

COMPARISON OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR A RN-BSN PROGRAM
COURSE USING ONLINE AND TRADITIONAL FACE-TO-FACE CLASSROOM
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT DELIVERY METHODS

ABSTRACT OF APPLIED PROJECT

An applied project submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Education Specialist at Morehead State University

by

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Committee Chair: Dr. Lee W. Nabb

Assistant Professor of Adult and Higher Education

Morehead, Kentucky

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Director of Applied Project: Dr. Lee W. Nabb

The purpose of this causal-comparative research study is to determine if potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using the online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods. The independent variable associated with the study is the course delivery method with variations being the online learning environment through the main campus at Morehead State University and the traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment offered at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center. Both variations are used specifically for the delivery of RN-BSN courses. The dependent variable associated with the study is academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered specifically for the delivery of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice in both learning environments.

The course syllabus (Appendix A) and instructional learning guide (Appendix B) for NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice indicate that the course description, purpose of the course, course learning outcomes, course units, evaluation method, grading scale, and textbooks are very similar for both course sections. The nature of collaboration, teaching strategies, attendance policies, course procedures, and calendars vary to some degree for both course sections. The measure that was used is an independent samples t-test data from SPSS 16.0, which is one of the most common used techniques for testing a hypothesis to determine if potential causal relationships exist between sample means.

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APPLIED PROJECT

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Morehead State University

2013

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Morehead, Kentucky

2013

Accepted by the graduate faculty of the College of Education,
Morehead State University,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Education Specialist Degree in Adult and Higher Education

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	9
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background.....	2
Problem Statement.....	10
Purpose of the Study.....	11
Significance of the Study.....	12
Research Question.....	13
Definition of Terms.....	14
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	17
Introduction.....	17
Registered Nurse (RN) Background.....	17
Online and Traditional Face-to-Face Classroom Learning Environments.....	19
Course Management System - Blackboard™.....	23
Learning Styles.....	26
Theoretical Foundation.....	29
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY.....	33
Research Design.....	33
Subjects and Sampling.....	34
Instrumentation.....	35
Collection of Data.....	36
Hypothesis.....	37

Limitations.....	38
CHAPTER IV: PRESENTATION OF DATA.....	41
Data Analysis.....	41
Results.....	43
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS.....	48
Conclusion.....	48
Recommendations.....	49
REFERENCES.....	51
APPENDICES.....	59
A. NURB 327: Transition to Professional Nursing Practice Syllabus.....	60
B. NURB 327: Transition to Professional Nursing Practice Instructional and Learning Guide.....	68

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Comparison of Online and Traditional face-to-face classroom learning environments

Table 2. NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice

Table 3. Group Statistics 2011 and Independent Samples Test 2011

Table 4. Group Statistics 2012 and Independent Samples Test 2012

Table 5. Likert-scale

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The introduction section provides a foundation for this applied research project about the comparison of academic achievement for a post-licensure RN-BSN program course using online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods.

This research is important because The Department of Nursing at Morehead State University was approached by Big Sandy Community and Technical College to offer the RN-BSN face-to-face track at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center. This Community and Technical College indicated to the Department of Nursing that there would be large cohorts. There is no data on Morehead State University (MSU) nursing students that determines if potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using the online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods. Therefore, the researchers want to know if potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using the online learning environment offered through the main campus at Morehead State University and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment offered at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center.

This causal-comparative research study could help Morehead State

University to make better decisions about developing more online learning programs and courses, adding more online programs and courses, and funding for more information technology related instructional resources. This study will also be used as a resource to better assist Morehead State University in recruitment efforts because it will attract more non-traditional learners due to the delivery method.

The following topics will be reviewed: background, problem statement, the purpose of the study, significance of the study, research question, and definition of terms. Each topic is discussed in sequence and the essential points of each topic are summarized at the end of the section.

Background

Do potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using the online learning environment offered through the main campus at Morehead State University and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment offered at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center?

The purpose of this causal-comparative research study is to determine if potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods. The independent variable associated with the study is the course delivery method with

variations being the online learning environment through the main campus at Morehead State University and the traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment offered at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center. Both variations are used specifically for the delivery of RN-BSN courses. The dependent variable associated with the study is academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered specifically for the delivery of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice in both learning environments.

The NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice course syllabus (Appendix A) and instructional learning guide (Appendix B) consist of learning goals, objectives, and outcomes including performances on assignments and examinations to determine the final course percentage grades. “Moving beyond the issue of source evaluations response rates, a variety of published studies have found that there is no statistically significant difference between online and face-to-face courses, in terms of grades, students’ perceptions of learning, instructional quality, or student satisfaction” (Topper, 2007, p. 681).

NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice is the first course taught in the post-licensure RN-BSN program. The course syllabus (Appendix A) and instructional learning guide (Appendix B) for NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice indicate that the emphasis of this course is the role transition and socialization of the registered nurse to professional nursing. Essential

content includes concepts and theories of health, professional nursing standards, culture community based care, and the nursing process (Clevenger, 2012).

The course syllabus (Appendix A) and instructional learning guide (Appendix B) for NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice indicate that the purpose of this course is to facilitate acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for the non-traditional learner; to assist the RN student in the socialization process to the role of a professional nurse; to allow the RN student an opportunity to increase his/her knowledge of the foundational concepts related to wellness, health promotion and maintenance, culture, community based care, and the nursing process; and to enhance the understanding of factors related to the current and future health care environments (Clevenger, 2012).

The course syllabus (Appendix A) and instructional learning guide (Appendix B) for NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice indicate that upon completion of this course the student should be able to do the following: describe how the practice of professional nursing is guided by the use of the nursing process, critical thinking, independent judgment and decision-making; communicate effectively in a variety of spoken, written, and technological formats; analyze the role professional nursing has as a member of the health care team in changing health care delivery models; describe current scientific knowledge, nursing theory and nursing research used to deliver quality health care in accordance with the ANA Standards of Care and Code of Ethics for Nurses; describe leadership roles within interdisciplinary health care teams and the profession of nursing; provide compassionate, sensitive,

spiritual and culturally appropriate nursing care for individuals and families at any stage of the life span; analyze state and national issues affecting professional nursing practice in the context of cultural diversity; and maintain a health care environment that is conducive to wellness and health promotion (Clevenger, 2012).

The course syllabus (Appendix A) and instructional learning guide (Appendix B) for NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice indicate that the course description, purpose of the course, course learning outcomes, course units, evaluation method, grading scale, and textbooks are very similar for both course sections. The nature of collaboration, teaching strategies, attendance policies, course procedures, and calendars vary to some degree for both course sections. The course units include: The Beginning the Transition to Professional Nursing Practices; Professional Nursing Practice Environments; Roles in Professional Nursing Practices; and Future Directions for Professional Nursing (Clevenger, 2012).

The online learning environment seems to be more convenient and flexible for non-traditional learners, whereas the traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment allows the instructor to interpret non-verbal student communication and identify puzzling problematic areas of learning. The course syllabus and instructional learning guide for the online and face-to-face learning environment are very similar, but the instructors and delivery method are both different. Offering the same course in two different learning environments with a similar course syllabus (Appendix A) and instructional learning guide (Appendix B) for NURB - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice provide an opportunity to examine how the online and traditional

face-to-face classroom learning environment can affect teacher-student and student-student interaction and the ability of students to reach the required levels of student comprehension of complex information that is needed to complete this course.

Many non-traditional learners are now being introduced to online learning environments. The online learning environment provides a more convenient and flexible schedule for non-traditional learners who combine higher education, employment, and family responsibilities. An online course is available anywhere or anytime and the non-traditional learners are not required meet on site. “The increased accessibility of the Internet and the World Wide Web has created vast opportunities for non-traditional education through this medium” (Li & Irby, 2008, p. 449). For this applied research study, the term “online” will be used if the non-traditional students interact with their instructor entirely through Blackboard™ and the term “face-to-face” will be used if the non-traditional students interact with their instructor at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center.

The teaching strategies for the online learning environment of NURB 327 include asynchronous discussion via Blackboard™, active learning exercises, audiovisual materials, computer assisted instruction (CAI), internet searches and readings, World Wide Web assignments, and written assignments and learning activities via Blackboard™ (Clevenger, 2012). In particular, the asynchronous online discussion function of Blackboard™ allows students to interact frequently with each other and with the instructor. “Asynchronous discussions have the advantage of allowing students to take time to thoughtfully compose their responses before posting

them online” (Gorski, 2004, p. 3).

