Professional Development for Student Success:
Class Organization**

- 8:00 – 8:30 a.m. **Welcome, Background, and Study Results (slides 1-9)**
Attendees will receive handout materials which will include a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, handout for the interactive exercise, and session evaluation form. Welcome will include the objectives and goals for the session.
- 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. **Class Organization and Student Organizational Skills Description and Tools (slides 8-14)**
Attendees will watch videos about class organization and organizational skills:
1) Life Skills for Teachers: Getting Organised
https://youtu.be/ynmhh_noUHU
2) How a student changed her study habits by setting goals and managing time | Yana Savitsky | TEDxLFHS
<https://youtu.be/z7e7gtU3PHY>
3) HOW I ORGANIZE MY STUDIES - tips for student organization <https://youtu.be/0qVwPXHwNVU>
- 9:30 – 10:00 a.m. **Interactive Exercise (Handout) (slide 15)**
Attendees will participate in an interactive exercise concerning class organization and supporting student organizational skills.
- 10:00 – 10:45 a.m. **Discussion about Exercise**
- 10:45 – 11:15 a.m. **Relationship Between Teacher Engagement and Student Organizational Skills / Being Prepared (slide 16-17)**
Video: Proactively Supporting Students To and Through College | Lindsay Page | TEDxWilmingtonED
<https://youtu.be/pYgENucOQFQ>
- 11:15 – 11:50 a.m. **Discussion**
Open discussion, respond to questions, and provide feedback about class organization and student organizational skills.
- 11:50 – 12:00 noon **Evaluation**
Attendees will complete a brief evaluation about today's session.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series

Session 3: Class Organization

Welcome

- Agenda review
- Objectives
 - Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of:
 - Student perceptions of class organization
 - Descriptions of class organization / organizational skills tools
 - Organizational skills to support student success
- Goals
 - Attendees will incorporate organizational skills tools/ tactics into their practice to create change to improve student success
 - Student graduation rate will increase

Background

Problem

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, referred to as RCC, were graduating at a rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education.

Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class/Student Organizational Skills

3

Background

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational and dispositional supports and barriers they face toward graduation.

The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over 6 monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class/Student Organizational Skills

4

Background

- You are attending this session because:
 - RCC is your school
 - The research study revealed that changes need to be made to classroom experiences to support student success

Study Results

The theme that emerged from the data analysis for this study was classroom experiences.

Data analysis revealed 5 classroom experiences subthemes:

- Teacher engagement
- Class organization (and student organizational skills)
- Class format
- Class pace
- Student workload
- workload, pace, teacher engagement, class format, and class organization, are barriers to student success and that there is a need for change.

Study Results

Along with the **classroom experiences** theme and the 5 subthemes, participants identified that there is a need for change to support student success.

This professional development series is designed to support that change.

Class Organization

Session 3 of 6

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Organization

Class Organization

Perceptions / study results

- Faculty members responded that students were not organized
- Students responded that faculty/the classroom was not organized

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class/Student Organizational Skills

9

Video:

Life Skills for Teachers: Getting Organised

https://youtu.be/ynmhh_noUHU

Class Organization

GETTING ORGANISED



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class/Student Organizational Skills

10

Class
Organization /
Student
Organizational
Skills

How a student changed her study habits by setting goals and managing time | Yana Savitsky | TEDxLFHS

<https://youtu.be/z7e7gtU3PHY>



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class/Student Organizational Skills

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Class
Organization /
Student
Organizational
Skills

Study LESS, Study SMART – What I Wish I Knew in College

https://youtu.be/V2_2UGeGLgM

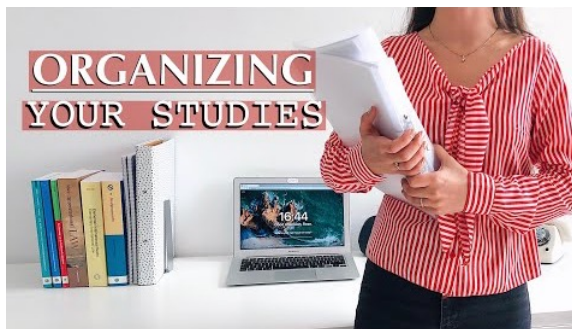


Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class/Student Organizational Skills

