

Distance Learning Re-Entry Nursing Update Project Survey Summary August 2005

Introduction

The Distance Learning Re-Entry Nursing Update Project (DLRNUP) has been a Carl D. Perkins State Leadership funded grant project through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board which was initiated in August of 2003 and completed in August 2005. The goals of the project included the development of a quality distance learning nursing refresher course addressing both the needs of RNs and LVNs re-entering professional nursing practice resulting in an increase in the number of nurses accessing such programs in the state of Texas. The course design needed to be flexible, effective and appropriate in the learning deliverables in order to make the course easily accessible through any community college interested in hosting or providing such a program. Once the course was developed its use would be offered to community colleges and healthcare facilities around the state.

One of the grant deliverables for the second year of the project was a survey of re-entry nurses who had taken the Distance Learning Re-Entry Nursing Refresher course. In order to gather a sufficient number of survey responses it was decided to survey both the DLRNUP students and students from traditional classroom based refresher programs within the last two years. The survey was designed to obtain demographic information on the re-entry nursing student, what their past nursing work experience was and why they left nursing practice, the specific type of nursing refresher course taken and the impact the course had on obtaining employment after completing the course.

Survey Data Results

Below is a synopsis of the survey results. A copy of the actual survey data gathered can be found in Attachment A at the end of this synopsis.

For those re-entry nurses that responded to the survey, all the re-entry nurses were female with most being between the ages of 40 to 60 years old. The majority were RNs, either diploma, ADN or BSN. There were some LVNs and one RN, MSN. One half of the respondents reported living in urban areas with one fourth living in rural areas. Most of the re-entry nurses had held an active nursing license for either 6-10 years or for 17-22 years.

The past nursing work experience of those surveyed indicated the majority had worked full time in the inpatient hospital setting. Almost one half of the respondents had left their nursing practice to stay at home with their children. Most of them had been out of nursing practice for either 6-10 years or for 17-22

years. This would seem to imply that for those nurses who left nursing practice to raise a family, did so until their children were either school age or had graduated from high school.

Reasons given for enrolling in a nursing refresher course varied between being ready to return to work, to updating nursing knowledge and skills and/or required to re-instate their nursing license or obtain a TX nursing license coming from out-of-state. The majority of the Re-entry nurses took a refresher course through a community college and completed the entire course (didactic and preceptorship) in 3-4 months. The type of nursing refresher course taken was split between the distance learning online course and the traditional classroom based course with approximately two-thirds taking the online course and one-third taking the classroom based course. All respondents took a didactic course (either online or traditional) which included a clinical preceptorship. The majority of the nursing refresher courses also included a skills lab portion.

Employment after completion of the nurse refresher course indicated more than half the respondents were either currently employed as a nurse or were seeking nursing employment. While more than one-third of the respondents are currently working as a nurse, one-fourth of them are not working as a nurse. After completing the nurse refresher course one-third of those surveyed were hired immediately or within 1-2 months and more than one-half of them were working in the hospital setting in the area where they had precepted. Most of the respondents were oriented to their new jobs in 1-5 weeks and felt their new job orientation was adequate to perform the job.

Summary

While this survey effort may not represent all the re-entry nurses in the state of Texas, it does represent those re-entry nurses who have looked to their local community college for this type of training. With the time away from the clinical setting being as long as 22 years, many of the re-entry nurses face a significant challenge in updating their skills and knowledge to a level that will allow them to function in the fast-paced high-tech clinical environment of today. While some nurses reported not finding employment after completing the course, the majority were able to return to work bringing their years of expertise back into the clinical setting at a time when the nursing shortage is at its greatest need. Those nurses that did not secure employment following completion of the refresher course either discovered that they were not able to meet the demands of the current clinical work environment or encountered healthcare facilities that were either not prepared or not willing to assist the re-entry nurse's transition back into clinical practice.

The Distance Learning Re-Entry Nursing Update Project has succeeded in making nursing refresher training available to more nurses around the state of Texas, particularly in the rural areas. However, this seems to be only part of

what is needed to assist even more re-entry nurses to find their way back into clinical practice. The healthcare facilities also carry the responsibility of providing an adequate orientation and transition period for the re-entry nurse to come up to speed in today's clinical setting. With both a strong re-entry nursing course and strong support from healthcare employers, many more experienced qualified re-entry nurses will find their way back into the clinical setting.