The teaching strategies for the traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment of NURB 327 include lecture, discussion, reading assignments, active learning exercises, simulation, audiovisual materials, computer assisted instruction (CAI), internet searches and readings, World Wide Web assignments, and written assignments and learning activities via Blackboard™. Blackboard™ is a course management system that services millions of learners and educators around the world keeping everyone informed by collaborating together to meet the high expectations of today’s learners (Clevenger, 2012).

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2008), post-secondary schools reported an increase in enrollment for distance education programs and courses during the 2006-07 academic years. Approximately 12.2 million undergraduate students took distance education courses during this time while 77 percent were online courses, 12 percent were hybrid/blended courses, and 10 percent were other types of distance education courses.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2011), post-secondary schools reported an increase in enrollment for distance education programs and courses during the 2007-08 academic years. Undergraduates that took distance education classes rose from 16 percent in 2003-2004 to 20 percent in 2007-2008. An estimate of 4.3 million undergraduate students (20 percent of all undergraduates) and 0.8 million (22 percent of all post

baccalaureate students) enrolled in distance education courses during this time. Approximately 0.8 million (4 percent of all undergraduates) took their entire program through distance education. There was also an increase of post baccalaureate students who took their entire program through distance education (9 percent).

According to Radford (2011), post-secondary schools reported an increase in older undergraduate enrollment for distance education programs and courses. It is reported that younger undergraduates enroll at lower rates in distance education programs and classes than older undergraduates.

Fifteen percent of all undergraduates age 23 or younger are enrolled in distance education courses compared to 26 percent of those between the ages of 24 and 29 and 30 percent of those between the ages of 30 and older. One percent of younger undergraduates were enrolled in a distance education program, while 5 percent and 8 percent of older undergraduates were enrolled in a distance education program (Radford, 2011, p. 10).

According to Radford (2011), post-secondary schools reported that students' working obligation is a major factor when looking at an undergraduate's participation in distance education and the reason this method of learning can be so desirable.

Students working full time had a distance education class enrollment rate of 27 percent and a distance education program enrollment rate of 7 percent. Respectively, these rates were about 10 and 4 percentage

points higher than both students who were not working and students who were working part time. In addition, 34 percent of all undergraduates were employed full time, but 45 percent of all undergraduates enrolled in a distance education class were employed full time, and 62 percent of all undergraduates enrolled in a distance education program were employed full time (Radford, 2011, p. 13).

Located in rural Eastern Kentucky, Morehead State University offers five distance education course types: interactive television, online, hybrid-blended, web enhanced, and web assisted. Morehead State University has five regional campus centers that offer both online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environments. “Offering programs through a regional campus has enabled schools to recruit students from rural areas, expand diversity among both students and faculty, and afford access to nontraditional learners who are working and raising families” (Mayne & Wu, 2011, p. 110).

According to the Morehead State University, Profile (2011), the most recent data profile from the Institutional Research and Analysis website reports that in fall 2011, there were 10,971 students enrolled at Morehead State University, which consisted of 9,420 freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior undergraduate students. In fall 2011, there were 533 distance learning class sections. Of this amount, 321 were online courses and 6,663 students registered for these courses. There was a headcount of 727 nursing students.

According to the Morehead State University, Profile (2012), the most

recent data profile from the Institutional Research and Analysis website reports that in fall 2012, there were 11,172 students enrolled at Morehead State University, which consisted of 9,725 freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior undergraduate students. In fall 2012, there were 580 distance learning class sections. Of this amount, 388 were online courses and 7,637 students registered for these courses. There was a headcount of 823 nursing students.

Problem Statement

There is no data on Morehead State University (MSU) nursing students that determines if potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using the online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods.

Students are enrolling in more courses and programs that integrate technology, such as hybrid/blended classes and programs. Many instructors are now choosing to integrate technology in the traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment. Some researchers believe an effective learning environment should include a foundation based upon a traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment that is complimented with technology (Lightfoot, 2005). For example, instructors can incorporate a course management system such as Blackboard™. The online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods will be the focus of this applied research study.

Purpose of the Study

There has been an increase in online learning environments due to the integration of technology, therefore the purpose of this causal-comparative research study is to determine if potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using the online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods.

With the continuous and modern advances in technology, higher education institutions are finding new ways to introduce online learning environments. “The explosion of technology has made teaching outside the traditional classroom learning environment possible for instructors and has also provided non-traditional learners with easy access to course material” (Li & Irby, 2008, p. 449).

The independent variable associated with the study is the course delivery method with variations being the online learning environment through the main campus at Morehead State University and the traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment offered at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center. Both variations are used specifically for the delivery of RN-BSN courses. The dependent variable associated with the study is academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered specifically for the delivery of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice in both learning environments.

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this causal-comparative research study is to determine if potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using the online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods. The independent variable associated with the study is the course delivery method with variations being the online learning environment through the main campus at Morehead State University and the traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment offered at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center. Both variations are used specifically for the delivery of RN-BSN courses. The dependent variable associated with the study is academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered specifically for the delivery of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice in both learning environments. Final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course will be analyzed by the researchers to identify any statistically significant difference in outcomes based on the delivery methods.

The online learning environment provides learners the benefit of anonymous and interactive instruction that allows them to learn at their own pace. The traditional face-to-face learning environment provides learners the opportunity to interact personally with teachers and receive hands-on instruction in the courses.

As higher educational institutions continue to implement information technology, online learning environments have become more common at post-secondary schools. Online learning environments allow learners to go to class at the best time of day for them. Learners can often work at their own pace, except for adhering to instructor imposed deadlines. The traditional face-to-face learning environment does not offer this flexibility. Learners must learn new material when the class is expected to meet. Although with online courses students must be disciplined and manage their time well, students also report many benefits of online learning. According to Lei (2010), flexibility and freedom to work at a comfortable pace is one benefit to students who pursue online learning. This is particularly beneficial to students who work while taking courses. Other benefits are lack of commute time, reduction in transportation/parking costs, and no issues with appearance/dress.

This causal-comparative research study could help Morehead State University to make better decisions about developing more online learning programs and courses, adding more online programs and courses, and funding for more information technology related instructional resources. This study will also be used as a resource to better assist Morehead State University in recruitment efforts because it will attract more non-traditional learners due to the delivery method.

Research Question

Do potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-

licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using the online learning environment offered through the main campus at Morehead State University and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment offered at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center?

Definition of Terms

Academic achievement demonstrated by final course percentage grades - The evidence academic achievement that is measured in the final course percentage grades of the online course and traditional face-to-face course. According to Snowman and Biehler (2003), grades accurately communicate the level the student has obtained in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades.

Andragogy - The art and science of helping adult students learn. Through the works of Dr. Malcolm Knowles, practitioners strive to improve learning through its respectful and engaging method focused on the learner (Henschke, 2011).

Asynchronous course - A web-based course delivered over the Internet using some sort of classroom management software such as Blackboard™ (Christ & Ganey, 2003). This is a self-paced course that relies on student learning taking place while deciding when to complete assignments, tests, and quizzes within a designated time period.

Non-traditional student - An adult learner pursuing higher education for many reasons such as the need for more job training, the desire to change careers, or a desire for personal growth (Kilgore & Rice, 2003).

Online learning environment - This type of learning environment is strictly

limited to the use of a virtual learning environment such as asynchronous learning. Morehead State University offers courses that emphasize a course management system (Blackboard™), which contains various learning tools such as discussion boards, virtual chat-rooms, and online assignments with test submissions.

Pedagogy - The art of teaching, leading learners to learn that addresses the interactions between the teacher, the learner and the knowledge produced by the teacher and learner (Lusted, 1986).

Registered Nurse (RN) - A graduate nurse who has been legally authorized (registered) to practice after examination by a state board of nurse examiners or very similar regulatory authority, and who is legally entitled to use the designation RN. They provide and coordinate patient care, educate patients and the public about various health conditions, and provide advice and emotional support to patients and their family members (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012-2013).

Synchronous course - The communication in which interaction between participants is simultaneous (Christ & Ganey, 2003). The entire class meets online in a predetermined online web site during a predetermined time period to conduct class.

Traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment - This type of learning environment involves traditional face-to-face interaction with an instructor sometimes referred to as synchronous learning. Traditional face-to-face classroom schedules offered at MSU at Prestonsburg, classes are typically taught during the evening or weekends with an online component using Blackboard™.

