University of Northern Iowa

UNI ScholarWorks

Graduate Research Papers   **Student Work**

1988

Stressors identified by RN/BSN adult learners returning to college to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing

Dorothy Nahnsen
University of Northern Iowa

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Recommended Citation

Stressors identified by RN/BSN adult learners returning to college to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing

Abstract

The current controversy over the type of formal education needed by registered nurses has resulted in an influx of associate-degree and diploma-prepared nurses into baccalaureate nursing programs. This study presented the results of a survey used to identify stressors that RN/BSN adult learners encountered when returning to school to earn a baccalaureate degree. The respondents included 60 registered nurses from both associate degree and diploma programs who had either graduated or were currently enrolled in a BSN completion program at a small private mid-western college. The results of the survey substantiated the presence of stressors during the educational experience but that these stressors were not sufficient enough to adversely affect the students completion of the program.

STRESSORS IDENTIFIED BY RN/BSN ADULT LEARNERS
RETURNING TO COLLEGE TO OBTAIN A
BACCALAUREATE DEGREE IN NURSING

A Research Paper

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of the University of Northern Iowa

by

Dorothy Nahnsen

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts/Educational Psychology

July, 1988

This Research Paper by: Dorothy Nahnsen

Entitled: STRESSORS IDENTIFIED BY RN/BSN ADULT LEARNERS RETURNING TO
            COLLEGE TO OBTAIN A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE IN NURSING

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the

Degree of Master of Arts in Education: General Educational Psychology.

Director of Research Paper
Charles Dedrick

Co-Reader of Research Paper
Key Lee

Graduate Faculty Advisor
Charles Dedrick

Head, Department of Educational
      Psychology & Foundations
Larry L. Kavich

July 26, 1988
Date Approved

Abstract

The current controversy over the type of formal
education needed by registered nurses has resulted in
an influx of associate-degree and diploma-prepared
nurses into baccalaureate nursing programs. This study
presented the results of a survey used to identify
stressors that RN/BSN adult learners encountered when
returning to school to earn a baccalaureate degree.
The respondents included 60 registered nurses from both
associate degree and diploma programs who had either
graduated or were currently enrolled in a BSN
completion program at a small private mid-western
college. The results of the survey substantiated the
presence of stressors during the educational experience
but that these stressors were not sufficient enough to
adversely affect the students completion of the
program.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

The nursing profession has been in considerable
turmoil for some time regarding the type of formal
educational preparation necessary for nurses. A
discrepancy exists between the stated ideals of nursing
leadership and the reality of its membership (Baj,
1986, Borst & Walker (1986). According to the American
Nurses Association (1981), of the 958,308 registered
nurses working in nursing, 722,861 (75.4%) had less
than a baccalaureate degree as their highest academic
credential. Trends indicate that by the year 2000,
there will be about one-half as many nurses, a
deficiency of 619,000, prepared at the baccalaureate
and graduate levels (Styles & Holzemer, 1986).
According to projections by the Division of Nursing,
Department of Health and Human Services, Iowa alone
will need 13,900 baccalaureate-prepared nurses. As of
December 1986, there were only 5,785 such nurses in
Iowa (Iowa Board of Nursing, 1986).

Because of this need, many associate degree and
diploma-prepared nurses are feeling the pressure from
their associates and employers to return to college for
additional study. This push for the baccalaureate

degree for registered nurses is also precipitated by the current "entry into practice" controversy facing nursing today. In 1978 the ANA passed a resolution on entry into practice that mandated that there be two categories of nursing by 1985. The resolution called for baccalaureate preparation for the professional nurse and associate degree or the equivalent preparation for the technical nurse. This mandate has resulted in an increased demand for registered nurses from two- and three-year programs to continue their professional education at the baccalaureate level. In 1984, it was estimated that between 50-71% of ADN graduates intended to continue their education toward the baccalaureate degree (Lawler & Rose, 1987). Other factors contributing to this pressure include misinformation and confusion over who needs a baccalaureate degree, what type of degree is needed and by what date this degree should be completed.

Between 1960 and 1986 the number of employed registered nurses rose from 50% of those licensed to 80% (Link, 1987). In 1984, data indicated that 79% of nurses with children aged six and under still participated in the labor market. Of the nurses with children over six, 86% were in the labor market. It

has been projected that young women will stay in the
labor force continuously which is a change from twenty
years ago (Styles & Holzemer, 1986; Link, 1987).
Adelstein (1983) found that reentry women made up more
than two-thirds of the adult-student population in
post-secondary education. This has potentially far-
reaching effects on the educational endeavors of
registered nurses today.

Despite the various types of educational programs
and nontraditional instructional methods available,
registered nurses who want to attain a baccalaureate
degree in nursing must overcome many obstacles. These
obstacles arise from a variety of factors causing
considerable distress and frustration. The opportunity
to work toward a BSN is often inaccessible for many
reasons; (a) lack of time and money; (b) too little
credit for past study and experience; (c) residency
requirements; (d) no baccalaureate programs within
commuting distance; (e) difficult challenge exams that
test didactic more than clinical expertise; (f)
suspending a career in mid-course; (g) foregoing
income; (h) uprooting family to move closer to school
and (i) continuation of part- or full-time employment
while attending school (Norris, 1980; Lange, 1986;

McGrath & Bacon, 1979; Zusy, 1986; Bardossi, 1980; Hibbert, 1986; King, 1986; Dustan, 1981; Wu, 1978; Gross & Bevil, 1981; Alward & Swanson, 1980). These obstacles or stressors of RN/BSN adult learners must be recognized and dealt with to facilitate their completion of the requirements for a baccalaureate degree.

Problem

This study sought to identify stressors encountered by RN/BSN adult learners returning to college to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing. A questionnaire was used to identify those stressors.

Purpose of the Study

Nursing is pushing toward baccalaureate preparation as the minimum level for professional practice. As a result, there have been increased numbers of registered nurses, both associate and diploma graduates, returning to school to become "professional" by obtaining a baccalaureate degree in nursing. More empirical evidence is needed regarding the stressors that may be encountered by these registered nurses returning to school. This study examines the stressors faced by students either

previously or currently enrolled in a BSN completion program using the two-plus-two approach.

Research Questions

From the statement of the problem, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the RN/BSN adult learner returning to college to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing?

2. What are the primary motivational factors that influenced the RN/BSN adult learners' entry into the BSN completion program?

3. What stressors did or does the RN/BSN learner encounter while attending the BSN completion program?

Definition of Terms

For clarification, the terms were defined in this study as follows:

Adult learners - persons, primarily women, over the age of 25 years returning to college to complete their education and who have significant work experience (Merritt, 1983). Adults who have assumed the social

roles associated with adulthood and perceive themselves as being responsible for the conduct of their lives (Knowles, 1980).

Androgogy - the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1980).

Associate degree-prepared nurse - a registered nurse who has graduated from a two-year junior or community college nursing program.

BSN - Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Diploma-prepared nurse - a registered nurse who has graduated from a three-year hospital school of nursing.

Entry into practice - The American Nurses Association recommendation that "The baccalaureate in nursing be the minimum educational qualification for the practitioner in professional nursing practice" (ANA, 1978).

Generic baccalaureate student - a student who has enrolled in a four-year college or university with the intent to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing.

Reentry women - women who are entering post-secondary education after a varied period of time away from the school setting; identified also in this paper as the RN/BSN adult learner.

RN - Registered nurse

RN/BSN adult learner - A licensed professional nurse
who has enrolled in a baccalaureate nursing program
with junior standing.

Stress - an adaptive response that is a consequence of
any external action, situation or event that places
special physical and/or psychological demands upon the
person. The internal response to a disruptive external
agent which is the stressor (Kushnir, 1986). The
transactional event in which the perceived external or
internal demands on the individual tax his or her
physiological, psychological, or social resources (Baj,
1986).

Stressor - those internal or external factors that
trigger stress in the individual and place a demand
upon the individual for change, adaptation or
readjustment (Sutterly, 1979). Demands to which there
are readily available or automatic responses. Demands
may be physical, social, or psychological. A
disruptive external agent (Kushnir, 1986).

Two-plus-two approach - a program in which registered
nurses enroll in a college or university with junior
standing and complete a minimum of two years of upper-
division nursing classes to achieve a baccalaureate in
nursing (Ellis & Hartley, 1986).