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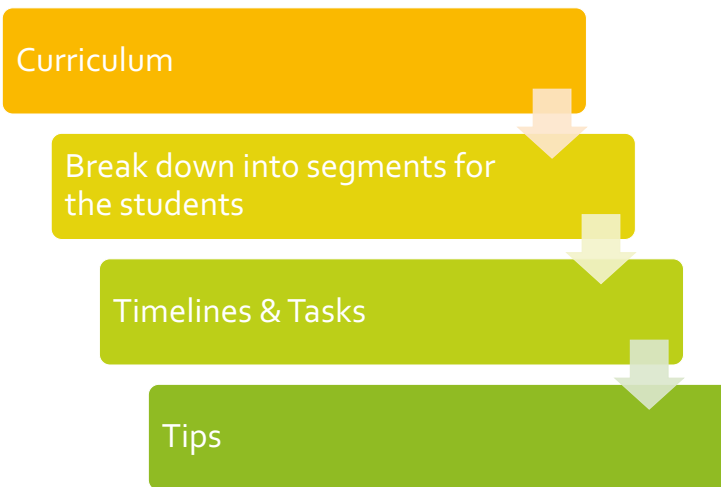
Class Organization / Student Organizational Skills

HOW I ORGANIZE MY STUDIES - tips for student organization <https://youtu.be/oqVwPXHwNVU>



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class/Student Organizational Skills

Class Organization / Student Organizational Skills



Hornstra, L., Stroet, K., van Eijden, E., Goudsblom, J., & Roskamp, C. (2018). Teacher expectation effects on need-supportive teaching, student motivation, and engagement: A self-determination perspective. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 24(3-5), 324-345. doi: 10.1080/13803611.2018.1550841

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class/Student Organizational Skills

Class
Organization /
Student
Organizational
Skills

**Class Organization / Student Organizational Skills
Interactive Exercise**

Pair up, or join in small groups and work on the interactive exercise (see handout)

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class/Student Organizational Skills

15

Class
Organization /
Student
Organizational
Skills

There is a relationship between teacher engagement and student organizational skills.

Organizational skills are not limited to assignments.

Proactively Supporting Students To and Through College |
Lindsay Page | TEDxWilmingtonED

<https://youtu.be/pYgENucQQFO>



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class/Student Organizational Skills

16

Class Organization / Student Organizational Skills

Discussion about video:

- Think like a student
- Proactively offer organizational skills tips for whole picture as well as smaller details
- Assume, until proven otherwise, that students need your help

Evaluation

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series Session 3: Class Organization / Student Organizational Skills

Please complete your evaluation form and turn it in to the moderator.

Thank you!

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series**Session 3: Class Organization****Interactive Exercise**

- 1) Select a course in the curriculum that you believe students struggle with
 - a. Divide the course into segments to support student organizational skills:
 - i. Include timeframes
 - ii. Study tips
 - iii. Goals

- 2) Now think of a time where students might have perceived that the class or the curriculum was not organized.
 - a. What would you do differently to support organization of the course/curriculum and/or the student's perception of the organization of the course/curriculum

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series
Session 3: Classroom Organization / Student Organizational Skills
Evaluation

1. Were the session objectives met?

Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of:

- Student perceptions of class organization
- Descriptions of organization/ organizational skills tools
- Organizational skills to support student success

2. Do you believe this session will help with you/your school meeting the goals:

Attendees will incorporate organizational skills tools/ tactics into their practice to create change to improve student success

- Yes No

Student graduation rate will increase

- Yes No

3. How would you rate your overall experience in participating in this session?

(1 = the least satisfied, 5 = most satisfied)

- 1 2 3 4 5

4. What are your key takeaways / how will you use the information that was shared today?

Name (optional): _____

Date of session: _____

Session 4. Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Format

- 8:00 – 8:30 a.m. **Welcome, Background, and Study Results (slides 1-9)**
Attendees will receive handout materials which will include a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, handout for the interactive exercise, and session evaluation form. Welcome will include the objectives and goals for the session.
- 8:30 – 9:15 a.m. **Videos / Discussion (slides 10-11)**
1) Changing Roles of teachers and learners
<https://youtu.be/nuYWUPirkqQ>
2) Problem Based Learning <https://youtu.be/bUCbCoDpwD0>
Discussion – how would you incorporate problem based learning in your classroom?
- 9:15 – 9:45 a.m. **Video/Discussion (slide 12)**
Teaching Medical and Nursing Students With Mnemonics | Picmonic in the Classroom <https://youtu.be/MgySRJla0Qc>
Discussion – how would you incorporate mnemonics or a similar tool in your classroom?
- 9:45 – 10:30 a.m. **Video/Discussion (slide 13)**
Classroom Management Styles: What's Your Style?
<https://youtu.be/CiIcptKYNh4>
Discussion – What is your style? Does it support student success?
- 10:30 – 11:50 a.m. **Videos/Discussion (slides 14-16)**
Flipping the Classroom - A Nursing Perspective
<https://youtu.be/qhh0o4Vq8qc>
Flipped Classroom in Nursing School - LOVE it or HATE it?
<https://youtu.be/K9VAI-WaPZQ>
The Flipped Classroom for Medical Students V2
<https://youtu.be/MvlMCvtrbD0>
Discussion – Have you/will you use the flipped classroom approach?
- 11:50 – 12:00 noon **Evaluation**
Attendees will complete a brief evaluation about today's session.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series