In summary, this chapter highlighted the introduction of the applied research

project including background, problem statement, the purpose of the study, significance of the study, research question, and definition of terms. The next chapter will discuss the literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following topics will be reviewed in the literature review section: introduction, registered nurse (RN) background, online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environments, course management system - Blackboard™, learning styles, and theoretical foundation. Each topic is discussed in sequence and the essential points of each topic are summarized at the end of the section.

Introduction

This literature review will examine existing research with regard to student learning by understanding the online and traditional face-to-face learning environment focusing upon the nursing education setting. There are many elements in understanding why nursing students are seeking online teaching versus traditional face-to-face teaching.

RN Background

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) is a post-licensure degree that can be completed by nurses that have earned an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) or diploma in nursing. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nurses (AACN) (2011), only 50 percent of the current RN workforce is prepared with a Bachelor of Science degree. According to the publication Institute of Medicine (IOM) (2011), it is highly recommended that nurses achieve to a workforce of 80 percent BSN's by the year 2020. Meggison (2008) stated that the educational mobility of ADN and diploma nurses to the BSN level is crucial to “positive patient outcomes, creation of a credible professional identity, and to create cohesion among

nurses” (p. 48). These educational routes in becoming an RN in the United States are unique for a profession and lead to concern that RNs will be seen as undereducated when compared with other members of the health care team (Donley & Flaherty, 2002).

Health care continues to be a fast paced, ever changing environment where professionals need to continuously enhance their education. The patient is the primary purpose to encourage continuing formal education (Altmann, 2012). Altmann stated the research and support is consistent with patient care linked to nursing education. Gone are the days when nurses could obtain a basic nursing education and utilize this diploma or degree to sustain throughout their career. The American Nurses Association (ANA) (2000), actively promotes the acceptance of lifelong learning and continued competency upgrading nurses and many stress mandated continuing education (CE) hours.

“There is a current nursing shortage expected to be critical by 2020” (Yordy, 2006, p. 257). Along with the nursing shortage, there is also a nursing faculty shortage. Recruiting the diploma nurses and ADN’s to return to achieve the RN-BSN is imperative on having enough nursing faculty.

The nursing faculty shortage is due to a confluence of factors, including the global migration of nurses, an aging faculty, a reduced younger faculty hiring pool, decreased satisfaction with the faculty role, lack of funding and poor salaries, a seeming persistent devaluation of faculty by academic institutions, increased dependence

on contingent faculty, and overall reduction in full time equivalent faculty positions (Nardi & Gyurko, 2013, p. 317).

Online and Traditional Face-to-Face Classroom Learning Environment

Education at a distance was first introduced as a correspondence course offered as a shorthand class by Isaac Pittman in England in the 1840's which was delivered by mail (Keramidas, 2012). This mode of delivery still exists with correspondence courses offered all over the world. With the continuous and modern advances in information technology, higher education institutions are now finding new ways to introduce online learning environments. "A course is considered "online" if students ordinarily interact with its instructor entirely through the Internet and other computer networks, rather than the traditional face-to-face contact in lecture halls, seminar rooms, or faculty offices" (Haigh, 2007, p. 93).

"The explosion of information technology has made teaching outside the traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment possible for instructors and has also provided student learners with easy access to course material" (Li & Irby, 2008, 449). A qualitative assessment of student experiences in distance education suggested that students find the flexibility of the online learning environment to be empowering (Ledwell, et al., 2006). "Offering programs through distance education has enabled schools to recruit students from rural areas, expand diversity among both students and faculty, and afford access to non-traditional students who are working and raising families" (Mayne & Quiang, 2011, p. 110).

Some student learners enjoy the convenience and flexibility of online learning

environments, especially if they work or have a family. These students are juggling higher education, employment, and family responsibilities. Online learning environments can help student learners develop communication, problem-solving, and teamwork skills (Neo & Neo, 2009).

Student learners are now being faced with having to change their thought process of what a traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment should be and adapting to information technology instructional methods (Santally, 2005). The online learning environment can be complicated with the fact that a student is expected to delve into the course material, which can be challenging to understand, without the spontaneous element of traditional face-to-face learning. Students in online courses are responsible for their own learning as they decide when, where, and how long to access the learning materials (McMahon & Oliver, 2001). Therefore, self-regulated learning behaviors are especially important when taking online courses (Wijekumar, et al., 2006).

According to Tse, et.al (2007, p. 36) online learning environments allow learners the ability to become more independent in learning and they suggested that online courses stimulated self-learning and helped to examine the content in greater depth. The learners also appreciated the time flexibility and convenience associated with this Web-based learning approach. With increasing economic constraints worldwide, it is necessary for nurse educators to design and implement cost-effective teaching and learning strategies. Computer-based interactive multimedia applications in education are cost- and time-effective methods of providing dynamic, information-

rich learning environments. Implications for the use of the Web-based approach include freeing the amount of time nurse educators spend in the classroom as well as increasing students' flexibility to learn, and finally enhancing self-efficacy in critical thinking and independent learning.

Research has shown that technical problems with computers and feeling disconnected with the instructor are some issues that need to be addressed (El Mansour & Mupinga, 2007). A disconnect with the instructor can sometimes be a sign that the non-traditional student does not have a solid understanding of the technology being used and therefore avoids entertaining questions revolving around the subject (Ball & Levy, 2008). The retention of students in an online learning environment can sometimes be low because of higher non completion rates than the traditional face-to-face environment (Huett, et al., 2008).

It cannot be assumed, however, that the skills, strategies, and techniques that are effectively used in traditional face-to-face classroom learning environments will also work well in online learning. David McConnell (2000) has developed the following table that provides an excellent comparison of some of the differences that exist between online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environments. Among the important differences to note on this table are differences in the nature of the instructor's sense of control, the mode of delivery, and the differences in the level of work for each type of learning.

Table 1: Comparison of online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environments

	Online Learning Environment	Traditional Face-to-Face Classroom Learning Environment
Instructors sense of control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Less sense of instructor control *Easier for participants to ignore instructor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *More sense of leadership from instructor *Not so easy to ignore instructor
Mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Discussions through text only; can be structured; dense; permanent; limited; stark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Verbal discussions: a more common mode, but impermanent
Work/discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Work on multiple issues at the same time *Work not condensed-fluid and interweaved with other activities *Group contact continually maintained *Depth of analysis often increased online *Discussion often stops for periods of time, then is picked up and restarted *Members sometimes lose sense of where they are in the discussions over long periods of time (information overload) *Able to reshape conversations on basis of ongoing understandings and reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Usually work on one issue at a time and advance through agenda item by item *Work is condensed and focused *Little group contact in-between meetings *Analysis varies, often dependent on time available *Discussions usually completed during meeting *Discussions occur within a set time frame, therefore less likely that members will lose sense of where they are *Less likelihood of conversations being reshaped during meeting

(McConnell, 2000, p.1)

Overall, student learners seem to have mixed reactions about information technology and will not always see the value in it (D'Angelo & Woosley, 2007). Some higher education institutions are quick to embrace curriculum integrated with information technology and quick to fill up courses to try to meet the supply and demand theory. Therefore, administration sometimes fails to recognize the need for the planning and developing stages before implementing curriculum (Lightfoot, 2005). This issue can lead to unsatisfied faculty and student learners because the online learning environment will not be considered effective. This will lead higher education institutions back to the drawing board to learn how to incorporate online learning environments as an effective learning tool. One such way is to emphasize the importance of computer skills within online learning environments.

One area of the job market that has seen an increase in IT skills is the medical community, especially within the area of nursing. The medical community agrees that information technology can reduce health errors while improving patient care quality, access, and cost effectiveness (Fetter, 2009). Admission rates will increase for nursing programs as online learning environments provide non-traditional learners more opportunities to complete programs, learn, and grow.

Course Management System - Blackboard™

Blackboard™ was founded in 1997 by two college friends to provide tools for distance learning by using a course management system. Blackboard™ has a goal to make online education innovative, fast, and personalized to enhance clients, partners, and learners (blackboard.com, 2012). In doing so, Blackboard™ serves millions of

learners and educators around the world in providing quality service by keeping everyone informed by collaborating together to meet the high expectations of today's learners. "Blackboard™ provides a user-friendly means by which college professors/instructors put course information, including course syllabi, reference sites, and study guides on the Web" (Bradford, et al., 2007, p. 301).

