SHORT AND LONG TERM OUTCOMES OF A BRIDGING RPN-BScN PROGRAM: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

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Background

- **Ongoing nursing shortage** (Canada)
  - Projected shortage - 60,000 full-time equivalent RNs by 2022
  - Practical Nurses (LPN/RPN) comprise 22.9% of the total regulated nursing workforce in 2010
  - 30,423 RPNs in Ontario (2010)

- **Support career mobility for Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs)**

- **College-university partnership to enhance access to RN degree education for RPNs in practice in both urban and non-urban areas**
  - 6 post-diploma programs in Ontario
    1. Centennial – Ryerson
    2. Mohawk, Conestoga – McMaster
    3. Algonquin – Ottawa
    4. Durham, Georgian – UOIT
    5. Canadore, George Brown – Nipissing
    6. Fleming – Trent
Overview of Bridging-to-BScN Program

Bridging Program
- Full Time On-campus (2 terms)
- Flex / Part Time On-campus (3 terms)
- Part Time Regional Access Centres (6 terms)
  - GPA 3.0 (75%)
  - Clean GPA

BScN Program
- Full Time On-campus (4 terms)
- Part Time On-campus (7 terms)
- Part Time Regional Access Centres (7 terms)
  - 63%

CRNE Exams
- License
- Employment

Evaluation Study 2009

2014
Study Purpose

To evaluate the short and long term outcomes of two new program delivery options for bridging and post-diploma degree completion programs including post-graduation follow-up.

- **part-time RAC hybrid** versus on-campus flex and full time delivery options -CC Bridging
- **part-time** versus full-time on-campus delivery options RU- post diploma degree completion
- **long term program outcomes** of the CC-RU academic pathway from diploma RPN to BScN
Research Questions

A. Unique challenges and success strategies
   - motivation to return to school
   - challenges
   - success strategies

B. Differences in outcomes between
   - Bridging program: Part time study (RACs) vs. Full time study, On campus
   - Degree completion program: Full Time vs. Part Time study

C. Post-graduation BScN student outcomes
Design and Methods

- Mixed methods descriptive comparative design
- Survey/interviews first and final terms
- Student cohorts beginning Fall 2009 and 2010 (50-90 students per class)
- Response rates 4-70% across cohorts
Outcome Measures – What does program effectiveness mean?

**SHORT term outcomes**

- Academic success (GPA, academic standing)
- Student engagement
- Satisfaction with learning experience

  *National Survey of Student Engagement® (NSSE):* The College Student Report, Indiana University

- Professional socialization: *Nursing Professional Values Scale-Revised (NPVS-R)* (Weis & Schank, 2000).

**LONG term outcomes**

- Success with registration exams
- Employment characteristics
- Transition to RN role: *Casey-Fink Graduate Nurse Experience Survey* (Casey, Fink, Krugman & Propst, 2004)
Student Characteristics (n=139)

Gender
- Bridging – 90-100% female
- BScN – 83-100% female

Age
- Bridging – 28-34 yrs.
- BScN – 30-42 yrs.

Prior experience
- Bridging – 1.5-7 yrs.
- BScN – 3-4 yrs.

Years since graduation
- Bridging – 1.5-7 yrs.
- BScN – 3-4 yrs.
Student Characteristics

- **Bridging:**
  - 11-31% not working
  - 78-89% RAC students work >20 hrs./wk.
  - 14-17% on-site students work >20 hrs./wk.

- **BScN:**
  - 38-50% on-site students work > 20 hrs./wk.

- **Bridging:**
  - 11-21% had pre-school or school age children

- **BScN:**
  - 50% had pre-school or school age children
Preparation for Program

20-60% Attended prep course (CVNU101)

Family ‘warned’ of changes

No other specific strategies
Unique Challenges and Successes

Motivation

• wanted leadership role and to think more critically about patients
• “not get overlooked”
• wider scope, limited role as an RPN
• broader job and career opportunities (better pay)
• “could be a better nurse if I have more knowledge”
Unique Challenges and Successes

Challenges

- Group work e.g. students living far apart, grading schemes
- Time management i.e. balancing work, school and family
- Accessing resources from off campus

Success strategies

- Good organizational skills, making school a priority
- Reduce work hours
- Partnering with other students
- Read regularly
Centennial Bridging Program – SHORT TERM OUTCOMES

- Grades – T1 – RAC 2.97
- Academic standing – T1 -97% clear, 3% on probation
- Other data in progress
BRIDGING Program - Student Engagement

Scale: 1 (never) 2 (sometimes) 3 (often) 4 (very often)

- interaction with instructors
- interaction with active learning*
- academic challenge*
- enriched educational experience

*significant differences between RAC students and on campus students (p<.05)
BRIDGING Program - Satisfaction with overall learning experience

- Overall educational experience:
  - 1 (poor) 2 (fair) 3 (good) 4 (excellent)

- If start over again, would attend CC:
  - 1 (definitely no) 2 (probably no) 3 (probably yes) 4 (definitely yes)
• Academic standing – T1- Part time -81% clear, 9% withdrew or quit
• Other data in progress

Post Diploma Degree Completion Program

Daphne Cockwell
SCHOOL OF NURSING

RYERSON UNIVERSITY
Everyone Makes a Mark
DEGREE COMPLETION Program – Satisfaction with overall learning experience

- Overall educational experience at RU:
  1 (poor) 2 (fair) 3 (good) 4 (excellent)
  
- If start over, would attend RU:
  1 (definitely no) 2 (probably no) 3 (probably yes) 4 (definitely yes)
Demand and attrition rates

DEMAND

- 2007-2010 – exceeded targets
- 2011 – decreased – policy changes, launch of RACs
- Full time demand greatest

ATTRITION

- Time to completion – RU 20-25% out of phase
Can’t wait to finish my BScN!!! This program has allowed me to continue working while completing my degree which is great!