Limitations of Study

The study was undertaken with the following limitations:

1. Only 60 subjects participated in the study. This limited population may restrict generalization of the findings.

2. The study involved 60 female registered nurses enrolled or who have graduated from BSN completion program, started in 1984, utilizing a two-plus-two format.

3. All participants were female.

4. The questionnaire tends to measure the instantaneous responses of the individual rather than the many responses of single individuals over a period of time.

5. The instrument tends to freeze the respondent at one point in time and assumes that the moment is representative of the respondent's condition at other times.

Method

A twenty-five item questionnaire was sent to graduates and current students enrolled in a BSN completion program using the two-plus-two approach at a

small mid-western liberal arts college. All students
were registered nurses from either an associate degree
or diploma program and held a current Iowa license
during their enrollment.

Summary

There are several studies available regarding
perceived stressors registered nurses identified as
factors in their decision whether to return to school
to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing. However,
there are few research studies to determine the actual
stressors encountered by the RN/BSN adult learner and
how they affected their completion of the program.
This study is being conducted to identify those
stressors.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The review of literature will focus on studies related to the needs and characteristics of adult learners and implications for registered nurses returning to college to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing. Research on the primary motivational factors that influence the RN/BSN adult learners will then be explored.

Introduction

There has been an increase in the number of registered nurses desiring to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing. With this increased demand, programs have been started or changes have been made within existing programs to accommodate these students. Some of the changes include the development of the two-plus-two approach, the external degree program, the adjustment of class schedules, special classes, workshops, orientation sessions, counseling services and support groups (King, 1986; Borst & Walker, 1986; Parlocha & Hiraki, 1982; Lynch, Doyle & Chickering, 1985; Gross & Bevil, 1981).

The American Nurses Association has supported the idea that the multiple educational pathways to one licensure to practice professional nursing be replaced by two levels of nursing practice; a professional level and a technical level (ANA, 1978; ANA, 1982). In 1982, the House of Delegates of the American Nurses Association urged state nurses associations to establish the baccalaureate degree with a major in nursing as the minimal educational requirement for licensure to practice professional nursing. As of June 1985, 50 of the 53 constituent state nurses associations had adopted this platform. Because of this, many associate degree and diploma-prepared nurses have returned or will be returning to college to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing. To help in this transition, 170 "RN to BSN" programs were available in the United States as of 1985 and this number is growing (Zusy, 1986).

Characteristics and needs of adult learners

Educators are discovering that the educational needs of the RN/BSN adult learners are not the same as those of generic baccalaureate students. These learners come to the baccalaureate completion programs

with needs and priorities which differ widely from the
students enrolled in the generic programs. They often
have significant professional nursing work experience
and have experienced a variety of adult social roles.
These roles are concurrent with the baccalaureate
student role of wage earner, parent, and spouse
(Dustan, 1981; Parlacha & Hiraki, 1982; Wooley, 1973;
Merritt, 1981). These RN/BSN adult learners are
representative of a variety of settings within the
hospital and in other types of health care agencies.
They work at both staff and middle management positions
and bring with them a cross-section of skills related
to divergent areas and types of nursing practice.

In the transition to the role of a student at a
university setting, it is not uncommon for RN/BSN adult
learners to experience "academic shock." They find the
experience to be quite different from what they had
expected, and have many misconceptions about what it
would be like. They generally perceive themselves as
quite competent in their nursing practice. Often they
are puzzled and angry about why there should be any
need for further education. They sense that going back
to school is the "thing to do" and come with a vague
sense that there must be answers somewhere. Although

they come filled with apprehension and bewilderment,
they are motivated by a desire to grow, feeling that
"there must be something more to life as a woman and
also a nurse" (Smullen, 1982, p. 370). Family
responsibilities and work consideration may interfere
with school commitments and schedules resulting in less
time and energy available for school activities. These
registered nurses fit the descriptive category of adult
learners and may require different approaches to
learning.

Knowles, as cited by Davenport & Davenport (1985),
has used the term androgogy to define a method of
helping adults learn. The assumptions about registered
nurses reentering the educational system are consistent
with the four assumptions about the characteristics of
adult learners. These are:

1. As a person matures, the self-concept moves
   from dependency toward self-direction.

2. Maturity brings an accumulating reservoir of
   experience that becomes an increasing
   resource for learning.

3. As the person matures, readiness to learn is
   increasingly oriented towards the person's
   social roles.

4.   As the person matures, the orientation
      towards learning becomes less subject-
      centered and increasingly problem-centered.
      (p. 6).

Utilizing these assumptions in planning the
learning environment for adult learners, it is obvious
that adult learners need some control over the
direction of their learning. This would foster the
growth potential of the learner and also encourage each
to take a greater responsibility for their learning.
Based on these assumptions, in 1971 the National League
of Nursing recommended that in baccalaureate programs,
the learning experiences be sufficiently flexible
enough to permit students to develop in accordance with
their individual talents and needs (Zusy, 1986).

     Zemke (1981) and Perry (1986) found other
characteristics of adult learners that are significant
for the returning registered nurse. First of all,
adult learners cannot be threatened, coerced, or
tricked into learning something new, that is, they
cannot be forced to learn. Curricular design that
emphasizes single-concept, single-theory courses that
focus heavily on the application of the concepts to
relevant problems is preferred. Self-learning modules

are also beneficial. It is important for adult learners to be able to integrate new ideas with what they already know if they are going to keep and use the new information learned. However, if the information conflicts sharply with what is already held to be true, it forces a re-evaluation of the old material and therefore is integrated more slowly.

Fast-paced, complex or unusual learning tasks interfere with the learning of the concept being taught or illustrated. It is important to remember that older students may require more time to study, but their ability to process information has not decreased. They tend to compensate for being slower in some psychomotor learning tasks by being more accurate and making fewer trial-and-error ventures.

Adult learners tend to take errors personally and are more likely to let these errors affect their self-esteem. As a result, they tend to apply tried-and-true solutions rather then take risks. Feedback is often misinterpreted and mistake errors for positive confirmation (Zemke, 1981).

RN/BSN adult learners enter the classroom with a very blurred image of their identity and role as nurses. They are acutely aware that nursing is

changing fast. They realize that their roles are no longer as confining as they were when they completed their primary education. Because of this, they tend to be interested in specific areas of knowledge or practice rather than general entry level roles. This perception may markedly differ from that of nursing educators.

Higher educational levels can be achieved by building on lower level studies. New theoretical formulations need to be presented early in the framework of the course. A problem-centered format will allow the RN/BSN adult learners to apply some of the theories in their own practice and later in the classroom. For RN/BSN adult learners prior knowledge and patterns of thought may either augment or interfere with new learning. Prior knowledge, when constant with new information is a strong enhancer of the learning process. However, when prior knowledge is embedded in a system of thinking that conflicts with the new theoretical framework, RN/BSN adult learners may have to reject the previous learning in order to incorporate new nursing theory into their thinking pattern.

RN/BSN adult learners differ from generic students in that they are usually older, more mature, committed,

self-directed and come with varied competencies and
expectations (Neuman & Wyatt, 1981). This variation in
age and life stage may effect learning. Education,
socialization and ongoing professionalism of those
RN/BSN adult learners, whether they are recent
graduates or have several years of experience, is very
important in the establishment of the new role
behavior. When RN/BSN adult learners work together
there is a growing sense of both common purpose and
shared identity; ages and educational backgrounds
become irrelevant as a collegial group of nurses work
together to solve client problems. One of the most
important changes that RN/BSN adult learners perceive
in themselves is a broadening of their horizons and of
their perception of themselves as professionals
(Smullen, 1981).

McCloskey (1983) found that ADN nurses who
obtained a baccalaureate degree were rated higher than
either generic baccalaureate graduates or ADN graduates
in nursing practice. In a study by Lawler and Rose
(1987), ADN graduates who obtained a baccalaureate
degree were a more professional product than either the
generic baccalaureate student or the ADN graduate as
determined by Stone's Health Care Professional Attitude

Inventory. Hunter (1988) found a dual role orientation
of high professional/high bureaucratic role for the ADN
baccalaureate graduate. Finally, different career
goals and aspirations complete the picture of the
RN/BSN adult learners as unique baccalaureate
candidates.