Session 4: Class Format

Welcome

- Agenda review
- Objectives
 - Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of:
 - Student perceptions of class format
 - Descriptions of class formats
 - Class formats to support student success
- Goals
 - Attendees will incorporate knowledge gained from this session into their practice to create change to improve student success
 - Student graduation rate will increase

Background

Problem

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, referred to as RCC, were graduating at a rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education.

Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation.

Background

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational and dispositional supports and barriers they face toward graduation.

The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over 6 monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

Background

- You are attending this session because:
 - RCC is your school
 - The research study revealed that changes need to be made to classroom experiences to support student success

Study Results

The theme that emerged from the data analysis for this study was classroom experiences.

Data analysis revealed 5 classroom experiences subthemes:

- Teacher engagement
- Class organization (and student organizational skills)
- Class format
- Class pace
- Student workload
- workload, pace, teacher engagement, class format, and class organization, are barriers to student success and that there is a need for change.

Study Results

Along with the **classroom experiences** theme and the 5 subthemes, participants identified that there is a need for change to support student success.

This professional development series is designed to support that change.

Class Format

Session 4 of 6

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Format

Class Format

Perceptions / study results – student responses

- “To have the instructors... give actual examples other than just reading from a power point.”
- “Allowing more time to talk about lecture and ask questions instead of rushing through lecture...”
- “More hands-on homework rather than just giving us a book and turning us loose”

Class Format

Changing Roles of teachers and learners

<https://youtu.be/nuYWUPirkqQ>



Class Format

Problem based Learning

<https://youtu.be/bUCbCoDpwDo>

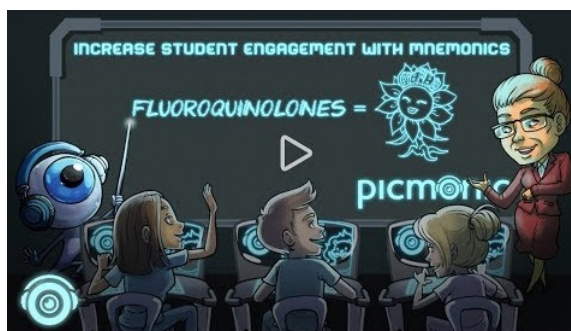


Discussion - How would you incorporate this in your class?

Class Format

Teaching Medical and Nursing Students With Mnemonics | Picmonic in the Classroom

<https://youtu.be/MgySRJlaoQc>

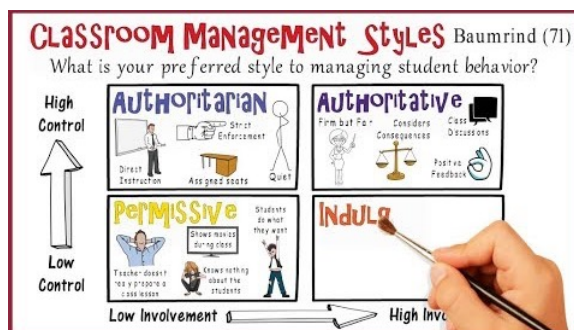


Discussion - How would you incorporate this in your class?

Class Format

Classroom Management Styles: What's Your Style?

<https://youtu.be/CilcptKYNh4>



Discussion – What is your style? Does it support student success?

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Format

13

Class Format

Flipping the Classroom - A Nursing Perspective

<https://youtu.be/qhhoo4Vq8qc>



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Format

14

Class Format

The Flipped Classroom for Medical Students V2

<https://youtu.be/MvIMCvtrbDo>



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Format

15

Class Format

Flipped Classroom in Nursing School - LOVE it or HATE it? <https://youtu.be/KgVAI-WaPZQ>



Discussion – Have you/will you use the flipped classroom approach?

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Format

16



**Faculty Professional Development
for Student Success Series
Session 4: Class Format**

**Please complete your evaluation form and turn it in to the
moderator.**

Thank you!