But, it is much more than this; Blackboard™ came to Morehead State University in 1998. Currently, at the university, all classes are given a Blackboard™ shell regardless of their method of delivery (ITV, traditional face-to-face, online, or hybrid). It is at the discretion of the instructor if the shell is utilized for the class being taught. The Department of Nursing at Morehead State University decided to provide online classes, using Blackboard™, to give RN's the opportunity to attend classes because of juggling higher education, employment, and family responsibilities.

According to Servonsky, et al. (2005), the Blackboard™ platform is as follows: Blackboard™ offers a secure environment in which to post information, documents, assignments, and announcements. It allows for synchronous, real-time activities such as chat rooms and asynchronous, delayed activities such as discussion boards and a digital drop box that can be used for student-to-instructor and instructor-to-student document transfer. A grade book is also provided where items can be weighed and final course percentage grades computed automatically. Examinations of different formats whether

fill in the blank, true-false, and multiple choice can be posted. The grade book even allows instructors to post grades of complete and incomplete. Any number of instructors can be designated for a course with all instructors being given equal rights and privileges. Evaluation surveys that allow students to give anonymous opinions are available and allow for feedback on a course even during the middle of the semester (pp. 132-133).

According to Jung (2011), what makes the Web-enhanced course desirable is the “integration of text, pictures, video, and audio into one system, providing easy accessibility to huge databases, and offering a relatively simple and flexible interaction between user and technology” (p. 446). The announcements section on Blackboard™ homepages provides a simple and efficient way of relaying messages to all students, while the email function provides students the opportunity to communicate with instructors on an as needed basis (Ballard, et al., 2004). Asynchronous and synchronous learning approaches take place in this CMS. An example of an asynchronous feature of Blackboard™ is the discussion board function. Discussion board posts happen whenever the student chooses to post a thread for all students and the instructor to see. “However, the lack of immediacy in asynchronous discussions makes them unpopular for students who want help instantaneously” (Gorski, et al., 2004, p. 3). Synchronous discussions are evident in the virtual classroom facility, are in real time and have a strong sense of social presence (Malikowski, et al., 2007, p. 159).

Institutions use Blackboard™ for a plenitude of reasons such as to (1) create powerful learning content that can be utilized by both the student and the instructor; (2) enhance group collaboration by sharing tools available by the instructor; and (3) offer a more engaging, interactive, and individualized learning experience that help a student to achieve critical thinking skills. According to Jung (2011), “quality dimensions, guidelines, best practices, and benchmarks” assure the quality for e-learning (p. 446). Phipps & Merisotos (2000), with support from Blackboard™ and the National Education Association, suggested 24 common benchmarks for high quality online education. These seven benchmarks of institutional support, course development, teaching/learning, course structure, student support, faculty support, evaluation and assessment were put into place to help the prime stakeholder which is the learner.

Learning Styles

People live in a world constantly connected to change and uncertainty. “Work, communication, identity, self, knowing, and even life: the meaning of fundamental concepts are no longer clear in a world of change” (Barnett, 2002, p. 75). To embrace a changing world, resilience is necessary to develop personal goals (Folke, 2010). Folke states inner resilience can help learners guard against experiencing every change that comes as disruptive.

The learning by adults is coined by the term andragogy. “Popularized by adult educator Malcolm Knowles, andragogy relies on five basic tenants: (a) adult learners are self-directed, (b) they possess life experience which informs their learning, (c)

they possess a desire to actively participate in the learning process, (d) their learning needs to be relevant to their lives, and (e) they are highly motivated to learn” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 2).

All students have a particular learning style that enhances their experience in the classroom and not all students learn the same way. It is imperative to learn as much as possible about different learning styles especially when it comes to a higher education classroom. Many learners come to a post-secondary school unaware of the importance in knowing they all have different levels of challenges along with different expectations in a classroom.

The importance of studying a learning style is helpful in formulating the classroom environment with productive learning. In knowing the learning styles of your students, one has to then decide how to properly utilize this information.

Different learning styles, in pedagogy, can impact the way students consume technology, which in turn impacts the technology’s effectiveness as a learning tool (O’Hanlon, 2010). This is reflected in a student’s willingness to access Blackboard™, especially in taking responsibility for their own learning. O’Hanlon (2010) states that collaboration in the college classroom using online and traditional face-to-face interaction promotes true synchronous interaction such as annotating documents simultaneously, brainstorming via chat, or viewing presentations as a group no matter what time it is. Blackboard™ allows for construction of knowledge through what is actually a deeper reflection by the learner. Through groups and other learning interactions with their online peers, students acquire deeper understanding

because of the “opportunities for exposure to multiple perspectives and interpretations” (Gold, S., 2001, p. 1). The individual student then interprets and assimilates the new knowledge, embedding it within his or her own experience. According to Gold (2001), “Though people will more or less share one reality, each of us conceives of it in different ways based on our prior experiences, belief structures, and perspective” (p. 37).

Design principles account for the pedagogical differences in the way that instruction is delivered in Blackboard™ versus classroom instruction (Jacobs, 2007). Jacobs (2007) states students should know what is expected of them as good instruction begins by clarifying objectives. Objectives need to be clear in a traditional face-to-face setting, but they are equally important, if not more so, in an online environment. Jacobs goes on to say, superior objectives tell students what they are expected to learn under specific conditions, how the objective will be measured, and the time period in which the learning is to take place. But, to measure objectives a student needs direction, this direction is by the instructor. According to Gold (2001), online facilitators serve their students in three important ways. Organizing involves setting the objectives, procedural rules, and timetables for the experience of learning. The facilitator also serves a socializing function by fostering a friendly environment. Instructors also provide social role-modeling of appropriate online behavior, even assisting students in becoming better students. Instructors, in the intellectual role, guide the students’ journey to understanding. This is accomplished by probing and questioning students about their responses, by summarizing main themes, and by

linking these to assignments such as readings, written responses, and independent and group projects (Gold, 2001).

In his study, Gold (2001) continues to speak on the constructivist teacher focusing on the process of learning and the outcomes that are produced. The learning process transpires into learning in a different and constructive way. Many instructors have different tools in Blackboard™ that they migrate to such as the discussion board. The discussion board is a good tool for teaching an independent thought process, but it can also develop into much more as the instructor adds an element of community to the postings.

A group of people who exchange information and socially reinforce one another is called a learning community. While community is important especially in online learning, research indicates that online learning environments are deficient in community, which negatively impacts learning (Moller, 1998). According to (Moller,1998), while several contemporary studies have explored how community evolved within the context of a university course taken online for a semester, very little research currently exists regarding how an online learning community evolved within the curricular scope and sequence of an online learning environment. Not evaluating the entire department and university population are possible limitations that will also occur.

Theoretical Foundation

One theoretical foundation that will support this research is Jean Piaget's Theory of Learning and Constructivism. This theory is focused more on discovery,

hands-on, experiential, collaborative, project-based, and task-based learning that is supportive for the online learning environment. Piaget's theory focuses on four developmental stages: sensorimotor, preoperations, concrete operations, and formal operations (Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2009).

This theory focuses on how individuals gain knowledge throughout their lives and how it is acquired. It also focuses on how knowledge is developed within individuals and maintains that they create or construct their knowledge through experiences in life. These experiences involve people, places, ideas, and activities.

Constructivist learning activities consists of four areas: active engagement, inquiry, problem solving, and collaboration with others (Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2009). Constructivist learning plays an important part in online learning environments, such as developing cognitive, developmental, and problem solving skills. Piaget's theory is very similar in nature to other constructivist perspectives of learning.

Another foundation is David Kolb's theory of learning styles which identifies four primary learning styles; the four categories are convergers, divergers, assimilators, and accommodators (Tobolowsky, 2007). Convergers are good problem solvers preferring concrete things, direction and goals, these learners like discussions. Divergers are very people-oriented with creativity and imaginative as their range of options; their goal is to reach reflection in the classroom. Assimilators have ideas interest them more than people, they think on concepts or ideas in their discussions. Accommodators are doers that like seeing projects completed, adapting

to situations is extremely important. According to Kolb (1984, p.77), this learning cycle has many benefits: The learner incorporates others to explore the possibilities for the information to generate new ideas among each other enhancing activity. Links are then made with the knowledge, which in turn leads to repurposing the information and resources.