Attachment A
Distance Learning Re-Entry Nursing Update Project
Survey of Graduates of a Nursing Refresher Course
August 2005

Demographics:

1. Level of Education

Vocational Nsg. Certificate	Diploma RN	ADN	BSN	MSN
4	4	7	11	1

2. Current Age

20-29 years old	30-39 years old	40-49 years old	50-59 years old	60+ years old
	3	10	13	2

3. Gender

Male	
Female	28

4. Ethnicity/Race

Hispanic/Latino	
Caucasian	26
Black/African American	
Asian	2
American Indian/Alaskan Native	
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	
Other	

5. Area where you reside?

Urban	20
Rural	7
Both/Border Line (property begins city, ends country)	1

6. What year did you obtain your original nursing license?

1966	1
1970	1
1972	1
1973	1
1975	1
1976	3
1977	1
1978	2
1979	1
1980	2
1981	3
1983	1
1987	2
1992	1
1993	1
1994	2
1996	1
1997	1

7. How long have you had an active nursing license?

<5 years	6-10 years	11-16 years	17-22 years	>22 years
6	7	1	1	13

The following questions pertain to your past nursing experience, **prior** to your entry into a Nursing Refresher Program.

8. License status prior to your participation in a Nursing Refresher Course:

Active TX license	12
Active license in another state	4
Inactive license	10
Expired license	5
Suspended license	
Surrendered license	
Revoked license	

9. Prior work status as a nurse:

Full time	Part time	PRN	Other
18	6		2

10. Prior employment field as a nurse:

Inpatient Hospital	18		
Nursing Home	4		
Home Health	3		
Occupational Health	1		
Private Practice	1		
Outpatient Hospital			
Office (Medical/Dental)	2		
Community/Public Health	3		
Long Term Acute Care	2		
Military			
Other-Please Specify	School Nurse (1)	Endoscopy (1)	Medical Business (1)
Public Hlth. St. Agency (1)	Managed Care (1)	Dialysis Clinic (1)	Nsg. Education (1)

11. Prior work area as a nurse:

Adult Med/Surg	10		
Pediatrics/NIC	2		
OB/GYN	3		
Geriatrics	4		
Mental Health	3		
Emergency Room	1		
ICU/CCU	5		
OR/PACU	3		
Oncology	2		
Rehab	3		
Other-Specify	Endoscopy (1)	R R (1)	Family Planning (1)
	CVS (1)	Supervisor (1)	

12. What was the primary reason you left your nursing practice?

To be a stay at home mom	12
Become school nurse	1
Marriage	1
Retirement	1
Burn-out: too many hours	1
Run Personal Business	1
Non nursing job offer	3
Back to school-BSN	1
Attend law school	3
Salary increase	2
Dislike long drive, no part time	1
Did not leave	1

13. How long were you out of nursing before taking the Nursing Refresher course?

<5 years	6-10 years	11-16 years	17-22 years	> 22 years
5	9	3	8	3

The following questions pertain to the Nursing Refresher Program you participated in.

14. What was your primary reason for enrolling in a Nursing Refresher course?

Required to reinstate	4
Refresh/Update knowledge/skills	6
Refresh meds. procedures	1
Want to go to a medical mission trip	1
To become traveling nurse	1
To become school nurse	1
To get Texas lisc.	1
Ready to go back to work	12
No answer given	2

15. Where did you complete the nursing refresher course?

Community College	Healthcare Facility	Both	Other
22	1	3	Online-1

16. How long did it take to complete the entire course (both the classroom or online didactic and the clinical preceptorship)?

3-4 months	5-6 months	7-8 months	9-10 months	11-12 months	> 12 months
17	6	1			1

2 months (1 person)

Not answered (1 person)

17. What type of Nursing Refresher course did you complete?

Traditional Classroom didactic with preceptorship	11
Distance Learning Online didactic with preceptorship	16

18. Did your course include a skills lab component?

Yes	28
No	

The following questions pertain to your employment since completing the Nursing Refresher course.