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series**Session 4: Class Format****Evaluation****1. Were the session objectives met?**

Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of:

- Student perceptions of class format
- Descriptions of class formats
- Class formats to support student success

2. Do you believe this session will help with you/your school meeting the goals:

Attendees will incorporate knowledge gained from this session into their practice to create change to improve student success

- Yes No

Student graduation rate will increase

- Yes No

3. How would you rate your overall experience in participating in this session?

(1 = the least satisfied, 5 = most satisfied)

- 1 2 3 4 5

4. What are your key takeaways / how will you use the information that was shared today?

Name (optional): _____

Date of session: _____

Session 5. Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Pace

- 8:00 – 8:30 a.m. **Welcome, Background, and Study Results (slides 1-9)**
Attendees will receive handout materials which will include a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, handout for the interactive exercise, and session evaluation form. Welcome will include the objectives and goals for the session.
- 8:30 – 9:45 a.m. **Accelerated Learning (slides 10-12)**
Video: 4 Steps to Accelerate Learning
<https://youtu.be/Sq1-Wk1nvjc>
Video: The Real Secret Behind Every "Accelerated Learning" Expert
https://youtu.be/du_-Tae042g
Video: The first 20 hours -- how to learn anything | Josh Kaufman | TEDxCSU <https://youtu.be/5MgBikgcWnY>
Discussion – what are your experiences as an accelerated learner
- 9:45 – 10:00 a.m. **Supporting Student Success in Accelerated Learning Environments (slides 13-14)**
Presentation will include a description of class pace.
- 10:00 – 10:30 a.m. **Interactive Exercise (Handout) (slide15)**
Attendees will participate in an interactive exercise concerning accelerated learning.
- 10:30 – 11:00 a.m. **Discussion about Exercise**
- 11:00 – 11:50 a.m. **Talk about fast– paced. Nick Fuhrman describes how you can change a life in 45 minutes...**
Video: The One Thing All Great Teachers Do | Nick Fuhrman | TEDxUGA <https://youtu.be/WwTpfVQgkU0>
Discussion: Talk about how you apply, or can apply, these techniques in your classroom
- 11:50 – 12:00 noon **Evaluation**
Attendees will complete a brief evaluation about today's session.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series

Session 5: Class Pace

Welcome

- Agenda review
- Objectives
 - Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of:
 - Student perceptions of class pace
 - Tactics to support student success in accelerated programs
- Goals
 - Attendees will incorporate knowledge gained from this session into their practice to create change to improve student success
 - Student graduation rate will increase

Background

Problem

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, referred to as RCC, were graduating at a rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education.

Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Pace

3

Background

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational and dispositional supports and barriers they face toward graduation.

The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over 6 monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Pace

4

Background

- You are attending this session because:
 - RCC is your school
 - The research study revealed that changes need to be made to classroom experiences to support student success

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Pace

5

Study Results

The theme that emerged from the data analysis for this study was classroom experiences.

Data analysis revealed 5 classroom experiences subthemes:

- Teacher engagement
- Class organization (and student organizational skills)
- Class format
- **Class pace**
- Student workload
- workload, pace, teacher engagement, class format, and class organization, are barriers to student success and that there is a need for change.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Pace

6

Study Results

Along with the **classroom experiences** theme and the 5 subthemes, participants identified that there is a need for change to support student success.

This professional development series is designed to support that change.

Class Pace

Session 5 of 6

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Pace

Class Pace

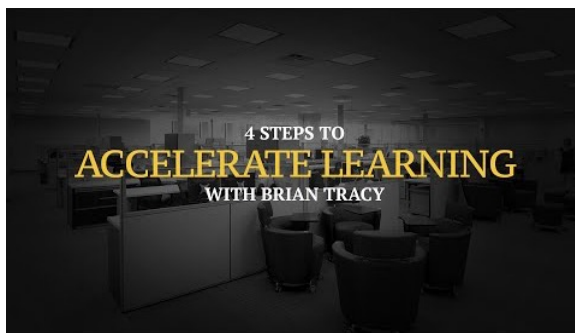
Perceptions / study results – student responses

- “I wish we spend more time on topics instead of rushing through because we “ have stuff to get done”. Sometimes it feels like I’m teaching myself a great deal because we have so much to get through.”
- “It’s stressful because we learn a new chapter everyday and I feel its really fast pace, hard to take it all in.”
- “More time (should be) spent on a topic to help us better understand the concept.”