Motivational factors of RN/BSN adult learners

Literature suggests that the process of self-
actualization as advanced by Maslow is the primary
motivating factor for the return of RN students to BSN
programs. They may be seeking expression for greater
social consciousness, growing altruism, concern with
self, coping with inner needs with the integration of
behavior and self-fulfillment (Ingles, 1971; Baj, 1986;
Muzio & Ohashi, 1979). RN/BSN adult learners are also
motivated by the possible legislative mandating of
baccalaureate education (Smullen, 1982; Hale & Boyd,
1981; Primm, 1986; Dustan, 1981; McGrath & Bacon, 1979;
Neuman & Wyatt, 1981; Muzio & Ohashi, 1979; Bardossi,
1980).

In a survey of RN's in the general population by
RN magazine,(Bardossi, 1980) 57% of the 335 respondents
indicated they were interested in obtaining a

baccalaureate degree in nursing. Reasons given by these repondents included job security and the belief that a BSN degree was necessary for all nurses. Other reasons cited included an update and broadening of knowledge, provision of an in-depth theoretical background, and a means to higher pay (Bardossi, 1980). Additional reasons as to why RN's are interested in pursuing a BSN degree included: (a) desire for nursing competencies that are different and more comprehensive than those derived from technical education;

 (b) interest in more independent practice, and (c) a desire to assume supervisory roles which require a BSN degree.(Hillsmith, 1978; McGrath & Bacon, 1979; Muzio& Ohashi, 1979). Levinson (1978) felt these adult learners were focusing on refining their initial decision to become nurses and enrollment in college was seen as the way to achieve personal goals and enhance careers.

The nursing profession views these students as persons who are leaving one role behind to assume a new role, in essence, moving from a technical to a professional nurse. Evidence suggests that these students feel a sense of conflict about this role transition. A discrepancy exists between the way the

professional educators perceive these students and the way the students view their own level of performance. They may enter the program expecting a familiar educational approach only to encounter an entirely new one. They may experience difficulty in clinical settings with student-teacher relationships as well as with attainment of course objectives (Parlocha & Hiraki, 1982; Perry, 1986).

Obstacles to obtaining a baccalaureate degree

Studies have identified various obstacles or stressors RN/BSN adult learners will encounter returning to college. These include a lack of credit for previous learning, anxiety over unfamiliar student responsibilities, lack of money, limited evening courses, distance between home and campus, and family responsibilities. Despite these obstacles, baccalaureate education can accommodate the RN who works, the RN who is a parent or the RN who wishes to study on a part-time basis (Bardossi, 1980; Lange, 1986; Borst & Walker, 1986; Norris, 1980; Perry, 1986; Zusy, 1986; Marsh & Lasky, 1984).

At the University of Wisconsin, Madison, School of Nursing, a task force found that there was a definite

need for assessment of prior learning of returning

registered nurses (Marsh & Lasky, 1984). In a survey

conducted by Hillsmith (1978), it was found that many

RN's considered the BSN to be a credential rather than

an indicator of knowledge. Eighty percent viewed the

BSN requirements as an obstacle. The RN/BSN adult

learners complained that their prior learning was

neither properly recognized nor credited. They

expressed concern about the repetition in required

courses of content they had already mastered in general

programs and augmented in practice (Marsh & Lasky,

1984). They wanted more new content along with

essential curricular planning information.

A study by Hale & Boyd (1981) indicated that the

RN/BSN adult learners wanted blanket acceptance of

previous academic credit. They also wanted less

duplication of study and less enrollment time. Another

survey conducted by Zusy (1986) showed that Associate

Degree graduates wanted to be able to apply credits

earned in their basic nursing education program to

lower-division requirements so they could enter

collegiate upper division courses without having to

repeat or verify course work taken. The concept of

assessment of prior learning was introduced to faculty

members of the RN/BSN program in the College of Nursing at the University of Alabama with positive results (Lynch, Doyle, & Chickering, 1985). Wu (1978) indicated that the granting of credit for previous learning assumes that the student has the prerequisite lower-division knowledge and skills to perform at the level of competency required to complete an upper-division program successfully.

Another obstacle identified was a lack of time to complete a baccalaureate program. Most registered nurses seeking a BSN have been employed for some length of time and many are currently employed and plan to remain employed during their enrollment. Bardossi (1980) found that 72% of the respondents preferred part-time enrollment and 62 percent wanted to limit attendance to nine class hours per week. In contrast, only four percent found no significant stumbling blocks in their pursuit of a baccalaureate degree (Lange, 1986; Borst & Walker, 1986).

In a study by Perry (1986), the high cost of a baccalaureate education and the lack of access to financial aid posed another obstacle for the RN/BSN adult learners. Because many had to return to school on a part-time basis, they were not eligible for

financial assistance. This lack of adequate financial assistance forces these women to continue their part- or full-time jobs. Some students do not qualify for financial aid because of their spouse's income. For others, the family budget cannot accommodate educational expenses. Norris (1986) found that these students must also deal with the widespread, yet only partially valid perception, that, unlike the majority of youth in public institutions, adult learners can and should pay for their own education. It is not uncommon for some of the RN/BSN adult learners to be displaced homemakers; divorce and marital separation have lowered the family income making it particularly difficult to meet the financial demands of an education.

It is estimated that returning RN/BSN adult learners can expect to spend between $2,000 and $5,000 or even more for a baccalaureate degree. The educational costs are further increased if these students quit their jobs or work only part-time resulting in a loss of income. Financial aid, which is often not available, is not enough to make up for this loss of income. When asked the amount of money they could afford to spend on a BSN, a majority of the respondents to the RN magazine survey stated $500 or

less.   Ten percent said that money for educational

purposes was no problem (Bardossi, 1980).

A Western Washington University study showed about

19 percent of respondents were willing to travel no

more than ten miles to participate in classes, 34

percent no more than twenty miles, and 20 percent were

willing to travel more than thirty miles for classes.

This study also showed that 96 percent of the

respondents interested in additional education were

presently employed and would continue working while

enrolled in a BSN completion program (Norris, 1980).

A top priority of reentry women with young

children is adequate child care.   Coordinating child

care with family and academic responsibilities becomes

a major task for these women.   Also closely linked is

the problem of changing roles and role conflict with

the family.   Most reentry women experience some degree

of resistance by their families to their return to

school.   Although the family must adjust to the women's

changing role, studies show that a majority of

marriages and families do not suffer significantly as a

result of this change.   Once the reentry women have

ventured out, families tend to be supportive and

encouraging.   Families generally come to see the wife-

mother's schooling as a move toward a better home environment (Brandenberg, 1976; Kaplan, 1982). Women who do encounter resentment, hostility, or lack of adjustment need special considerations from educators because their schooling is likely to be affected by these family issues. Hibbert (1986) found that students who were satisfied with their course of study continued their education despite domestic and external problems whereas those discontent with the course of study often abandoned their goal of further education.

Summary

The ever-increasing number of associate degree and diploma-prepared nurses returning to school for a baccalaureate degree have the potential for a critical impact on the entire nursing profession. These nurses will provide the professional leadership necessary for improving patient care. Of paramount importance, therefore, is the identification of obstacles or stressors which can affect the completion of such a program. The review of literature points to the uniqueness of RN/BSN adult learners and their motivation for returning to school. The literature presents a common theme that certain stressors are present and do influence the decision of RN/BSN adult

learners to return to school to further their education.

Chapter 3

Method

The review of the literature supported the need to identify stressors encountered by registered nurses returning to school to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing. Data were gathered and analyzed to determine these stressors. The study involved sending a twenty-five item questionnaire to graduates and current enrollees in a BSN completion program utilizing the two-plus-two format.

Subjects

The setting for this study was a small private mid-western liberal arts college. The BSN completion program was started in the fall of 1984 and is comprised of 12 eight-week terms. The sample consisted of sixty female registered nurses who have graduated or are currently enrolled in the BSN completion program. Thirty-five subjects obtained their basic education from an associate degree program while twenty-five subjects graduated from a hospital-based diploma program. Thirteen subjects were in the 20-29 age range, 30 subjects in the 30-39 age range, 14 subjects

Table 1

Sample Description

Age of

Students	No. of Students (N = 60)	Percent of Total
20-29	13	21.7
30-39	30	50.0
40-49	14	23.3
50-59	3	5.0

in the 40-49 age range and three in the 50-59 age range (Table 1).