19. I completed the Nursing Refresher course _ months ago:

< 3 months	3-6 months	7-12 months	13-18 months	> 18 months
8	6	4	1	5
Still taking course or not answered				
Total: 4				

20. Employment after completion of the Nursing Refresher Course:

Currently employed as a nurse	16
Currently not employed as a nurse	2
Seeking nursing employment	6
I am not employed	2
Still taking course: no answer	2

21. After completion of the Nursing Refresher course, I have actively practiced as a nurse for:

< 3 months	3-6 months	7-12 months	13-18 months	> 2 years	Never
11	3	1	2	1	8
Still taking course/no answer –Total 2					

22. Current work status as a nurse:

Full Time	Part time	PRN	Not Working @ a Nurse
9	3	4	10
Still taking course/no answer –Total 2			

23. How long did it take to find a nursing job after completion of the Nursing Refresher course?

Hired immediately	< 1 month	1-2 months	3-4 months	> 4 months	NA-Not working
7	3	4		3	6
Still taking course/no answer –Total 2					

24. Please comment on any difficulty you had obtaining Nursing employment.

Not answered	12
Clinic positions difficult to obtain due to lack of experience	1
Viewed as new graduate	1
Hospitals did not recognize this course plus past experience as sufficient to hire	1
Can't find 8 hour shift	1
No difficulty	2
No calls for interview yet	2
Never worked @ nurse, w/o experience no employer wants to hire me	1
Hospitals/employers still require recent w/in 1-3 yrs nursing experience	1
Hospitals wanted to place me in Med-Surg, not OR because of the time I was away	1
Had to be persistent in seeking employment	1
Still taking course, not answered	3
Employed before class completed	1

25. If you are working as a nurse, are you working in a hospital setting or outside the hospital setting?

Hospital	10
Other	1
Rehab Hospital	1
Home Health	1
Mental Health Facility	1
Day Surgery Center	1
In-House Hospice	2
Not Working	8
Still taking course	3

26. If you are working in a hospital, are you working in the same area/specialty you did in the clinical portion of the Nursing Refresher course?

Yes	10
No	3
NA	11
Still taking course	3

27. Do you feel the clinical preceptorship was adequate to perform your new nursing job?

Yes	14
No	5
NA	5
Still taking course	2

28. Do you feel the clinical preceptor was familiar with the goals and objectives of the nurse refresher program?

Yes	23
No	2
NA	
Still taking course	3

29. How long was your orientation for your new nursing job?

< 1 wk.	1-2 wks.	3-5 wks.	6-8 wks.	9-12 wks.	> 12wks.	NA
	7	5	2	1		8
Still taking course/no answer –Total 3						

30. Do you feel the clinical orientation you received when you were hired was adequate to perform your new nursing job?

Yes	12
No	3
Not applicable	10
Still taking course	3

31. If you replied No in the previous question, please explain why.

Replied NO: No explanation given	
Orientation to first nursing position was not hands on. Test given w/answers. Skills & knowledge not tested.	1
Brand new hospital & being away, I needed closer preceptor which was not available	1

32. If you are currently not working as a nurse, please explain why you did not re-enter the nursing job market.

Other priorities currently	1
Still taking course	3
No 8 hour shift available	1
No offers yet	1
Employers not anxious to hire w/o recent experience in last 1-3 years	1
Hospitals not interested, no experience in past working as a nurse	1
Health Problems	1
Salaries, benefits & working conditions haven't improved or are worse not	1
Not applicable	9
Awaiting right job	1

Please rate yourself on the following:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
33. I would choose to take this Nursing Refresher course if I had to do it all over.	5	4	3	2	1	0
RESULT LINE:	19	4	3	1		2
34. I would choose a different type of Nursing Refresher course if I had to do it all over.	5	4	3	2	1	0
RESULT LINE:	1	4	1	6	15	1
35. I perform as well as other nurses on my clinical unit.	5	4	3	2	1	0
RESULT LINE:	7	27	5	2		7
36. The Nursing Refresher course adequately prepared me to return to nursing practice.	5	4	3	2	1	0
RESULT LINE:	8	9	4	3		3
37. The content and experiences of the Nursing Refresher course prepared me for the realities of current nursing practice.	5	4	3	2	1	0
RESULT LINE:	7	11	2	4		4