Class Pace

4 Steps to Accelerate Learning

<https://youtu.be/Sq1-Wk1nyjc>





The Real Secret Behind Every "Accelerated Learning" Expert

https://youtu.be/du_-Taeo42g



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Pace

11



The first 20 hours -- how to learn anything | Josh Kaufman | TEDxCSU

<https://youtu.be/5MgBikgcWnY>



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Pace

12

Class Pace

Teachers support student success in fast-paced learning environments by:

- Incorporating personalized learning styles into the classroom
- Including a variety of visual and audio media into the classroom

Radler, D., & Bocianu, I. (2017). Accelerated teaching and learning: Roles and challenges for learners and tutors. *ELearning & Software for Education*, 2, 601–608. doi:10.12753/2066-026X-17-170

Class Pace

Teachers support student success in fast-paced learning environments by:

- Flipping the classroom
- Including hands-on learning and videos

Barral, A. M., Ardi-Pastores, V. C., & Simmons, R. E. (2018). Student learning in an accelerated introductory biology course is significantly enhanced by a flipped-learning environment. *CBE - Life Sciences Education*, 17(3). doi:10.1187/cbe.17-07-0129

Class Pace

Break up into small groups to participate in the interactive exercise
(see handout)

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Pace

15

Class Pace

Talk about fast-paced. Nick Fuhrman describes how you can change a life in 45 minutes...

The One Thing All Great Teachers Do | Nick Fuhrman | TEDxUGA

<https://youtu.be/WwTpfVQgkUo>



Discussion: Talk about how you apply, or can apply, these techniques in your classroom

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Class Pace

16



Evaluation

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series Session 4: Class Format

Please complete your evaluation form and turn it in to the moderator.

Thank you!

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series**Session 5: Class Pace****Interactive Exercise**

- 1) Select a course in the curriculum that you believe students struggle with due to the fast pace
 - a. Determine what techniques you will use to support student success

- 2) Now think of a time where students perceive the pace as too fast where you could actually slow the pace down?
 - a. What would you do to slow the pace, or change the students' perceptions that the pace is too fast?

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series**Session 5: Class Pace****Evaluation****1. Were the session objectives met?**

Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of:

- Student perceptions of class pace
- Tactics to support student success in accelerated programs

2. Do you believe this session will help with you/your school meeting the goals:

Attendees will incorporate knowledge gained from this session into their practice to create change to improve student success

- Yes
- No

Student graduation rate will increase

- Yes
- No

3. How would you rate your overall experience in participating in this session?

(1 = the least satisfied, 5 = most satisfied)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

4. What are your key takeaways / how will you use the information that was shared today?

Name (optional): _____

Date of session: _____

**Session 6. Faculty Professional Development for Student Success:
Student Workload**

- 8:00 – 8:30 a.m. **Welcome, Background, and Study Results (slides 1-9)**
Attendees will receive handout materials which will include a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, handout for the interactive exercise, and session evaluation form. Welcome will include the objectives and goals for the session.
- 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. **Nursing Student Perspectives (slides 10-11)**
Videos:
1) **Things Nursing Students Say**
<https://youtu.be/6S59PBZw1qE>
2) **How to Survive Nursing School with a Family | Nursing Student Tips Vlog | Alyssa All Day**
<https://youtu.be/CrYs4IPeNmM>
Discussion: What are you hearing about workload from your students? How are you supporting them?
- 9:30 – 10:00 a.m. **Workload and Student Success (slides 12-14)**
- 10:00 – 10:30 a.m. **Interactive Exercise (Handout) (slide 15)**
Attendees will participate in an interactive exercise concerning student workload.
- 10:30 – 11:00 a.m. **Discussion about Exercise**
- 11:00 – 11:30 a.m. **Understanding ~~time-management~~ self-management (slide 16)**
Video: How To Multiply Your Time | Rory Vaden | TEDxDouglasville
<https://youtu.be/y2X7c9TUQJ8>
Discussion: How can you use this information to help your students manage workload?
- 11:30 – 11:50 a.m. **Discussion**
Open discussion, respond to questions, and provide feedback about student workload and how attendees might change their practice.
- 11:50 – 12:00 noon **Evaluation**
Attendees will complete a brief evaluation about today's session.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series

Session 6: Workload

Welcome

- Agenda review
- Objectives
 - Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of:
 - Student perceptions of workload
 - Tactics to support student success with workload
- Goals
 - Attendees will incorporate knowledge gained from this session into their practice to create change to improve student success
 - Student graduation rate will increase

Background

Problem

The problem this study explored was that practical nursing program students at a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States, referred to as RCC, were graduating at a rate that was putting the school at risk to not meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Occupational Education.

Although administrators and faculty members at RCC changed admission guidelines for the practical nursing program in 2017 to improve retention and graduation rates, students were still graduating at a rate that put the school at risk of falling short of the benchmark for accreditation.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Workload

3

Background

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of practical nursing program students and faculty at RCC about institutional, situational and dispositional supports and barriers they face toward graduation.

The information gained through this study was used to create a 3-day professional development series taking place over 6 monthly 4-hour sessions that educators at RCC could implement to support improvement of the practical nursing program's graduation rate and reduce the risk of losing accreditation.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Workload

4

Background

- You are attending this session because:
 - RCC is your school
 - The research study revealed that changes need to be made to classroom experiences to support student success

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Workload

5

Study Results

The theme that emerged from the data analysis for this study was classroom experiences.