Constructivist learning is the ability for learning to become interactive between students, both in and out of the classroom, causing learners to incorporate old experiences with new experiences. Within the constructivist model, educators recognize several approaches or models of learning, including the cooperative/collaborative approach (Carswell, 2001). Carswell (2001) explains the cooperative or collaborative model of learning and argues that learning occurs as an individual interacts with other individuals. Learning results as individuals exercise, verify, solidify and improve their mental models through discussions and information sharing. Developing a safe space for collaborative inquiry is paramount in setting the stage for a constructivist learning environment (Staples, 2007). Staples (2007) also states collaborative inquiry involves the sharing of ideas and experiences where students offer their own thoughts and respond to the views of others.

In summary, this chapter highlighted the introduction of the applied research project including introduction, registered nurse (RN) background, online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environments, course management system - blackboard™, learning styles, and theoretical foundation. Based on the review, this causal-comparative research study is important because it helps to determine if

potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods. The next chapter will discuss the methodology.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The following topics will be reviewed in the methodology section: research design, subjects and sampling, instrumentation, collection of data, hypothesis, and limitations. Each topic is discussed in sequence and the essential points of each topic are summarized at the end of the section.

The purpose of this causal-comparative research study is to determine if potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using the online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods.

The independent variable associated with the study is the course delivery method with variations being the online learning environment through the main campus at Morehead State University and the traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment offered at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center. Both variations are used specifically for the delivery of RN-BSN courses. The dependent variable associated with the study is academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered specifically for the delivery of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice in both learning environments.

The measure that will be used is an independent samples t-test from SPSS

16.0, which is one of the most common used techniques for testing a hypothesis to determine if potential causal relationships exist between sample means.

Subjects and Sampling

The reason the NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice course was selected is because it had both an online and face-to-face section to review and determine if potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using the online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods.

The sample for this study consists of data from the Department of Nursing course NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice offered at Morehead State University. The data that will be analyzed is academic achievement as shown in course percentage grades for each student in this course for the online learning environment offered through the main campus at Morehead State University and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment offered at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center. The traditional face-to-face section had 6 students and the online section had 33 in NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice in fall 2011 for a total of 39 students. The traditional face-to-face section offered at the MSU at Prestonsburg had 6 students and the online section had 40 in NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice in fall 2012 for a total of 46 students. The gathering of data consists of analyzing the independent variable

and dependent variable information. The course syllabus and instructional learning guide for the online and face-to-face learning environment are very similar, but the instructors and delivery method are both different.

The researchers will analyze the online and traditional face-to-face NURB 327 course data using the independent samples t-test. This technique is a statistical test used to determine if two scores of two groups differ on a single variable. For example, it will determine if potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using the online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods.

Instrumentation

The measure that will be used is an independent samples t-test for testing a hypothesis on the basis of potential causal relationships between sample means. The independent samples t-test determines a probability that two populations are the same with respect to the variable tested. “The independent samples t-test is an inferential statistics technique used to determine whether the means of two groups are statistically significantly different at a given probability level” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009, p. 607). The samples will be collected and academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades for the online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods will be analyzed using the independent samples t-test. The independent samples t-test results will be used which

is a parametric test of significance used to determine whether, at a selected probability level, a statistically significant difference exists between the means of two independent samples. Independent samples are randomly formed without any type of matching or the members of one sample are not related to members of the other sample in any systematic way other than they are selected from the same population. If two groups are randomly formed, the expectation is that at the beginning of the study they are essentially the same with respect to performance on the dependent variable. Therefore, if they are also essentially the same at the end of the study, the null hypothesis is probably true. On the other hand the means are not close at the end of the study; the null hypothesis is probably false and should be rejected. There is no expectation that the means will be identical at the end of the study.

Collection of Data

The researchers have selected to collect data using final course percentage grades. They will measure the final course percentage grades for each student in this course for the online learning environment offered through Morehead State University and traditional face-to-face learning offered at MSU at Prestonsburg.

For each group, the researchers obtained permission from the appropriate professionals for the causal-comparative study. A causal-comparative study involves two or more groups and one independent variable that attempts to identify cause-effect relationships or involves comparisons. The final course percentage grades used will have no identifying information obtained for this study. The statistical data will help the researchers to determine whether there is a difference between the online and

traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment and academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades.

The two groups consist of: Group 1 - the online students offered at the main campus through Morehead State University and Group 2 - the traditional face-to-face offered at MSU at Prestonsburg students. The independent variable associated with the study is the course delivery method with variations being the online learning environment through the main campus at Morehead State University and the traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment offered at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center. Both variations are used specifically for the delivery of RN-BSN courses. The dependent variable associated with the study is academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered specifically for the delivery of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice in both learning environments.

Hypothesis

In addressing the proposed research question, “Do potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using the online learning environment offered through the main campus at Morehead State University and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment offered at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center?” the causal-comparative research study tested the following hypothesis:

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a statistically significant difference between academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades for non-traditional students at Morehead State University who completed NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice for the fall 2011 and fall 2012 traditional face-to-face and online sections.

Null Hypothesis: There is no statistically significant difference between academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades for non-traditional students at Morehead State University who completed NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice for the fall 2011 and fall 2012 traditional face-to-face and online sections.

Limitations

This causal-comparative research study was primarily limited by a small sample size. The RN-BSN online track had more students registered in the NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice course than the face-to-face track. The Department of Nursing at Morehead State University was approached by Big Sandy Community and Technical College to offer the RN-BSN face-to-face track at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center. This Community and Technical College guaranteed the Department of Nursing that there would be large cohorts, but the previous two cohorts have been rather small. The smaller face-to-face track cohorts in comparison to the larger online track cohorts impact or influence the application or interpretation of the results of the study because the group statistics vary. There will no longer be new cohorts officially admitted to the RN-BSN face-to-

face track due to this limitation.

Another limitation of the causal-comparative research study was that the only dependent variable associated with the study is academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice. Having more contact with the target sample would have enhanced this causal-comparative research study. For example, additional dependent variables such as a survey for student satisfaction and/or a questionnaire for student perceptions of an online learning environment compared to a traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment could have been analyzed for the study.

An additional limitation of the causal-comparative research study was time constraints. The scope and parameters of this quantitative study are limited in several ways. For example, not having technology skills to alleviate fear of online courses in the online track could result in final course percentage grades being affected. Students need to feel comfortable with technology and have initiative and self-discipline to be successful in online learning environments. The RN-BSN online track and face-to-face track also have different instructors with varying communication and teaching styles. Having more contact with the target sample would have enhanced this causal-comparative research study. If time permitted, a focus group could have been formed to gather qualitative research from a group of registered nurses about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards an online learning environment compared to a traditional face-to-face classroom learning

environment.

In summary, this chapter highlighted the introduction of the applied research project including research design, subjects and sampling, instrumentation, collection of data, hypothesis, and limitations. The next chapter will discuss the presentation of data.

CHAPTER IV: PRESENTATION OF DATA

The following topics will be reviewed in the presentation of data section: data analysis and results. Each topic is discussed in sequence and the essential points of each topic are summarized at the end of the section.

Data Analysis

A causal-comparative research study was used to gather the data for the dependent and independent variables. The causal-comparative study involved an independent variable and dependent variable that attempted to identify cause-effect relationships or comparisons. The independent variable associated with the study is the course delivery method with variations being the online learning environment through the main campus at Morehead State University and the traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment offered at the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center. Both variations are used specifically for the delivery of RN-BSN courses. The dependent variable associated with the study is academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered specifically for the delivery of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice in both learning environments. Final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course were analyzed to identify any statistically significant difference in outcomes based on delivery method of the course between the online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment.

The attempt was to use the statistical tool, SPSS 16.0, to help calculate the

independent samples t-test results. The test variable selected was final percentage grades and the grouping variables selected were face-to-face = “0” and online = “1”. The confidence interval percentage was on default at 95%. Using this statistical tool helped compare the scores. The independent samples t-test results provided the mean test score for each group, the standard deviation, and the standard error of the mean, including other statistics to assist with the interpretation. It was important to know if the student’s final course percentage grades were statistically different from the online learning environment offered through the main campus at Morehead State University compared to the traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment offered at MSU at Prestonsburg.

According to Gay, et al (2009), the first set of statistics comes under the heading “Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances”. This test determines if the variances of the two groups in the analysis are equal. If they are not, then SPSS 16.0 makes an adjustment to the remainder of the statistics to account for this difference. When the observed probability value (PV) of the Levene’s test is greater than .05, the statistics for the independent samples t-test results will be “equal variance assumed”, because there were no statistically significant difference in the variances found. When the observed probability value for the Levene’s test is less than .05, the statistics for the independent samples t-test results will be, “equal variance not assumed”, because the difference of the group variances is statistically significant (p. 607).