38. I feel confident I made the right choice to return to work as a practicing nurse.	5	4	3	2	1	0
RESULT LINE:	12	6	3	2		5
39. Overall, the Nursing Refresher course met my professional goals.	5	4	3	2	1	0
RESULT LINE:	13	9	1	3		2
40. The Nursing Refresher course was successful in preparing me to re-enter nursing practice.	5	4	3	2	1	0
RESULT LINE:	11	8	3	3		3

41. Please provide any additional comments you might have regarding your experience i.e. the refresher course, re-entering the workforce, current nursing practice, demands of a changing practice environment, etc.

- Appreciate the survey & would like to help if I can.
- Course helped me gain confidence to return to NICU.
- Preceptorship was opportunity for management/staff to see my skills; very helpful. (2)
- Viewed as a new graduate, would not have been interviewed w/o preceptorship.
- Enjoyed course.
- Sims Man awesome, beneficial to hear lung/heart sounds.
- Will recommend course to friends. (2)
- Had to make my own contact for preceptorship after becoming frustrated at the length of time it was taking to be assigned at one of the three choices.
- Too much reading (unit 2) required for the simple exam given. An exam over each body system would be better.
- Should include a SASE along with survey for your benefit.
- Could use more clinical time & further skills enhancements. (3)
- Online book portion & lab "great".
- Course very good (2)
- Additional pharmacy information would be helpful. (2)
- Recommend completing some case studies-from preceptor work.
- Disheartened to find out re-entering workforce means mandatory 12 hour shifts full-time or part-time.
- Length of (time) course ok but not for amount of info I was responsible for. Recommend focusing more on highlights and less on text with topics such as how to put in prosthetic eyeballs.
- Hired where precepted.
- Course intensive & comprehensive. (2)

- Feel well prepared. (3)
- Surprised at how difficult it is to get assistance from Bd. of Vocational Nursing on obtaining TX. lisc.
- Encouraged by ACCs' efforts to help returning nurses and think program should be expanded to other areas of the state.
- ACC performs outstanding services for nurses/healthcare.
- Teaching materials were overall excellent with a few weak areas in the classroom portion.
- ACC should have stronger communication & more structured learning program in the preceptorship. Should offer option of second (additional) 64 hour preceptorship for students who may not feel comfortable after 1st preceptorship.
- Clinical preceptor should be in area you plan to work in. (2)
- Orientation of equipment would be helpful; since things have changed.
- ACC staff available/helpful & made me feel like I was the only one taking the course. (2)
- The clinical skill practice; helpful. (2)
- Instructors were knowledgeable/helpful. (2)
- A thoroughly positive experience.
- This particular refresher course very poorly done, disparity in teachers skills. Skills lab useful. The focus was more on basic info not relevant in practical setting. (2)
- Course should be tailored to current job potential/wishes after being out for years.
- Preceptorships not convenient , contractual obligation very obvious.
- Course just right for those out of nursing for a very long time.
- HR in some hospitals did not recognize this refresher course as reason enough to hire a post RN with experience.
- CE eligible lectures were all excellent.
- Found some nurses who taught in the theory portion were unprepared and less knowledgeable about the area they were teaching.
- Resistance to hire when out of practice for some time.
- Standards of patient care seem lower.
- Don't see real nursing shortage, do see shortage of qualified nurses willing to practice under current health care systems conditions.
- Course would be enhanced by a case study approach vs. current didactic content presentation. Offer us case studies and allow students to research nursing implications & produce good care plans while learning new technology & pharmacology.
- Preceptorship should be in field interested in becoming employed in.
- BNE expectations should be revised to reflect reality. (2)
- Preceptorship should be longer.
- Learning how to prioritize the needs of 6 pts. has been very difficult, learning how to ask for help and what to ask for is an important skill.