Each individual transcript was evaluated by the Director of Admissions and faculty members on the Admissions and Credits Committee. In addition, each subject had to hold a current license to practice nursing in the state of Iowa while attending the program. Additional requirements had to be met prior to acceptance into the program (Appendix A).

Instrument and Design

Prior to developing the questionnaire, the researcher obtained verbal permission from the director of the BSN completion program to have access to student

names and addresses. Copies of admission requirements were also obtained.

The 25-item questionnaire (Appendix B) was sent to the 1986 and 1987 graduates and hand delivered to those students currently enrolled in the program. Cover letters were attached to each questionnaire requesting assistance in the study (Appendix C).

Survey Analysis

The data were obtained by asking the students and graduates to identify certain demographic items such as: age, marital status, work experience prior to and during school, job category and facility worked, hours worked both prior to and while attending school, number of children at home and student status. The students were then asked to select any or all items that were applicable regarding financial assistance needed, major concerns about entering the BSN program, major obstacles encountered when returning to school, and satisfaction with the program. The subjects ranked the reasons for returning to college to obtain a BSN degree and items dealing with what the college could do to assist individuals enrolled in the program to have a more satisfying academic experience. The item of most

importance was ranked #1, next #2 and so on. To
prevent the subjects from giving a set of approved or
desirable responses rather than their true feelings,
subjects were assured that all questionnaires would be
treated in a confidential manner. Percent of responses
was used in the majority of items. However, those
items using rank order format employed means and
standard deviation in the analysis.

Summary

Returning registered nurses completed a
questionnaire to determine stressors encountered when
returning to school and to obtain a baccalaureate
degree in nursing. Percentage, means and standard
deviation were calculated on specific items.

Chapter 4

Results of Study

The purpose of this study was to identify stressors encountered by RN/BSN adult learners returning to school to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing. The stressors were identified by using a questionnaire.

Analysis of Data

Fifty percent of the respondents were found to be in the 30-39 age range while about 23 percent were in the 40-49 age range and 5 percent in the 50-59 age range. About 83 percent of the students were married at the time they were enrolled in the BSN completion program while 17 percent were identified as single including those who were divorced or widowed. Eighteen percent indicated their marital status had changed since enrolling in school. Seventy-three percent indicated they had dependent children at home during the time they attended school.

Ninety-five percent of the respondents were employed prior to enrolling in school compared to 93.3 percent who were employed while attending school. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents indicated they

had been employed full-time prior to enrolling in school compared to 45 percent who continued full-time employment while enrolled in school.

Of those RN/BSN adult learners working part-time prior to enrolling in school, the majority, or 65 percent, indicated they worked from 17-24 hours per week, 26 percent indicated they worked 25-32 hours per week, 4.3 percent worked 0-8 hours per week and 4.3 percent worked 9-16 hours per week. After enrolling in school, of those respondents indicating part-time status, 48.2 percent worked 25.32 hours per week, 44.8 percent worked 17-24 hours per week, 3.5 percent worked 0-8 hours per week and 3.5 percent worked 9-16 hours per week. Five percent indicated that they had not been employed prior to enrolling in the BSN completion program compared to 6.5 percent who were not working while attending school.

Slightly over one-half of the respondents, 31 or 51.7 percent, were employed for 10 or more years in nursing prior to enrolling in the BSN completion program, while 21.7 percent were employed 1-3 years, 13.3 percent were employed between 4-6 years and 13.3 percent were employed between 7-9 years. Sixty-five percent were employed in staff nurse positions, 15

percent in nursing administration, 11.7 percent in nursing education, 3.3 percent in staff development and 5 percent in other phases of nursing. A majority of the respondents, 68 percent, indicated they were employed in acute care facilities, 11.7 percent in long-term facilities, 1.7 percent in Public Health, and 18.3 percent in various other health agencies.

Approximately one-half, 29 or 50.9 percent, of the respondents who were employed requested a change in their work schedule while attending school while 28 or 49.1 percent did not. Thirty-six percent indicated they had also asked their employer for educational expenses.

The majority, or 78.3 percent, attended the BSN completion program on a full-time basis while 21.7 percent attended the program part-time. Seventy percent took between 6-8 credit hours of study each term compared to 15 percent who took 3-4 credit hours of study. Fifteen percent indicated they had taken from 3 to 12 credit hours of study depending on the term enrolled.

Twenty-eight percent of the respondents indicated they had considered terminating the program at some time during the course of study. When asked why they

continued, three common reasons given by the respondents focused on time and effort invested in going to school, money spent for tuition and other school expenses, and the need to attain personal goals.

Table 2

Frequency of Responses Regarding Sources of Finance for RN/BSN Adult Learners

(Multiple Response Table)

Source of Finance (N=60)	f	Percent of Response
Personal Savings	44	33.8
Spouses's Income	26	20.0
Government insured loan	17	13.1
Employer paid arrangement	15	11.6
Scholarship/grant	12	9.2
Bank loan	10	7.7
Parental Assistance	6	4.6
Totals	130	100.0

Respondents indicated that the financing for their BSN completion program came from a variety of sources. Data in Table 2 show that 33.8 percent of the respondents financed their education with personal savings and 20 percent received financial support from

their spouses. Few of the respondents, 4.6 percent, indicated they received parental assistance for their education. In addition to relying on their own funds, 22.3 percent of the respondents received financial assistance in the form of scholarships, grants, and government insured loans. Another 7.7 percent obtained private bank loans and 11.6 percent took advantage of employer-paid arrangements. Of the respondents that received assistance from their employer, 92 percent worked full-time and 51 percent had worked at least four years for their employer.

All respondents were asked to rank in order of priority (from 1 to 9 with 1 being highest) a set of nine reasons for returning to college to obtain a BSN degree (Table 3). Personal enhancement through increased knowledge and skills was ranked the highest with a mean of 2.07 and a standard deviation of 1.53. Broader job opportunities, with a mean of 3.05 and a standard deviation of 1.49 was followed closely by professional advancement with a mean of 3.42 and a standard deviation of 1.47. The belief that the BSN degree would become a mandatory requirement for nurses was ranked fourth with a mean of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 2.40. Other reasons for returning to

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Participants' Scores

Regarding Reasons for Returning to College to Obtain a

BSN Degree

Reason (N=57)	Mean	S.D.
Personal enhancement	2.07*	1.53
Broader job opportunities	3.05	1.49
Professional advancement	3.42	1.47
Mandatory BSN	4.28	2.40
Job security	5.11	1.87
Increased theoretical background	5.25	1.86
Increased salary	5.61	1.61
Pressure from nursing profession	7.96	1.32
Pressure from employer	8.23	1.05

*Numbers indicate ranks ranging between 1 - 9 with 1
being highest.

school included job security, increased theoretical

background for professional practice, increased salary,

and pressure from the nursing profession and/or

employers.

Table 4 illustrates the major concerns RN/BSN

adult learners had prior to entering the BSN completion

program. Concerns over educational expenses were

Table 4

Frequency of Concerns of RN/BSN Adult Learners Prior to
Entry Into a BSN Completion Program

(Multiple Response Table)

Concerns (N=60)	f	Percent of Response
Educational expenses	42	34.2
Study skills	33	26.8
Grades	26	21.1
Child care	22	17.9
Totals	123	100.0

expressed by 34.2 percent of the respondents. These
students had previously indicated that the majority of
their financial support came from either their own
personal savings or from a combination of their own
funds and funds from spouse and/or parents. Study
skills (26.8%) and grades (21.1%) were also identified
by respondents as concerns. While 73 percent indicated
they had dependent children at home, 17.9 percent saw
this as a major concern when returning to school.

Conflict between work, family and class
responsibilities (25.8%), distance from campus (17.8%)
and educational expenses (17.2%) were identified as the

Table 5

Frequency of Participant Responses Regarding Stressors

Encountered When Returning to School for a

Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing

(Multiple Response Table)

Reason (N=60)	f	Percent of Response
Conflict between work, family and class responsibilities	42	25.8
Distance from campus	29	17.8
Educational expenses	28	17.2
Course requirements	20	12.3
Lack of employer support	13	8.0
Lack of family support	11	6.7
Lack of study skills	11	6.7
Lack of credit for previous learning	9	5.5
Totals	163	100.0

three major stressors encountered when returning to

school to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing

(Table 5). A majority of the open-ended responses

given were concerned with the problem of time

management and self-induced stress of completing the
program. In addition, 6.7 percent indicated that a
lack of study skills was a problem compared to 26.8
percent who felt this to be a concern before entering
the program. Eight percent of the respondents
indicated a lack of employer support and 6.7 percent
indicated a lack of family support. The stressor least
encountered by the respondents was a lack of credit
(5.5%) given for previous learning.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations of Participants' Scores

Regarding How the College Could Better Facilitate

RN/BSN Adult Learners With Their Educational Experience

Response (N=53)	Mean	S.D.
Improve library resource materials	2.77*	1.71
Improve class scheduling	3.19	1.27
Expand evening classes	3.45	1.46
Improve clinical experiences	3.58	1.61
Location of classes	3.83	1.87
Provide Saturday classes	4.20	1.82

*Numbers indicate ranks ranging between 1 - 6 with 1
being highest.

When asked what the college could do to assist RN/BSN adult learners with their college experience, the data in Table 6 show that the highest priority was given to improving library resource materials with a mean of 2.77 and a standard deviation of 1.71. Improved class scheduling was identified next with a mean of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 1.27. Other responses identified in descending priority included expanding evening classes, improving clinical experiences, location of classes, and providing Saturday classes.

Overall, the respondents revealed a high level of satisfaction with their college experience in the BSN completion program. Over 51 percent indicated that they were satisfied and 28.3 percent indicated they were very satisfied. Only 15 percent said they were somewhat satisfied and 5 percent said they were somewhat dissatisfied. No one indicated they were very dissatisfied with the program.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to identify stressors encountered by RN/BSN adult learners returning to school to obtain a baccalaureate degree in

nursing. Subjects were given a twenty-five item
questionnaire to complete. From the results, it was
identified that conflict between work, family and
school responsibilities was the major stressor
(Table 5). Whereas concern over educational expenses
was identified as the major concern prior to entering
the program (Table 4). Improved library resource
material was identified as the way the college could
better facilitate the RN/BSN adult learners with their
educational experience (Table 6). Although several
other concerns were identified by the RN/BSN adult
learners, the majority were satisfied with their
college experience when returning to school to obtain a
baccalaureate degree in nursing.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify stressors encountered by RN/BSN adult learners returning to school to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing. Sixty female registered nurses attending a BSN completion program utilizing a two-plus-two format were surveyed.

These RN/BSN adult learners consisted of thirty-five registered nurses who had graduated from an associate degree program and twenty-five registered nurses who had graduated from a hospital-based diploma program. All of the subjects held a current license to practice nursing in the state of Iowa. All students met the entrance requirements as set forth by the college. The BSN completion program consisted of 12 eight-week consecutive terms. (Refer to Appendix A for program description).

All respondents were asked to complete a twenty-five item questionnaire. Demographic items included age, marital status, work experience prior to and during school, job category and type of employing

facility, hours employed both prior to and while attending school, number of dependent children at home and student status.

Information regarding educational expenses, major concerns about entering the BSN completion program, and major obstacles encountered when returning to school and satisfaction with the program was obtained and analyzed. Respondents ranked reasons for returning to college to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing and items concerned with what the college could do to assist individuals enrolled in the BSN completion program.

Conclusions

The findings of the study are similar to those reported by researchers who have studied adult learners. Cross, as cited by Lange (1986), noted that "adult learners who pursue a college degree 'represent a significant departure from the norm . . .a selected group --- more highly motivated, more successful as students, more achievement oriented, and probably better off occupationally and financially than their peers who are not involved in such learning activities'" (Lange, 1986, p. 423).

The results of the survey indicated that those RN/BSN adult learners who entered the BSN completion program had been employed several years in the nursing profession. Nearly all of the respondents continued their employment either part- or full-time while attending school.

A majority of the students had obtained their basic education from an associate degree program. This corresponds to the findings of Lawler and Rose (1987) which indicated that half or more ADN graduates intended to continue their education toward a baccalaureate degree in nursing.

The majority of the students were between the ages of 30-39 and were married. Many of the respondents also indicated they had dependent children at home while enrolled in school. This compared favorably with the information obtained by several authors. However, unlike the review of literature findings, most of the respondents did not perceive child care as the major concern when entering the BSN completion program.

In the survey, respondents indicated that personal enhancement through increased knowledge and skills was the major reason for returning to school. This concurs with the findings by Smullen (1982) in which she noted

that RN/BSN adult learners return to school motivated ,by a desire to grow and a feeling of personal worth. Other motivational factors included broader job opportunities, professional advancement and the belief that the BSN would become a mandatory requirement for nurses. These factors were also mentioned consistently in the literature as reasons for returning to school to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing.

Unlike the literature findings that indicated that most registered nurses preferred part-time enrollment (Perry, 1986), the majority of the respondents attended the program on a full-time basis, taking between 6-8 credit hours of study each term. This was completed although many had to travel a significant distance to class.

Contrary to the findings in previous studies, respondents did not view a lack of academic credit for previous learning as a major obstacle. However, conflict between work, family and class responsibilities, distance from campus and educational expenses were the most frequently identified stressors. Respondents relied on existing personal or family finances to pay for most of their educational expenses. Other sources of income included scholarships, grants,

loans and employer-paid assistance.

Although the respondents identified several concerns and major stressors when returning to school, and at times considered terminating the program, most were satisfied with the course of study. As Hibbert (1986) reported in his study, satisfied students continue their education despite domestic and external problems.

Recommendations

The findings of this study have identified those stressors which RN/BSN adult learners encounter when returning to school to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing. There is no question that the nursing profession views these RN/BSN adult learners as people who are leaving one role to assume another; moving from a technical to a professional nurse (ANA, 1978). There is considerable evidence that suggest these students feel a sense of conflict when trying to facilitate this role transition. By recognizing these conflicts or stressors to furthering their educational goals, BSN completion programs can better serve RN/BSN learners. Everyone would benefit; nursing would benefit, the RN/BSN student would benefit, and ultimately clients

would benefit through a higher level of professional care.

As a result of this study, the following recommendations are made regarding possible revisions that educational institutions can implement that will minimize stressors encountered by RN/BSN adult learners returning to school.

1. Preeenrollment advisement conferences should be initiated to include discussion of life-style changes that will be needed to enable a smoother transition to the student role.

2. Advisement conferences should be initiated regarding time-management, stress management, and enhancement of study skills.

3. Library resource material relevant to the nursing program should be increased to more satisfactorily meet the requirements of the various courses.

4. Financial aid resources should be expanded for returning RN/BSN students.

5. Nursing courses should be repeated more frequently than once a year to facilitate completion of the program by part-time students.

Concluding Remarks

This study was chosen because there was a lack of empirical evidence identifying stressors encountered by returning RN/BSN adult learners. As the thrust of nursing education is directed toward mandating the baccalaureate degree in nursing as the entry level into practice, more and more associate degree and diploma-prepared nurses will be returning to BSN completion programs. More research needs to be done to better assist these RN/BSN adult learners in making a smoother transition to the student role.

Bibliography

Adelestein, D., (1983). Dimensions underlying the characteristics and needs of returning women students, <u>Journal of the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators and Counselors</u>, <u>46</u>, 22-27.

Alward, R. R., & Swanson, S. B., (1980 September). A student leadership experience for the experienced RN. <u>Nursing Outlook</u>, pp. 498-500.

American Nurses' Association, Facts about nursing 80-81 New York. <u>American Journal of Nursing</u>, 1981.

American Nurses' Association 1982 News <u>American Journal of Nursing</u>, <u>82</u>, 518-520.

American Nurses' Association. (1978) Resolutions, <u>The American Nurse</u> <u>10</u> (9), 970.

Baj, P. A., (1986). Stress of the returning RN student. In W. L. Holzemer (Ed.), <u>Review of Research in Nursing Education</u> (pp. 107-124). New York National League for Nursing

Bardossi, K., (1980 August) Why BSN programs drive nurses crazy. <u>RN</u>, pp. 53-55.

Borst, B. B., & Walker, W. J., (1986). A locally-based baccalaureate nursing program for registered nurses. <u>Journal of Nursing Education</u>, <u>25</u>, 168-169.

Brandenberg, J., (1976). The needs of women returning to school, <u>Personnel and Guidance Journal</u>, 53, 1178.

Davenport J., III, & Davenport, J. A., Andragogical-pedagogical orientation and its relationship to selected variables among university students, <u>College Student Journal</u> 20 Summer, 130-138.