Through the results of the independent samples t-test, the researchers will learn whether the difference between the online learning environment academic

achievement as shown in final course percentage grades are statistically different from the traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment. If there is a difference it will be suggested that the university accommodate for this difference by adding more online courses, adding more traditional face-to-face classes, or designing a hybrid program.

Results

The three columns in Table 3 and Table 4 labeled *t*, *df*, and Sig. (2-tailed) provide the standard “answer” for the t-test. They provide the value of “*t*”, the degrees of freedom (number of subjects, minus 2 in this case), and the significance level (often referred to as the *p*). The data used was the “equal variances assumed” row. The t-test assumes an equality of means. Therefore a significant result indicates that the means are not equivalent. When drawing conclusions about the t-test, the direction of the difference (i.e., which mean was larger than the other) was stated. The data also included information about the value of (*t*, the degrees of freedom, the significance level (often referred to as the *p*), and the means and standard deviations for the two groups).

An independent-samples t-test was calculated comparing the mean score of students who registered for the fall 2011 traditional face-to-face section of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice to the mean score of students who registered for the fall 2011 online section of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice. No statistically significant difference was found ($t(37) = 1.771, p > .05$ because the mean of the fall 2011 traditional face-to-face section of NURB 327

- Transition to Professional Nursing Practice ($m = 95.53$, $sd = 2.39$) was not statistically significant or different from the mean of fall 2011 online section of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice ($m = 87.93$, $sd = 10.36$). The sig. (2-tailed) is often referred to as the p .

An independent-samples t-test was calculated comparing the mean score of students who registered for the fall 2012 traditional face-to-face section of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice to the mean score of students who registered for the fall 2012 online section of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice. No statistically significant difference was found ($t(44) = -1.840$, $p > .05$) because the mean of the fall 2012 traditional face-to-face section of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice ($m = 87.19$, $sd = 18.21$) was not statistically significant different from the mean of fall 2012 online section of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice ($m = 93.00$, $sd = 4.01$). The sig. (2-tailed) is often referred to as the p .

The independent samples t-test was used to compare the data from one group to the data in another group. Since the t value was positive, it means that the traditional face-to-face group has a higher mean of 95.53 than the online group with a mean of 87.93. Since the t value was negative, the online group has a higher mean of 93.00 than the traditional face-to-face group with a mean of 87.19. In reality, it isn't very important whether the t-test is positive or negative as long as the researcher reports the means of each group, and it is acceptable to drop the negative sign when reporting the t value.

Table 2: NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice	
Course	Students Registered
Traditional Face-to-Face_fall 2011	6
Traditional Face-to-Face_fall 2012	33
Online_fall 2011	6
Online_fall 2012	40

Table 3:					
Group Statistics	Group_2011	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Grades_2011	Traditional Face-to-Face	6	95.5333	2.38886	.97525
	Online	33	87.9258	10.36376	1.80410

Independent Samples Test			Grades_2011	
			Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F		1.314	
	Sig.		.259	
independent samples t-test results for Equality of Means	t		1.771	3.710
	df		37	34.552
	Sig. (2-tailed) (often referred to as <i>p</i>)		.085	.001
	Mean Difference		7.60758	7.60758
	Std. <u>Error</u> Difference		4.29523	2.05083

95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	-1.09539	3.44225
	Upper	16.31054	11.77290

Table 4:

Group Statistics	Group_2012	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Grades_2012	Traditional Face-to-Face	6	87.1917	18.21051	7.43441
	Online	40	92.9972	4.01207	.63436

Independent Samples Test		Grades_2012	
		Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	38.507	
	Sig.	.000	
independent samples t-test results for Equality of Means	t	-1.840	-.778
	df	44	5.073
	Sig. (2-tailed) (often referred to as <i>p</i>)	.073	.471
	Mean Difference	-5.80558	-5.80558
	Std. Error Difference	3.15554	7.46142
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	-12.16516
	Upper	.55400	13.29186

In our example above, the research compared the scores of the students who registered for the fall 2011 traditional face-to-face section of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice to the students who registered for the fall 2011 online section of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice and compared the scores of the students who registered for the fall 2012 traditional face-to-face section of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice to the students who registered for the fall 2012 online section of NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice. The research did not consist of any statistically significant difference. Therefore, no statistically significant difference exists in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional student learners offered at the main campus at Morehead State University and MSU at Prestonsburg who completed NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice for the fall 2011 and fall 2012 online and traditional face-to-face sections.

In summary, this chapter highlighted the presentation of data of the applied research project including data analysis and results. The next chapter will discuss the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The following topics will be reviewed: conclusion and recommendations.

Each topic is discussed in sequence.

Conclusion

The purpose of this causal-comparative research study was to determine if potential causal relationships exist in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners registered for a post-licensure Registered Nurse - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program course using the online and traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment delivery methods.

This applied research study focused on the effects of academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades of non-traditional learners who completed NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice for the fall 2011 and fall 2012 online and traditional face-to-face sections.

The conclusion drawn from the results of this research concentrate on the fact there was no statistically significant difference that exists in academic achievement as shown in final course percentage grades for non-traditional students at Morehead State University who completed NURB 327 - Transition to Professional Nursing Practice for the fall 2011 and fall 2012 online and traditional face-to-face sections.

In summary, there will no longer be new cohorts officially admitted to the RN-BSN traditional face-to-face track through the MSU at Prestonsburg regional campus center. This is due to limitations including a small sample size, additional

dependent variables, and time constraints.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this causal-comparative research study, having more contact with the target sample would have enhanced this causal-comparative research study. The researcher's recommendations on further research would include additional dependent variables such as a survey for student satisfaction and/or a questionnaire for student perceptions of an online learning environment compared to a traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment. As well as a focus group to gather qualitative research from a group of registered nurses about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards an online learning environment compared to a traditional face-to-face classroom learning environment. The focus group could consist of current nurses, faculty members, members of the community, and anyone with an interest in seeing the RN-BSN program expand in the Big Sandy area of Eastern Kentucky. This valuable qualitative research tool would likely have 6-10 people in a relatively low cost operation of moderated discussions. After conducting the focus group sessions, the analysis of the data collected would interpret the possible continuation or the likelihood the traditional face-to-face cohort would be offered again in the future.

A student or faculty survey using a Likert-scale to can be used to generate questions and analyze them using a comparison of the means and barriers by listing from most to least severe. For example, the format of a typical five-level likert item could be: strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; or strongly

agree.

The following questionnaire sampling strategy for this study would consist of 39 (n=39) for fall 2011 or 46 (n=46) for fall 2012 RN-BSN online track students incorporating a purposive sample. Kumar (2011) states this sampling method is selected to provide the best information to achieve the objective of the study. The objective of this study is to find valuable information on Blackboard™ usage for this particular group. The second purposive sample would consist of the faculty teaching in the RN-BSN online track. The same objective would to be tested with the faculty on Blackboard™ usage.

A student and faculty questionnaire could consist of questions pertaining to the usage of Blackboard™. The questionnaire for both the student and faculty members would help in the development of future features that are useful and helpful in the effectiveness as an instructional tool.

In summary, this chapter highlighted the conclusion and recommendations of the applied research project. This causal-comparative research study could help Morehead State University to make better decisions about developing more online learning programs and courses, adding more online programs and courses, and funding for more information technology related instructional resources. This study will also be used as a resource to better assist Morehead State University in recruitment efforts because it will attract more non-traditional learners due to the delivery method. The recommendations are only a few suggestions that can be considered for future research.

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APPENDICES

- A. NURB 327: Transition to Professional Nursing Practice Syllabus
- B. NURB 327: Transition to Professional Nursing Practice Instructional and Learning Guide

APPENDIX A

MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Science and Technology

School of Health Sciences

Department of Nursing

Baccalaureate Nursing Program

NSB

NURB 327: Transition to Professional Nursing

Syllabus

Fall 2012

The Morehead State University BNP is nationally accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 530, Washington, D.C. 20036

MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Science and Technology

School of Health Sciences

Department of Nursing

Baccalaureate Nursing Program

Fall 2012

COURSE NUMBER: NURB 327

COURSE TITLE: Transition to Professional Nursing Practice

COURSE CREDIT

AND CLOCK HOURS: 4 semester hours of credit

4 hours of lecture per week.

