Supporting student nurses’ learning needs

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Why meet student learning support needs?

- Drop-out rate of student nurses estimated to be as high as 25% (Nursing Standard 2006).
- Student attrition carries costs to the UK of up to £100million (Smith 2008).
- Systematic support systems within an inclusive curriculum have been shown to increase retention and progression (Kift 2009).
- Changing demographic of student nurse: older (average age increased from 21 in 1960s to 29 in 2000s), increased diversity (esp. with WP agenda).
Retention project: an outline

• Aimed to look at the characteristics of progressed and withdrawn students through the first year of their pre-registration course.

• Aimed to explore the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors that affect student retention.

• Data on 5 pre-registration nursing cohorts (ranging from September 2006 to September 2008) were examined.

• Data were collected via AIS and a student questionnaire.

• [http://www2.hull.ac.uk/fhsc/research/stayingthecourse.aspx](http://www2.hull.ac.uk/fhsc/research/stayingthecourse.aspx)
Retention project: factors increasing the likelihood of progression

• Uni-variable analysis yielded the following p-values less than 0.1: Age on Entry, p<0.001; Domicile, p=0.001; Entry Qualification level, p=0.013; Previous Experience Caring, p=0.079 and; Dependents, p<0.001.

• Multivariable analysis led to Entry Qualifications remaining just statistically significant (p=0.046). Age on Entry and Domicile remained statistically significant (p<0.001 and p=0.007 respectively).

• Little difference between progression rates in students entering with Level 2 (78.3%), Level 3 (81.3%) or Level 4/5 (82.1%) entry qualifications.
Retention project: Questionnaire

594 continuing students were given questionnaires; 195 were returned (response rate 33%)

102 out of the 195 continuing students (52.3%) had considered leaving the course at some point but had chosen to stay.
Retention project: the top 3 ‘pull’ factors

• support received from family, fellow students and support staff
  “my family encourage me to keep going and my friends are also proud and encouraging”

• the desire to be a nurse
  “my drive to become a nurse does push me along and for this reason I am still on the course”

• personal attributes
  “sheer determination to succeed and do something ‘for me’ was the reason I carried on and did not leave”
Retention project: the main ‘push’ factors:

- **financial difficulties**  Students who had considered leaving were more likely to state that “I have struggled financially during the programme” when compared with the rest of the cohort and this was statistically significant ($X^2 = 25.241, df=3, p=0.000$).

  “The financial implications have made me consider continuing on my training. Trying to juggle studying full-time, placements and bank shifts to earn money has made me consider leaving.”

- **family (un)friendly course** “The hardest and most stressful element by far has been ... finding suitable and stimulating flexible out-of-hours care whilst I train.”

  “A more flexible approach in relation to being a ‘child-friendly’ course [is needed], especially during the school holiday period.”
Screening project: an outline

• A cohort of pre-registration nursing and midwifery students were screened for specific learning difficulties (SpLD) using the Adult Dyslexia Check List (ADCL).

• All students scoring 7+ were invited to attend targeted study skills sessions.

• Students were encouraged to access additional testing/support.

• Data was recorded on attendance at study skills sessions, progression and costs.

• http://www.health.heacademy.ac.uk/publications/miniproject/summaries/jwrayexecsum
Screening project: key findings 1

- 242 students completed and returned the ADCL: a response rate of 98% (total cohort = 247)
- 28.5% (n=69) scored 7+ on the screening tool
- Of the 69 students who scored 7+, 41 (59%) of students made contact with Disability Services.
# Screening project: key findings 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key contact points</th>
<th>Sept 06</th>
<th>Sept 07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average time registration to 1st contact (in weeks)</strong></td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Average time from registration to DAST</strong></td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average time DAST to PA</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average time PA to AofN</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
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Wednesday, 3 November 2010
Screening project: key findings 3

• 54% of students with SpLD progressed to year 2, compared to 41% from a previous cohort.

• Successful progression into year 2 was more likely for those students scoring less than 7 when compared to those scoring 7+ ($X^2=12.923$, df=3, $p=0.005$).

• Successful progression into year 2 was more likely for those students scoring 7+ if they had attended 6 or more study skills sessions.

• Cost of sessions: £6614.02. This is financially viable if 2 further students are retained as a result.
Factors affecting the student learning experience

THE STUDENT

FINANCIAL PRESSURES
Andrews et al 2008; Walsh 2007

DEPENDENTS/CHILDCARE ISSUES
Waters 2006

YEAR/SEMESTER OF STUDY
Waters 2006; Andrew 2008

DOMICILE
Anionwu et al 2005

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF CARING
Kevern and Webb 2004

PERSONAL FACTORS/PERSONALITY
Andrews et al 2008; Glossop 2001

QUALIFICATIONS
DoH 2006; Pryjmachuk 2009

AGE, GENDER, ETHNICITY, DISABILITY
Anionwu et al 2005; Yorke et al 2000; Horn and Bobbitt1999; Richardosn and Wydell 2004

INSTITUTION/COURSE FACTORS
DoH 2006