Davenport J., III, & Davenport, J. A., (1985, September) Andragogical-pedagogical orientation of adult learners: Research results and practice recommendations, <u>Lifelong Learning</u>, pp. 6-8.

Dustan, L. C., (1981, May-June) Buyer beware: The RN as baccalaureate student, <u>Nurse Educator</u>, pp. 10-13.

Ellis, J. R., & Hartley, C. L., (1986). <u>Nursing in today's world: Challenges, issues, and trends</u>. Philadelphia: Lippincott.

Gross, L. C., & Bevil, C. W., (1981, September). The use of testing to modify curricula for RNs. <u>Nursing Outlook</u>, pp. 541-545.

Hale, S. L., & Boyd, B. T., (1981, September). Accommodating RN students in baccalaureate nursing programs. <u>Nursing Outlook</u>, pp. 535-540.

Hibbert, A. U., (1986, October). Dropping out or staying on: Characteristics of drop-out students and course completers. <u>Studies in the Education of Adults</u>, pp. 71-81.

Hillsmith, K. E., (1978, February). From RN to BSN: Student perceptions. <u>Nursing Outlook</u>, pp. 98-102.

Hunter, E. P., (1988, March/April). Does 2+2=4? ADN programs as beginning preparation for professional nursing. <u>AD Nurse</u>, pp. 11-13.

Ingles, T. A., (1971, November). Debate: Ladder concept in nursing education, <u>Nursing Outlook</u>, pp. 726-728.

Iowa Board of Nursing (1986). [Projections by the Division of Nursing, Department of Health and Human Services]. Unpublished raw data.

Kaplan, S. R., (1982). A feminist cinderella tale: Women over thirty in graduate and professional school. <u>Journal of the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, Counselors</u>, <u>45</u>, 26-32.

Kaufman, G. M., & Beehr, T. A., (1986). Interactions between job stressors and social support: Some counter intuitive results, <u>Journal of Applied Psychology</u>, <u>71</u>, 522-526.

King, J. E., (1986). A comparative study of Adult developmental patterns of RN and generic students in a baccalaureate nursing program. <u>Journal of Nursing Education</u>, <u>25</u>, 366-371.

Knowles, N. S., (1968, October). Androgogy not pedagogy. Adult Leadership, 350-356.

Kushnir, T., (1986). Stress and social facilitation: the effects of the presence of an instructor on student nurses' behavior. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 11, 13-19.

Lange, L. L., (1986). Recruiting, advising, and program planning for RN/BSN students. Western Journal of Nursing Research, 8, 414-429.

Lawler, T. G. & Rose, M. A., (1987, May/June). Professionalization: A comparison among generic baccalaureate, ADN, and RN/BSN nurses. Nurses Education, pp. 19.22.

Levenson, D., (1978). The Seasons of a Man's Life. New York: Ballentine Books.

Link, C., (1987). What does a BS degree buy? An economist's view. American Journal of Nursing, 12, 1621.

Lynch, A. Q., Doyle, R. J., & Chickering, A. W., (1985, June). Model programs for adult learners in higher education. Phi Delta Kappan, pp. 713-716.

Marsh, H. F., & Lasky, P. A., (1984, September/October). The Professional Profile: Documentation of prior learning. Nursing Outlook, pp. 264-267.

McCloskey, J. C., (1983, January/February). Nursing education and job effectiveness. Nursing Research, pp. 53-58.

McGrath, B. J., & Bacon, T. J., (1986). Baccalaureate nursing education for the R. N.: Why is it so scarce? Journal of Nursing Education, 6, 40-45.

Merritt, S., (1983, November/December). Learning style preference of baccalaureate students. Nursing Research, pp. 367-372.

Muzio, L. G., & Ohashi, J. P., (1979, August). The RN student--Unique characteristics, unique needs. Nursing Outlook, pp. 528-532.

Neuman, B., & Wyatt, M., (1981). Prospects for change:
     Some evaluative reflections from one articulated
     baccalaureate program. Journal of Nursing
     Education, 1, 40-46.

Norris, C. G., (1980, September). Characteristics of
     the adult learner and extended higher education for
     registered nurses. Nursing & Health Care, pp. 87-
     93.

Parlocha, P., & Hiraki, A., (1982). Strategies for
     faculty: Teaching the RN student in a BSN program.
     Journal of Nursing Education, 5, 22-25.

Perry, A. E., (1986, May/June). Reentry women:
     Nursing's challenge. Nurse Educator, pp. 13-15.

Primm, P. L., (1986, May/June). Entry into practice:
     Competency statements for BSNs and ADNs. Nursing
     Outlook, pp. 135-137.

Smullen, B. B., (1982, September). Second-step
     education for RN's--The quiet revolution. Nursing &
     Health Care, pp. 369-373.

Styles, M. M., & Holzemer, W. L. (1986). Education
     remapping for a responsible future. Journal of
     Professional Nursing, 2, 64-68.

Sutterly, D. C., (1979, January). Stress and health: A
     survey of self-regulation modalities. Topics in
     Clinical Nursing, p. 6.

Williams, R. W., (1982, December). Teaching employee
     RNs in BSN programs. Nursing and Health Care, pp.
     573-575.

Wooley, A. S., (1978, February). From RN to BSN:
     Faculty perceptions. Nursing Outlook, pp. 103-108.

Wu, R., (1978, November). Granting credit for previous
     learning. Nursing Outlook, pp. 707-712.

Zemke, R. & Zemke, S., (1981, June). 30 things we know
     for sure about adult learning. Training/ The
     Magazine of Human Resources Development, pp. 45-52.

Zusy, M. C., (1986). RN to BSN: Fitting the pieces
    together. <u>American Journal of Nursing</u>, <u>4</u>, 394-397.

Appendix A

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM
VALIDATION OF PREVIOUS NURSING KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY

Entry to the program requires validation of prior nursing experience. This may be accomplished in the following ways:

Submission of National League For Nursing Achievement Test scores taken in the original nursing program within the past three years. The achievement of a score at the fiftieth percentile or above is required for validation. Test results may be obtained from your school of nursing.

-OR-

Successful completion of the N.L.N. Comprehensive Nursing Achievement Test. It is a three hour test and will be offered at a cost of $10.00. The test must be passed with a minimum score of 160.

-AND-

All nurses are required to validate clinical proficiency through simulated laboratory testing is required by all students. The fee is $10.00.

Registered nurses wishing to be considered for admission must provide a completed application form, official transcript from all schools and colleges attended and N.L.N. test results. A limited number of applicants will be accepted each Fall.

2.4.3   Professional liability insurance.
         The limits of liability should be
         $1,000,000.00 for each claim and
         each aggregate

2.5 Personal interview with the Director of
     Nursing Education and/or a member of the BSN
     faculty.

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM

Prerequisites to the Program

To enter this program, a candidate must (1) have at least a 2.0 CGPA and be eligible for admission with junior standing, (2) be currently licensed as a registered nurse in Iowa, (3) have completed (or complete during the first year of enrollment) the following: Anatomy and Physiology, 4-8 credits; Chemistry, 4 credits; Microbiology, 4 credits; English Composition, 3 credits; Human Growth and Development, 3 credits; and Sociology, 3 credits, and (4) validate lower level nursing courses by successfully passing the NLN Comprehensive Nursing Achievement Test or NLN End of Course Achievement Tests within 3 years of graduation from the basic nursing program, (5) validate clinical skills by successfully passing interpersonal relations, nursing process and psychomotor skills tests.

The Nursing Core

Course	Title	Credits
NURS 301	Holistic Assessment	4
NURS 302	Perspectives of Professional Nursing	2
NURS 303	Nursing Care of Individuals and Families in the Community	4
NURS 304	Community Health Nursing with Groups and Aggregates	4
NURS 306	Computers in Health Care	3
NURS 401	Nursing Theorists	2
NURS 402	Leadership in Nursing	4
NURS 403	Long-term Disruptions in Health	4
NURS 404	Nursing Research/Elective Field Experience	4
NURS 405	Professionalism of Nursing	3

Additional Requirements of the Program

The students must successfully complete all graduation
and general education requirements not previously met,
along with the required proficiency examinations in
mathematics and written communications.