PLACEMENT IN

CURRICULUM: First semester of the postlicensure (RN Track) component of BNP.

FACULTY:

Didactic: Kim Clevenger, EdD., MSN, RN, BC

BNP & RN-BSN Coordinator

Associate Professor of Nursing

Office: 201-H CHER

Office Phone: 606-783-2630; Cell Phone: 606-465-5105

Email: k.clevenger@moreheadstate.edu

Office Hours via email and phone

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

NURB 327: Transition to Professional Nursing Practice

Restriction: Baccalaureate post licensure students – Registered Nurses

Emphasis of this course is on the role transition and socialization of the registered nurse to professional nursing. Essential content includes concepts and theories of health, professional nursing standards, culture, and community based care and the nursing process.

GOALS OF THE COURSE:

1. To facilitate acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for the adult learner.
2. To assist the RN student in the socialization process to the role of a professional nurse.
3. To allow the RN student an opportunity to increase his/her knowledge of the foundational concepts related to wellness, health promotion and maintenance, culture, community based care and the nursing process.
4. To enhance the understanding of factors related to the current and future health care environments.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Describe how the practice of professional nursing is guided by the use of the nursing process, critical thinking, independent judgment and decision-making.
2. Communicate effectively in a variety of spoken, written, and technological formats.
3. Analyze the role professional nursing has as a member of the health care team in changing health care delivery models.
4. Describe current scientific knowledge, nursing theory and nursing research used to deliver quality health care in accordance with the ANA Standards of Care and Code of Ethics for Nurses.
5. Describe leadership roles within interdisciplinary health care team and the profession of nursing.
6. Provide compassionate, sensitive, spiritual and culturally appropriate nursing care for individuals and families at any stage of the life span.
7. Analyze state and national issues affecting professional nursing practice in the context of cultural diversity.
8. Maintain a health care environment that is conducive to wellness and health promotion.

TOPICAL OUTLINE

Unit I: Beginning the Transition to Professional Nursing Practice

Unit II: Professional Nursing Practice Environment

Unit III: Roles in Professional Nursing Practice

Unit IV: Future Directions for Professional Nursing

TEACHING STRATEGIES:

Synchronous and asynchronous discussion via Blackboard, Internet searches and readings, active learning exercises, audiovisual materials, computer assisted instruction (CAI), World Wide Web assignments, written assignments and learning activities via Blackboard.

EVALUATION METHODS:

Each student is expected to maintain satisfactory performance in all course requirements. A final course grade of "C" is necessary in order to progress to the next sequenced nursing course.

GRADING SCALE:

90 - 100 = A

80 - 89 = B

76 - 79 = C

68 - 75 = D

Below 68 = E

GRADING PROCEDURE

1. Each assignment/test grade assigned in the course is recorded to the tenth position with further decimal places dropped.
2. The official grade book for the course is maintained by course faculty. The Blackboard grade book is not the official grade book for the course.
3. All students are expected to complete their Final by the scheduled time.
4. Quizzes may be given over lecture content, reading assignments, and any other assigned activities. Students must take the quizzes during the allotted time. There will be no make-up quizzes given.

Evaluation will be based on assigned course points (see below). To calculate student performance in a course the grade will be determined by the earned student points divided by the total points in the course. *The total number of points in a course may change following test item analysis and students will be notified of any change in total points available.*

Assignments 215

Discussion Board 175

Total: 390

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

1. Theory: I strongly recommend you to log on to Blackboard and ***University email*** daily in order to stay current with the course and the announcements. University email should be set to the default email. **All communication sent from faculty will be sent through your University email account.**

COURSE PROCEDURES:

Requirements for the course include:

1. All written assignments must be completed by the required due date/time. Unless otherwise stated, all assignments will be due each week by **midnight, Sunday night**. A late assignment contract may be granted, at the **discretion** of the faculty, if circumstances warrant and **MUST** be discussed **PRIOR** to the assigned deadline. Late assignments for Discussion Board postings **WILL NOT** be granted **under any**

circumstances due to the timely nature of discussion. When a late assignment contract is granted, the student will have **10%** deducted from the grade earned on the late assignment; therefore, **90%** is the maximum grade achievable for the assignment.

2. All written assignments must be completed as a **Word, Rich Text Format (RTF) or PDF** document. If you do not have Microsoft software products you can download a free office suite that allows you to save your document as a Word, RTF or PDF document. Go to <http://www.openoffice.org/> to download a copy of OpenOffice Writer.

3. In compliance with the University's philosophy regarding attainment of general educational competencies, all written work must reflect correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Students are expected to communicate effectively using standard written English. Students are expected to produce clear writing that is free of distracting errors in grammar and spelling in all written assignments. Work that does not meet this expectation will be penalized accordingly. Students are encouraged to seek assistance in MSU's Tutoring and Learning Center located in two areas on MSU's Campus: Allie Young Hall Room 220 and Camden Carroll Library Room 305. In addition, online tutoring is available through Blackboard <http://www2.moreheadstate.edu/tutoring/index.aspx?id=60087> . **For more information on learning lab services and programs, call the TLC at (606) 783-5200, or visit TLC in 220 Allie Young Hall.**

4. Academic honesty: Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism or helping others to commit these acts will not be tolerated. Academic honesty will result in severe disciplinary action including, but not limited to: failure of the students assessment item or course, and/or dismissal from MSU. If you are not sure what constitutes academic honesty, read The Eagle: Student Handbook or ask your instructor. The policy is located at <http://www2.moreheadstate.edu/dsl/eaglehandbook/>. For example: Copying information from the Internet is plagiarism if appropriate credit is not given.

5. All students are expected to participate in group activities or online discussions as directed in weekly assignments.

6. In addition to the required text, students will be expected to complete assigned readings or visit web sites posted in weekly content.

7. All students are expected to participate in Discussion Board activities as assigned. The Discussion Board on the course site provides a forum for class discussions about various content related issues. Please remember that you should use professional language when participating in the discussion board assignment. Do not use slang terms or abbreviations.

8. **Discussion Board Assignments:** Asynchronous discussions will be a vital component of the course. The Discussion Board Grading Rubric (found in this syllabus and the

Course Document section of the BlackBoard course site) will be used to evaluate discussion board assignments. During asynchronous discussions, the student will be expected to:

- a. Respond to the instructor's posted question. The response to the question should analyze, describe or reference appropriate concepts/theories from readings. Your response must be accompanied by references within the text as well and listed at the bottom of your post. These references should be cited in APA format; however please note that Blackboard will only allow block format without indention so it is ok if your references are not indented (only for Blackboard Discussion Assignments). You are required to support your initial response with your readings.
- b. Provide a minimum of three meaningful contributions per discussion (Your original post and two responses to two of your classmates). Your initial post must be made prior to or **by Thursday 11:59 pm** of each discussion board assignment. Your two responses to your peers are **due by Sunday 11:59 pm** per each discussion board assignment unless otherwise instructed.
- c. Provide substantial comments to colleagues' responses. Saying "I agree." (Or similar) does not constitute an acceptable comment.
- d. **Respond** to at least two of your colleagues' postings in one or more of the following suggested ways:
 - Ask a probing or clarifying question.
 - Share an insight from having read your colleague's posting.
 - Offer and support an opinion.
 - Validate an idea with your own experience.
 - Make a suggestion.
 - Expand on your colleague's posting.
 - Ask for evidence that supports the posting

9. In addition to the required Discussion Board activities, a "Questions for the Instructor" forum will be established at the beginning of the course. Please communicate any questions you have for faculty via this forum as opposed to private emails. Usually if one student has a question, others will have the same question and/or will benefit from the response. Please check this forum each time you log on for new postings. However, if the matter is personal, please feel free to contact me via email or phone.

10. All electronic communications with students will take place using the assigned **University email address**. The University email account must be checked regularly. The student may forward University email to a preferred account. To set your preferred email account, access "Online Processing" through your secure University Web account. Your email information is located in the "Technology Account Maintenance" section.

11. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) In compliance with the ADA, all students with a documented disability are entitled to reasonable accommodations and services to support their academic success and safety. Though a request for services may be made at any time, services are best applied when they are requested at or before the start of

the semester. To receive accommodations and services the student should immediately contact the Disability Services Coordinator in the Office of Academic and Career Services, 204 E ADUC, 606-783-5188, <http://www2.moreheadstate.edu/disability/>

12. Campus Safety Statement: Emergency response information will be discussed in face-to-face classes. However, while in MSU buildings (if you are visiting campus) students should familiarize themselves with the nearest exit routes in the event evacuation becomes necessary. You should notify your instructor at the beginning of the semester if you have special needs or will require assistance during an emergency evacuation. Students should familiarize themselves with emergency response protocols at <http://www.moreheadstate.edu/emergency>

13. Smoking policy: The *Eagle Student Handbook* contains the tobacco policy. This policy is documented in a University Administrative Regulation 902.01 which is available online at: <http://www2.moreheadstate.edu/dsl/eaglehandbook/>

14. Read the Guidelines for Online Learning, Frequently Asked Questions, Netiquette for Online Courses, and Avoiding Plagiarism in College Papers found in the Start Here folder on the course BlackBoard site.

15. **Library Materials:** Students may request books or articles from the Camden-Carroll Library by:

Phone: 606-783-2819 or 1-800-423-0884

Fax: 606-783-2799

Online: <http://www.moreheadstate.edu/library/>

MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Nursing Baccalaureate Nursing Program

Program Specific: Post-licensure (RN-BSN) Program

STANDARDIZED TESTING POLICY

Purpose: To outline standardized testing requirements in the Baccalaureate Nursing Program curriculum for individuals enrolled in the Post-Licensure Baccalaureate Nursing Program.

Requirements: Health Education Systems Incorporated (HESI) examinations are nationally standardized examinations that are content-specific and based on the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) Testing Blueprint. HESI's online exams test students on their skills in clinical application and critical thinking which are cornerstones of BSN student preparation. HESI provides institutional and student diagnostic reports that include an item-by-item topic comparison between Morehead State University's BSN group's percentage answered correctly and the national group norm answered correctly. Additionally, HESI provides an individualized detailed remediation plan for the students regarding their specific areas of weakness.

HESI exams are utilized in the following RN-BSN Program courses: NURB 461 Nursing Leadership, NURB 498 Nursing Senior Seminar, and NURB 499C Advanced Nursing Practicum.

Use of Standardized Testing in the Post-Licensure (RN-BSN) Program Curriculum Course	HESI Exam Utilized	How HESI Exam is Utilized	Requirement for Remediation
NURB 461	Leadership/Management	Final exam grade based upon conversion percentage score	Any student scoring less than 850 on the exam
NURB 498	RN-Exit	An exam grade based upon the conversion percentage score	Any student scoring less than 850 on the exam
NURB 499C	RN-BSN Exam	An exam grade based upon the conversion percentage score	Any student scoring less than 850 on the exam

APPENDIX B

MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Nursing

Baccalaureate Nursing Program

N S B

**NURB 327: Transitions to Professional Nursing
Practice**

Instructional and Learning Guide

Fall 2012

The Morehead State University BNP is nationally accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 530, Washington, D.C. 20036

Baccalaureate Nursing Program (BNP)

Mission

The mission of the Baccalaureate Nursing Program is to provide excellence in baccalaureate nursing education which prepares graduates to promote health and well-being among the people of eastern Kentucky, the greater Commonwealth, and those whom our graduates serve in the global community.

Philosophy

The philosophy for the Baccalaureate Nursing Program at Morehead State University identifies the underlying beliefs and values of the faculty and describes the beliefs about the metaparadigm of nursing – person, health, nursing, environment and baccalaureate nursing education.

Person. The nursing faculty view each person as a unique, dynamic being who is more than and different from the sum of biopsychosocial, cultural, spiritual and developmental dimensions and is in constant interaction with an ever changing environment. The person is viewed as a member of a family, group and local and global communities. The nursing faculty places a high value on life and human dignity. They recognize that all life experiences involve the dynamic and complex processes of human development and the achievement of personal growth through learning.

Health. Health is viewed in a holistic manner, as a dynamic state of being that moves along a continuum from wellness to death, where the person/client effectively adapts to altered biopsychosocial needs while influenced by environment, cultural and global influences.

Nursing. The nursing faculty believes nursing is a caring, dynamic health care discipline that places the client as the focus of efforts. Professional nurses use the nursing process to assist the person/client at any stage of developmental level/lifespan within their cultural context to promote, maintain or restore optimal level of health or achieve a dignified death. The role of the professional nurse is multifaceted and encompasses manager, coordinator/provider of care, collaborator, teacher-learner, advocate, change agent, leader, researcher, and member of a profession. Through a mutual partnership, the professional nurse assists clients/ families, groups, communities, and populations across the lifespan in their adaptation to changes in their internal/external environments in a holistic manner. The professional nurse is committed to serving the needs of others, regardless of ethnic identity, race, gender, age, status, diagnosis, or ability to pay.

To implement this role, the professional nurse must:

- possess strong critical thinking and assessment skills;

- communicate effectively in a variety of spoken, written, and technological formats;

- possess competence, confidence, and commitment;
- base practice on current knowledge, theory, and research;
- assume responsibility and accountability for practice;
- serve as a member and leader within interdisciplinary health care teams;
- foster trust without dependence;
- provide compassionate, sensitive, spiritual and culturally appropriate care;
- act with altruism and integrity;
- honor patients' right to make decisions about their care;
- act in accordance with ANA code of ethics for nursing and accepted standards of practice.

Environment. The nursing faculty believes the environment is a complex integration of physical, political, social and cultural factors. The relationship between the person/client and the environment is open and ongoing throughout the lifespan.

Baccalaureate Nursing Education. The nursing faculty believes that baccalaureate nursing education is based upon a foundation from the natural sciences, behavioral sciences, humanities, mathematical sciences, nursing research and nursing theory. Incorporation of principles from this foundation provides for the development of critical thinking, decision making and independent judgment in the educational preparation for evidence-based practice in nursing. Further, the nursing faculty believes that teaching/learning is a partnership in which the nurse educator structures appropriate educational objectives to achieve desired student learning outcomes. The student, as partner, demonstrates commitment, motivation and preparation to actively participate in the learning process. Each individual learner has unique learning needs and participates actively in the learning process through interaction with the nurse educator in progression toward educational goals. The nurse educator selects essential content and provides multiple and varied learning activities which progress from simple to complex and from general to specific.

Operational Definitions

Vertical Threads:

- Culture- the sum total of the knowledge, morals, traits, learned behaviors and spiritual beliefs of a group of people that are acquired as a member of group/community and establish the uniqueness of the group/community.
- Health promotion- the science & art of helping others modify their behaviors to progress or maintain a state of optimal health.
- Lifespan- developmental and transitional stages from birth to death
- Nursing process- a problem solving method utilizing assessment, nursing diagnoses, planning, implementation and evaluation to address the needs of a person.

Horizontal:

- Communication- the exchange of information between two or more persons including oral, written, verbal, and nonverbal format.
- Nutrition- all the processes involved in the taking in and utilization of nutrients for growth, repair, and maintenance of health. These processes included ingestion, digestion, absorption, and cellular metabolism.
- Pharmacological- the study of the biopsychosocial effects of chemicals and their origin, nature, properties, and effects on the person.
- Technology- the practical application of scientific knowledge to increase efficiency of management of client care through available resources.
- Legal- all nursing rules/regulations that impact nursing, their practice setting and their clients.
- Ethical- moral practices and beliefs of professional nurses who work together in the delivery of health care and the inquiry into the moral dimensions of conduct consistent with ANA Code of Ethics.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- The organizing framework is derived from the philosophy. Lifespan and health are the organizing concepts for the program curriculum and individual courses.

Each individual client is considered within his/her cultural context. Professional nursing occurs at the intersection of the individual and the environment.

- The vertical concepts of the organizing framework are health, lifespan, nursing process, and culture. These concepts are studied according to the student's level in the BNP. The horizontal concepts of the curriculum are communication, nutrition, pharmacological, technology, legal, and ethical. These concepts are present throughout the curriculum and are applied to specific course content.

- The role of the professional nurse is integrated throughout the curriculum. New concepts expand student's capabilities to practice as a professional nurse in a variety of structured and unstructured health care settings. The nursing process is leveled by the extent of assessment, nursing diagnoses and interventions required. With increasing complexity, students assess, provide, plan and deliver care to individuals/groups of all ages and stages of development.

MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Nursing

Baccalaureate Nursing Program

Level Objectives

Level One:

By completion of level one the student will be able to:

1. Translate critical thinking skills through the nursing process in the planning and provision of nursing care to well persons.
2. Identify elements of effective communication in a variety of spoken, written, and technological formats.
3. Show competence and initiative within personal professional practice.
4. