

National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN®) success among first-time test takers was a great concern to the nursing program. To increase NCLEX-RN® pass rates and solidify trust with students, an innovative approach to mentoring Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) graduates while preparing for NCLEX-RN® was developed. The post-graduate mentorship program was created to focus on communicating, supporting, mentoring, and tutoring BSN students after graduation while they prepared to take the NCLEX-RN®. Through the mentorship program, nurse educators concentrated on enhancing self-esteem, decreasing anxiety and stress while focusing on strengths, learning styles, and individual areas requiring further development, and implementation of remediation plans. Many mentoring studies focus on mentorship while students are enrolled in nursing courses, but lack the development of post-graduation mentoring. Post-graduation mentorship takes place from the time of graduation until the student takes and passes the NCLEX-RN®. The lack of post-graduation mentorship can leave students in a vulnerable position with a limited number of resources that ensure their success on NCLEX-RN®, career services, and more. Supporting students' post-graduation through mentorship can provide the bridge between being a student and becoming a licensed professional Registered Nurse (RN).

Post-Graduate Mentorship Program

The post-graduate mentorship program was created through communication, support, mentoring, and tutoring of BSN students after graduation while they prepared to take the NCLEX-RN®. The mentors selected were the two nurse educators that taught in the nursing NCLEX-RN® review course. These nurse educators had a close working relationship with the students during their last semester and continued working with these

students post-graduation with the mentorship program. Before graduating the students were notified of the post-graduate mentorship program, so they were aware of the process. After commencement, the mentorship program began with weekly emails as a minimum from the nurse educators. Email communication would consist of asking for an update on students NCLEX-RN® preparation or if the student was engaged in an NCLEX-RN® review program. If they were engaged in a review program their progress within the program was requested. Other email communication would consist of inquiring if the student's study schedule was being followed, support, encouragement, test-taking strategies, and resource distribution. In addition to email communication, phone calls or text messages were made if there was no response to emails or if the mentee preferred that type of communication. Mentorship also varied based on individual student needs. This innovative post-graduate mentorship gave students one-on-one tailored mentoring after graduation, which currently is not common practice. Graduate students were invited to come back to the college to talk with the mentors, receive resources, or set up a tutoring session. If graduates were unable to come back to the college, the graduates were invited to video chat at their convenience. Furthermore, anxiety decreasing techniques, stress reduction, and positive affirmations were implemented with the post-graduate students. To evaluate the effectiveness of the post-graduate mentorship program, a questionnaire utilizing Survey Monkey® was distributed to graduated BSN nursing students.

Discussion

The graduate mentorship program was successful in increasing the NCLEX-RN® pass rate. The first time pass rate for 2018 was at 91%. Additionally, participants stated

that the nurse educators gave support, answered their questions, provided additional information, and advocated on their behalf. The findings demonstrated that participants were satisfied with the use of a post-graduate mentorship program through the college with the nurse educators. Also, the findings demonstrated that participants recommended the post-graduate mentorship program to continue for future participants. Implementation of a post-graduate mentorship program is viewed as beneficial for participants, nurse educators, and the first time NCLEX-RN® pass rate.

With the positive feedback from graduates and the increase in the NCLEX-RN® pass rate, the post-graduate mentorship will continue and be sustained. Continuation of the mentorship can be expanded based off graduate needs and feedback provided. The mentorship program can also be replicated and disseminated throughout other nursing programs to increase pass rates.

Conclusion

While NCLEX-RN® preparation initiatives need to be incorporated throughout the nursing program, there also needs to be initiatives in place after graduation. The post graduate mentorship program was created to focus on communication, support, mentoring, and tutoring BSN students after graduation while they prepared to take the NCLEX-RN®. The mentorship program was effective in helping students be successful on the NCLEX-RN®, increasing the programs pass rate, and restoring the reputation of the program.