In addition, the following support courses must be
completed: Introduction to Philosophy, 3 credits;
Educational Psychology, 3 credits; Cultural
Anthropology, 3 credits; Research/Statistics, 3
credits; and Principles of Management, 3 credits.

Electives selected from liberal arts must be completed
to bring the total hours applying toward the BSN degree
to a minimum of 128.

Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Curriculum Plan

JUNIOR YEAR

Term 1 (8 weeks)	Term 2 (8 weeks)	Term 3 (8 weeks)

NURS 301
Holistic
Assessment
4 Sem. Hrs.
M 5:00 p.m. -
  8:05 p.m.
Clinical Arranged
6 Hrs. 40 min./we.
	NURS 303
	Nursing Care of
	Individuals and
	Families in the
	Community
	4 Sem. Hrs.
	Theory M 5:00 p.m.-
	        8:05 p.m.
	Clinical W or F
	   8:00 a.m. -
	   2:40 p.m./wk.
		*NURS 302
		Perspectives of
		Professional
		Nursing
		2 Sem. Hrs.
		W 5:00 -
		  8:05 p.m.

PHIL 100
Intro to
Philosophy
3 Sem. Hrs.
M-W 8:10 p.m. -
   10:45 p.m.
	ED 250
	Educational
	Psychology
	3 Sem. Hrs.
	M-W 8:10 p.m. -
	   10:45 p.m.
		Gen. Ed. or
		Elective
		3 Sem. Hrs.
		HIST 450

---

*Prerequisite
 PHIL 100
 Intro to Philosophy

Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Curriculum Plan

JUNIOR YEAR

Term 4 (8 weeks)	Term 5 (8 weeks)	Term 6 (8 weeks)
*NURS 304 Community Health Nursing with Groups and Aggregates 4 Sem Hrs. Theory M 5:00 p.m. - 8:05 p.m. Clinical W or F 8:00 a.m. - 2:40 p.m./wk.	SOC 450 Cultural Anthropology 3 Sem. Hrs. M-W 5:30 p.m. - 8:05 p.m.	NURS 305 Computers in Health Care 3 Sem. Hrs. M-W 5:30 p.m.- 8:05 p.m.
Gen. Ed. or Elective 3 Sem. Hrs. HIST 397 SPEECH 100	PSY/SOC 450 Research Methods/ Statistics 3 Sem. Hrs. M-W 8:10 p.m. - 10:45 p.m.	Gen. Ed. or Elective 3 Sem. Hrs. ENG 420 COMPUTER SCIENCE 100 ENG 450 HIST 450

*Prerequisite
ED 250
Educational Psychology

Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Curriculum Plan

SENIOR YEAR

Term 1 (8 weeks)	Term 2 (8 weeks)	Term 3 (8 weeks)

*NURS 401
Nursing Theorists
2 Sem. Hrs.
M 5:00 p.m. -
  8:05 p.m.
	*NURS 402
	Leadership in
	Nursing
	4 Sem. Hrs.
	M 5:00 p.m. -
	  8:05 p.m.
	Clinical Arranged
	6 Hrs. 40 min./wk.
		NURS 403
		Long-Term
		Disruptions
		in Health
		4 Sem. Hrs.
		Theory M
		     5:00 p.m.-
		     8:05 p.m.
		6 Hrs. 40 min./
		       wk.

BA 160 Principles of Management 3 Sem. Hrs. M-W 8:10 p.m. - 10:45 p.m.	Gen. Ed. or Elective 3 Sem. Hrs. DRAMA 450	Gen. Ed. or Elective 3 Sem. Hrs. HIST 450

---

*Prerequisite
 SOC 450
 Cultural
 Anthropology

*Prerequisite
 BA 160
 Principles of
 Management

Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Curriculum Plan

SENIOR PLAN

Term 4 (8 weeks)	Term 5 (8 weeks)	Term 6 (8 weeks)
*NURS 404 Nursing Research/ Elective Field Experience 4 Sem. Hrs. Theory M 5:00 p.m. - 8:05 p.m. Clinical Arranged 6 Hrs. 40 min./wk.	NURS 405 Professionalism of Nursing 3 Sem. Hrs. M-W 5:30 p.m. - 8:05 p.m.	Gen. Ed. or Elective 2 Sem. Hrs. ENG 420
Gen. Ed. or Elective 3 Sem. Hrs. HIST 397 SPEECH 100	Gen. Ed. or Elective 3 Sem. Hrs. POLITICAL SCIENCE 320	Gen. Ed. or Elective 3 Sem. Hrs. COMPUTER SCIENCE 100 ENG 450 HIST 450

---

*Prerequisite
PSY/SOC 450
Research Methods/
Statistics

All nursing courses must be taken in sequence
except Computers in Health Care

3/30/88

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

I. Junior Year

Nursing 301:   Holistic Assessment – Four credits

Nursing 301 introduces the nurse to the nursing process and the concept of holistic health assessment, with an indepth development of physical assessment skills at various developmental stages throughout the lifespan. Communication and interviewing techniques are discussed in relation to the collection of the total health data base. Assessment and recording skills are developed in the clinical laboratory.

Nursing 302:   Perspectives of Professional Nursing – Two credits

The evolution of nursing theory, practice and research is described in relation to historical, philosophical and social factors. The program's conceptual framework is introduced by examining the concepts of man, environment, health, and nursing. Prerequisite: PHIL 100

Nursing 303:   Nursing Care of Individuals and Families in the Community – Four credits

Nursing 303 focuses on identifying and investigating disruptive forces with affect the health of individuals and families in the community. The evolution of community health nursing and the role of the nurse are studied in relation to political, economical, and societal health care trends. Protective, nurtrative, and generative nursing actions are developed to assist individuals and families to achieve and maintain wholeness through adaptation. The nursing process is utilized to provide care to individuals and

page 2

families in a variety of home settings.
Prerequisite: Nurs. 301.

Nursing 304:   Community Health Nursing with
                Groups and Aggregates - Four
                credits

Nursing 304 content further refines the
concepts of Nurs. 303. The focus is directed
toward identifying and investigating
disruptive forces which affect the health of
groups and aggregates. The scope of
responsibility and accountability of the
nurse as a member of the health team is
examined. The nature of the course
emphasizes generative nursing actions and
synthesizes Nursing and Public Health
Sciences. Out-patient clinics, schools, and
various community agencies are utilized as
clinical settings. Prerequisite: ED 250.

Nursing 305:   Computers in Health Care - Three
                credits

Nursing 305 introduces the use of
microcomputers in health care. The course is
intended to familiarize the nurse with the
computer and its application in health care
delivery systems. The hardware and software
are explored, with special emphasis on
standard packages for word processing,
spreadsheet analysis, data base systems, and
introductory programming. The clinical
component includes learning experiences in a
computer laboratory.

II. Senior Year

Nursing 401:   Nursing Theorists - Two credits

Nursing 401 further examines the program's
conceptual framework introduced in Nurs. 302.
A number of predominant nursing theorists'

page 3

models are analyzed and evaluated. The
evolvement, role and significance of nursing
theory is presented. Prerequisite: SOC 450.

Nursing 402:   Leadership in Nursing - Four
credits

This course focuses on theories of
leadership, leadership styles, and
organizational analysis, and leadership
skills for nurses as members of the
interdisciplinary health team. Various
informational systems and economics related
to management are examined. The nurse
leadership role is analyzed in a clinical
setting. Prerequisite: BA 160

Nursing 403:   Long-term Disruptions in Health -
Four credits

The focus of this course is on individuals
and families experiencing long-term
disruptions in health throughout the life
span. Both physiological and psychosocial
dimensions of adaptations are included.
Nursing strategies are explored to promote a
facilitative nurse-client relationship,
fostering independent client functioning.
The impact of chronic illness on the
community is explored. The nursing process
is utilized to enhance adaptation of the
client, family, and environment in a variety
of clinical settings.

Nursing 404:   Nursing Research/Elective Field
Experience - Four credits

The evolvement and significance of nursing
research in the development of nursing's
scientific body of knowledge is presented.
Nursing research concepts are utilized to
critically appraise published reports, and to
develop a research proposal of a nursing
problem in the Elective Field Experience.

page 4

>   This clinical experience includes
>   implementing the research process in
>   decision-making, validating nursing
>   interventions, and implementing student-
>   identified professional objectives in
>   selected clinical settings. Prerequisites:
>   PSY/SOC 450.