Data analysis revealed 5 classroom experiences subthemes:

- Teacher engagement
- Class organization (and student organizational skills)
- Class format
- Class pace
- **Student workload**
- workload, pace, teacher engagement, class format, and class organization, are barriers to student success and that there is a need for change.

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Workload

6

Study Results

Along with the **classroom experiences** theme and the 5 subthemes, participants identified that there is a need for change to support student success.

This professional development series is designed to support that change.

Workload

Session 6 of 6

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Workload

Workload

Perceptions / study results – student responses

- “Too much going on during the day and not enough time in the evenings to get assignments done so I have to stay up late.”
- “Some days, especially during Pharmacology, the homework load is insanely large.”
- “Less homework, more together work.”
- “All of the work is a lot of stress.”

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Workload

9

Workload

Things Nursing Students Say

<https://youtu.be/6S5gPBZw1qE>



Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Workload

10

Workload

How to Survive Nursing School with a Family |
Nursing Student Tips Vlog | Alyssa All Day

<https://youtu.be/CrYs4lPeNmM>



Discussion: What are you hearing about workload from your students? How are you supporting them?

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Workload

11

Workload

- Nursing students can benefit from understanding their study habits
- Helping students develop self-regulated learning skills can help them keep up with the class/workload

Reinke, N. B. (2018). The impact of timetable changes on student achievement and learning experiences. *Nurse Education Today*, 62, 137–142. doi:10.1016/j.nedt.2017.12.015

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Workload

12

Workload

Students are more likely to be able to keep up with the workload if...

- They maintain classwork assessment logs
- They receive weekly reminders from their teachers to complete the log

Sherr, G., Akkaraju, S., & Atamturktur, S. (2019). Nudging students to succeed in a flipped format gateway biology course. *Journal of Effective Teaching in Higher Education*, 2(2), 57–69. Retrieved from <https://jeth.e.org/index.php/jethe>

Workload

- A top stressor for nursing students is homework load
- Teachers need to be aware of what homework load aspects are causing stress for their students AND use the information to find solutions

Karaca, A., Yildirim, N., Ankarali, H., Açikgöz, F., & Akkuş, D. (2017). Nursing students' perceived levels of clinical stress, stress responses and coping behaviors. *Journal of Psychiatric Nursing / Psikiyatri Hemşireleri Dergisi*, 8(1), 32–39. doi:10.14744/phd.2017.22590

Workload

Break up into small groups to participate in the interactive exercise
(see handout)

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Workload

15

Workload

How To Multiply Your Time | Rory Vaden | TEDxDouglasville

<https://youtu.be/y2X7c9TUQJ8>



Discussion: How can you use this information to help your students manage workload?

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success: Workload

16



Evaluation

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series Session 4: Class Format

Please complete your evaluation form and turn it in to the
moderator.

Thank you!

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series**Session 6: Workload****Interactive Exercise**

- 1) Select a course in the curriculum that you believe students struggle with due to the workload
 - a. Determine what techniques you will use to support student success

- 2) Now think of a time where students perceive the workload to be too heavy pace where you believe the load should be manageable.
 - a. What would you do to understand your student's perceptions about the workload so that you could either make changes to the workload or change the students' perceptions that the workload is too heavy?

Faculty Professional Development for Student Success Series**Session 6: Workload****Evaluation****1. Were the session objectives met?**

Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of:

- Student perceptions of workload
- Tactics to support student success with workload

2. Do you believe this session will help with you/your school meeting the goals:

Attendees will incorporate knowledge gained from this session into their practice to create change to improve student success

- Yes No

Student graduation rate will increase

- Yes No

3. How would you rate your overall experience in participating in this session?

(1 = the least satisfied, 5 = most satisfied)

- 1 2 3 4 5

4. What are your key takeaways / how will you use the information that was shared today?

Name (optional): _____

Date of session: _____

Appendix B: Student Survey

Rural Practical Nursing Students' and Faculty Members' Perceptions of Supports and Barriers to Success –Student Survey

Welcome!

You are invited to take part in a research survey of students of a practical nursing program regarding perceptions of supports and barriers to student success. You were chosen for the survey because you are a current or former student of a practical nursing program at a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States.

If you have not done so already, please read the consent form that was attached to the invitation you received to participate in the survey, type in your signature and email it to: Amy Randall-McSorley at XXXXXX@XXXXXX

Please also email Amy with any questions you have before agreeing to be part of the survey. Amy is conducting this research as a doctoral student at Walden University.