I found the program kind of heavy and needed to study and read content constantly from course and outside.

Amazing support from professors, very well structured program, amazing experience.
LONG Term Outcomes  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Licensing Exam</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass on first attempt</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment (6-12 months post-graduation)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>56*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple employers</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed as: RN</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPN</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same employer as a student</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting: Acute care</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTC</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job title: Staff nurse Manager</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location: GTA</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Transition to RN Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How has your practice changed as a result of your experiences in the post-diploma program at RU?</th>
<th>Scale Range 1-5 (mean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical appraisal of the literature</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership skills and abilities</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to work independently</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work collaboratively with others</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making abilities</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate caring</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation of issues related to advocacy</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective practice</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Transition to RN Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comfort/confidence performing skills and procedures:</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confident communicating with physicians</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable caring for unstable clients/unpredictable outcomes</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable delegating tasks to RPN</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No difficulty prioritizing patient needs</strong></td>
<td><strong>94</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to complete assignment on time</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations of me in this job are realistic</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feel prepared to complete my job responsibilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>91</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No difficulty organizing patient care needs</strong></td>
<td><strong>94</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel I will not harm a patient due to my knowledge and experience</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Transition to RN Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulties experienced with the transition from student to BScN-RN role?</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Role expectations**  
(e.g. autonomy, more responsibility, being a preceptor or in-charge) | 44 |
| **Lack confidence**  
(e.g. communication skills with MD, delegation, knowledge deficit, critical thinking) | 19 |
| **Workload**  
(e.g. organizing, prioritizing, feeling overwhelmed, nurse-patient ratios, patient acuity) | 31 |
| **Fears**  
(e.g. patient safety) | 14 |
| **Orientation issues**  
(e.g. unit familiarization, learning technology, relationship with multiple preceptors, information overload) | 36 |
## Transition to RN Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of work environment that are most satisfying</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Peer support**
(e.g. belonging, team approach, helpful and friendly staff) | 61  |
| **Patient and families**
(e.g. making a difference, positive feedback, patient satisfaction, patient interaction) | 61  |
| **Ongoing learning**
(e.g. preceptors, unit role models, mentorship) | 50  |
| **Professional nursing role**
(e.g. challenge, benefits, fast pace, critical thinking, empowerment) | 53  |
| **Positive work environment**
(e.g. good nurse:patient ratios, available resources, great facility, up-to-date technology) | 31  |
## Future Educational Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Program</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Return to university</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently applying or are enrolled in further education (n=16)</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of program:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical specialization</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters degree</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Practitioner</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main reason</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career advancement/goals</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment/job security</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge development/specialize</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Overall Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall, how well did CC and RU prepare you for:</th>
<th>Good – Excellent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment as a RN in your current role</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further education</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall satisfaction with the program at RU (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1=Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3=Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5=A great deal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Comments

- Satisfied with program
  - Amazing support, amazing experience
  - Proud to be a Ryerson graduate

- Clinical placement issues (provincial issue)
  - Lack of choice
  - Placements not critical enough, hindered job prospects
  - Feel unprepared to work in a hospital, need more acute clinical practice hours

- Coursework
  - Too many papers
  - Less self-learning
  - Too difficult, set you up for failure
Conclusions

- Adjustment to student role similar for all students
  - Challenged by competing priorities: school, work, family
  - Success enhanced by time management

- Few significant differences
  - Between distance and on-campus delivery with the exception of student interaction, active learning and academic challenge for RAC students (lower scores)
  - Between part-time and full-time delivery (tentative)

- Programs prepare students for employment and transition to RN role

- Centennial-Ryerson program offers a feasible ‘academic pathway’ to prepare nurses i.e. varying entry points into nursing education
Strategies to Support Student Success

Before and during program

• Resources for on-campus and distance students
• Pre-workshop (online) e.g. Literature search skills, learning management system, APA referencing
• Academic supports e.g. Writing and Learning Centre
• Non-academic supports e.g. time management
• Academic advisors

Individual actions

• Decrease work hours
• Support from fellow students
• Enroll in one course (elective) to orient yourself to university expectations
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

Research – Nancy Purdy, npurdy@ryerson.ca

Bridging Program
- Victoria Reid-de-Jong, vreid-de-jong@centennialcollege.ca
- Ellen Bull, ebull@centennialcollege.ca

Post-diploma BScN
- Paula Mastrilli, pmastril@ryerson.ca
- Elaine Santamina, esantami@ryerson.ca

Centennial College PRN-BScN Bridging Full-time: http://www.centennialcollege.ca/Programs/ProgramOverview.aspx?Program=9251


Part-time Application Forms: http://www.centennialcollege.ca/parttime/RPN%20Hybrid%20Application%20Form/