Nursing 405:   Professionalism of Nursing - Three
>   credits

>   Nursing 405 is a seminar in which learners
>   are expected to critically evaluate current
>   and relevant topics including ethical, legal,
>   and political issues, nursing education
>   trends, and changes in the health care
>   delivery system. The historical development
>   of organized nursing is explored.

Required Supporting Courses

PHIL 100: Introduction of Philosophy - Three
>   credits

>   A survey of the development of philosophical
>   thinking from the classical period to the
>   contemporary era with attention to the major
>   figures, basic types and special problems.

ED 250:   Educational Psychology - Three credits

>   A study of classroom behavior with emphasis
>   on motivation and promotion of learning.
>   Introduces nature and theories of learning,
>   tests, and measurements, personal
>   characteristics of pupils and educational
>   procedures.

PSY/SOC 450:   Research Methods/Statistics - Three
>   credits

>   An introduction of statistical concepts and
>   principles utilized for various research
>   methods in the behavioral sciences is
>   presented. Content includes descriptive and
>   inferential statistics.

page 5

SOC 450:   Cultural Anthropology - Three credits

The development of culture and origins of
man: concepts and techniques for
understanding world cultural similarities,
differences, and diffusion; and systems of
belief and action by which different people
live.

BA 160:   Principles of Management - Three credits

A study of the fundamental elements of
managerial action-decision-making,
communications and motivation within an
organized managerial structure.

NOTE: All nursing courses must be taken in
sequence except for Computers in Health
Care

Appendix B

RN/BSN ADULT LEARNER STRESSOR SURVEY

<u>DIRECTIONS</u>:

You may use either pencil or pen in answering this questionnaire. Most of the questions may be answered by placing a check mark on the appropriate line. Some of the questions may require more than one answer. Please explain your answer when appropriate.

1. From what type of <u>basic</u> program did you graduate?

    _____ ADN

    _____ Diploma

    Year graduated _____

2. Sex

    _____ Female

    _____ Male

3. Please check the age group which best applies to you.

    _____ 20-29

    _____ 30-39

    _____ 40-49

    _____ 50-59

4. What is your current marital status?

_____ Single (never married)

_____ Married

_____ Widowed

_____ Divorced

_____ Separated

5. Which of the following best describes your work status PRIOR to enrolling in the BSN program at Buena Vista?

_____ Not employed

_____ Full-time

_____ Part-time*

* If part-time, what was the average amount of hours worked per week?

_____ 0-8 hours

_____ 9-16 hours

_____ 17-24 hours

_____ 25-32 hours

6. How many years were you employed PRIOR to enrolling in the BSN program?

_____ 1-3 years

_____ 4-6 years

_____ 7-9 years

_____ 10 years or more

7. What was your job category PRIOR to enrolling in
   the BSN program?

   _____ Staff nurse

   _____ Nursing administration

   _____ Staff development

   _____ Nursing education

   _____ Other (please specify) _____

   _____

8. What type of facility were you employed in PRIOR
   to enrollment in the BSN program?

   _____ Acute care facility

   _____ Long term facility

   _____ Public Health

   _____ Other (please specify)

   _____

9. What year did you first enroll in the BSN program
   at Buena Vista?

   _____ 1984

   _____ 1985

   _____ 1986

   _____ 1987

10. Are you currently a graduate of the BSN program at
    Buena Vista?

    _____ Yes *

    _____ No **

    *   If you answered yes, what year did you
         graduate? _____

** If you answered no, do you intend to graduate with a BSN degree?

_____ Yes+

_____ No

+ If you answered yes, what year do you intend to graduate? _____

11. Has your marital status changed since enrolling in the program?

_____ Yes *

_____ No

* If yes, how has it changed? _____

_____

12. Number of children at home while enrolled in school.

_____ 0

_____ 1

_____ 2   Age of oldest child _____

_____ 3   Age of youngest child _____

_____ 4 or more

13. During the time you were enrolled in the program, which one of the following BEST describes your work status?

_____ Not employed

_____ Full-time

_____ Part-time*

* If part-time, what was the average amount of hours worked per week?

_____ 0-8 hours

_____ 9-16 hours

_____ 17-24 hours

_____ 25-32 hours

14. Did you ask for a change in your work schedule during your enrollment in the BSN program?

_____ Yes *

_____ No

* If yes, please describe _____

_____

15. Did you ask your employer for education expenses?

_____ Yes

_____ No

_____ Not applicable

16. How many credit hours did you take each term?

_____ 3-4

_____ 6-8

_____ Other (please specify) _____

17. Did you attend the BSN program on a full- or part-time basis?

_____ Full-time

_____ Part-time

18. What is/was your cumulative grade point average (GPA) in the BSN nursing program?

_____ 0.00 - 1.99

_____ 2.00 - 2.49

_____ 2.50 - 2.99

_____ 3.00 - 3.49

_____ 3.50 - 4.00

19. Have you ever considered terminating the BSN program?

_____ Yes *

_____ No

* If yes, why did you continue? _____

_____

20. What was your major source of financial support while enrolled in the BSN program at Buena Vista? Please check all items that apply.

_____ Personal savings

_____ Help from parents

_____ Bank loan

_____ Scholarship/grant

_____ Government insured student loan

_____ Spouse's income

_____ Employer-paid arrangement

21. Below is a list of reasons for returning to college to obtain a BSN degree. Indicate <u>in order of priority</u> those reasons which influenced your decision to return to school. Number 1 would be the most important reason and 9 would be the least important reason. Please make certain all the items are assigned a rank.

_____ Broader job opportunities

_____ Job security

_____ Better salary

_____ Personal satisfaction through increased knowledges/skills

_____ Pressure from nursing profession

_____ Pressure from employer

_____ Belief that the BSN degree will become mandatory requirement for nurses

_____ Professional advancement

_____ Increased theoretical background for professional practice

22. Which of the following describe the MAJOR concerns you had about entering the BSN program? Check all items that apply.

_____ Concern over grades

_____ Concern over study skills

_____ Concern over child care

_____ Concern over educational expenses

23. Which of the following are major stressors you
    encountered when returning to school to work on
    your BSN degree? Please check ALL items that
    apply.

    _____ Distance from campus

    _____ Conflict between work and class schedule

    _____ Educational expenses

    _____ Lack of academic credit for previous
                learning

    _____ Lack of study skills

    _____ Course requirements

    _____ Lack of employer support

    _____ Lack of family support

    Please mention any other concerns not listed
    above:

    _____

    _____

24. Please rank order the following items in terms of
    what the college could do to assist individuals
    like yourself who are enrolled in the BSN degree
    program at Buena Vista. The item you mark 1 would
    be most important, 6 would be the least important.
    Please be certain that all items are marked.

    _____ Expand evening classes

    _____ Provide for Saturday classes

    _____ Improve class scheduling

    _____ Improve library facilities

    _____ Improve clinical experiences

    _____ Improve location of classes

25. How would you rate your overall college experience with the BSN program at Buena Vista? Please mark just _one_ item.

_____ Very satisfied

_____ Satisfied

_____ Somewhat satisfied

_____ Somewhat dissatisfied

_____ Very dissatisfied

Thank you for your help in this survey!

Appendix C

Route 1
Harcourt, Iowa   50544
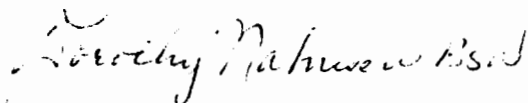March 18, 1988

Dear Registered Nurse:

As a student of the Buena Vista College BSN program, I
am asking you to participate in a research survey.
This is being conducted by the researcher as part of
the requirements toward a Master's Degree in
Educational Psychology at the University of Northern
Iowa.

Data obtained from this questionnaire will be utilized
to identify stressors RN adult learners encounter while
enrolled in the BSN program at Buena Vista College.
The results of your responses to this questionnaire
will treated in a confidential manner. At no time will
your name be used to identify results.

I encourage you to participate in this study and to
answer each question completely. Completion of this
questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes of
your time. Your completion of this questionnaire is
evidence of your consent to participate in the study.

Your personal response is valuable in identifying
stressors RN adult learners encounter in returning to
college. I believe the information obtained from this
questionnaire will be useful in future planning for the
program. Thank you very much for participating in this
survey.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Nahnsen BSN
Graduate Student
University of Northern Iowa
(1-515-354-5304)