* 1. I have read the consent form that was attached to the invitation to participate in this study. I agree to participate in the study and have typed my name into the consent form and emailed it to: amy.randall-mcsorley@waldenu.edu.

Yes No

* 2. Are you a current, or a former, student of the practical nursing program at the vocational school?

- I am a current student of the practical nursing program
- I am a former student of the practical nursing program
- I prefer not to answer this question

* 3. If you are a former student of the practical nursing program, did you graduate?

- I graduated from the program
- I did not graduate from the program
- I prefer to not answer this question

4. There are many different **situational factors** that can **support student success**. These are factors in an individual's life. Situational factors include those that are listed below. As you look over the types of situational factors in this list, what, if anything, do you perceive are, or were, supports, to your success in the practical nursing program? Check all that apply.

Access to technology
 Finances
 Nutrition
 Responsibilities
 Physical environment
 Sleep habits
 Support system
 Transportation
 NA / Not Applicable
 Other (please specify)

5. Please tell me a little more about your answer(s) to question 4. The more information you can provide, the better I can understand your experiences.

6. What changes to the supports you described in questions #4 and #5 do you think could be made to help improve student success?

7. Just as there are many different situational factors in an individual's life that can support student success, **situational factors** can also be **barriers** to success. As you look over the types of situational factors in the list, what, if anything, do you perceive are, or were, barriers, to your success in the practical nursing program? Check all that apply.

Access to technology
 Finances
 Nutrition
 Responsibilities
 Physical environment
 Sleep habits
 Support system
 Transportation
 NA / Not Applicable
 Other (please specify)

8. Please tell me a little more about your answer(s) to question 7. The more information you can provide, the better I can understand your experiences.

9. What changes to the barriers you described in questions #7 and #8 do you think could be made to help improve student success?

10. There are many different **institutional factors** that can **support student success**. Institutional factors include processes and procedures of the school. Institutional factors include those that are listed below. As you look over the types of institutional factors in this list, what, if anything, do you perceive are, or were, supports, to your success in the practical nursing program? Check all that apply.

Class schedule Class size
 Class topics
 Class experiences
 Homework load
 NA / Not Applicable
 Other (please specify)

11. Please tell me a little more about your answer(s) to question 10. The more information you can provide, the better I can understand your experiences.

12. What changes to the supports you described in questions #10 and #11 do you think could be made to help improve student success?

13. Just as there are many different institutional factors that can support student success, **institutional factors** can also be **barriers** to student success. As you look over the types of institutional factors in this list, what, if anything, do you perceive are, or were, barriers, to your success in the practical nursing program? Check all that apply.

Class schedule
 Class size
 Class topics
 Class experiences
 Homework load
 NA / Not Applicable
 Other (please specify)

14. Please tell me a little more about your answer(s) to question 13. The more information you can provide, the better I can understand your experiences.

15. What changes to the barriers you described in questions #13 and #14 do you think could be made to help improve student success?

16. There are many different **dispositional factors** that can **support student success**. Dispositional factors include an individual's attitudes and perceptions. A list of some dispositional factors is listed below. As you look over the types of dispositional factors in this list, what, if anything, do you perceive are, or were, supports, to your success in the practical nursing program? Check all that apply.

Organizational skills
 Study habits
 Stress or anxiety
 Self perceptions
 NA / Not Applicable
 Other (please specify)

17. Please tell me a little more about your answer(s) to question 16. The more information you can provide, the better I can understand your experiences.

18. What changes to the supports you described in questions #16 and #17 do you think could be made to help improve student success?

19. Just as many different **dispositional factors** can support student success, dispositional factors can also be **barriers** to student success. As mentioned in question #16, dispositional factors include an individual's attitudes and perceptions. As you look over the types of dispositional factors in the list below, what, if anything, do you perceive are, or were, barriers, to your success in the practical nursing program? Check all that apply.

Organizational skills
 Study habits
 Stress or anxiety
 Self perceptions
 NA / Not Applicable
 Other (please specify)

20. Please tell me a little more about your answer(s) to question 19. The more information you can provide, the better I can understand your experiences.

21. What changes to the barriers you described in questions #19 and #20 do you think could be made to help improve student success?

22. If there is anything else you would like to share about your experiences and perceptions regarding supports and barriers to students successfully graduating from the practical nursing program at the vocational school, please share your thoughts here.

Appendix C: Faculty Survey

Rural Practical Nursing Students' and Faculty Members' Perceptions of Supports and Barriers to Success –Faculty Survey

Welcome!

You are invited to take part in a research survey of students of a practical nursing program regarding perceptions of supports and barriers to student success. You were chosen for the survey because you are a current or former faculty of the practical nursing program at a rural vocational school in the midwestern United States.

If you have not done so already, please read the consent form that was attached to the invitation you received to participate in the survey, type in your signature and email it to: Amy Randall-McSorley at XXXXXX@XXXXXX

Please also email Amy with any questions you have before agreeing to be part of the survey. Amy is conducting this research as a doctoral student at Walden University.

* 1. I have read the consent form that was attached to the invitation to participate in this study. I agree to participate in the study and have typed my name into the consent form and emailed it to: amy.randall-mcsorley@waldenu.edu.

Yes No

* 2. What is your relationship to the vocational school?

I am a current faculty member
I am a former faculty member
I prefer not to answer this question

* 3. About how many years have you been, or were you, a faculty member at the school?

Less than 1 year
At least 1 year but less than 3 years
At least 3 years but less than 5 years
At least 5 years but less than 10 years
10 years or more

4. There are many different **situational factors** that can **support student success**. These are factors in an individual's life. Situational factors include those that are listed below. As you look over the types of situational factors in this list, what, if anything, do you perceive are, or were, supports, to student success in the practical nursing program? Check all that apply.

Access to technology
Finances
Nutrition
Responsibilities
Physical environment
Sleep habits
Support system
Transportation
NA / Not Applicable
Other (please specify)

5. Please tell me a little more about your answer(s) to question 4. The more information you can provide, the better I can understand your experiences.

6. What changes to the supports you described in questions #4 and #5 do you think could be made to help improve student success?

7. Just as there are many different situational factors in an individual's life that can support student success, **situational factors** can also be **barriers** to success. As you look over the types of situational factors in the list, what, if anything, do you perceive are, or were, barriers, to student success in the practical nursing program? Check all that apply.

Access to technology
 Finances
 Nutrition
 Responsibilities
 Physical environment
 Sleep habits
 Support system
 Transportation
 NA / Not Applicable
 Other (please specify)

8. Please tell me a little more about your answer(s) to question 7. The more information you can provide, the better I can understand your experiences.

9. What changes to the barriers you described in questions #7 and #8 do you think could be made to help improve student success?

10. There are many different **institutional factors** that can **support student success**. Institutional factors include processes and procedures of the school. Institutional factors include those that are listed below. As you look over the types of institutional factors in this list, what, if anything, do you perceive are, or were, supports, to student success in the practical nursing program? Check all that apply.

Class schedule Class size
 Class topics
 Class experiences
 Homework load
 NA / Not Applicable
 Other (please specify)

11. Please tell me a little more about your answer(s) to question 10. The more information you can provide, the better I can understand your experiences.

12. What changes to the supports you described in questions #10 and #11 do you think could be made to help improve student success?

13. Just as there are many different institutional factors that can support student success, **institutional factors** can also be **barriers** to student success. As you look over the types of institutional factors in this list, what, if anything, do you perceive are, or were, barriers, to student success in the practical nursing program? Check all that apply.

Class schedule
 Class size
 Class topics
 Class experiences
 Homework load
 NA / Not Applicable
 Other (please specify)

14. Please tell me a little more about your answer(s) to question 13. The more information you can provide, the better I can understand your experiences.

15. What changes to the barriers you described in questions #13 and #14 do you think could be made to help improve student success?

16. There are many different **dispositional factors** that can **support student success**. Dispositional factors include an individual's attitudes and perceptions. A list of some dispositional factors is listed below. As you look over the types of dispositional factors in this list, what, if anything, do you perceive are, or were, supports, to student success in the practical nursing program? Check all that apply.

Organizational skills
Study habits
Stress or anxiety
Self perceptions
NA / Not Applicable
Other (please specify)

17. Please tell me a little more about your answer(s) to question 16. The more information you can provide, the better I can understand your experiences.

18. What changes to the supports you described in questions #16 and #17 do you think could be made to help improve student success?

19. Just as many different **dispositional factors** can support student success, dispositional factors can also be **barriers** to student success. As mentioned in question #16, dispositional factors include an individual's attitudes and perceptions. As you look over the types of dispositional factors in the list below, what, if anything, do you perceive are, or were, barriers, to student success in the practical nursing program? Check all that apply.

Organizational skills
Study habits
Stress or anxiety
Self perceptions
NA / Not Applicable
Other (please specify)

20. Please tell me a little more about your answer(s) to question 19. The more information you can provide, the better I can understand your experiences.

21. What changes to the barriers you described in questions #19 and #20 do you think could be made to help improve student success?

22. If there is anything else you would like to share about your experiences and perceptions regarding supports and barriers to students successfully graduating from the practical nursing program at the vocational school, please share your thoughts here.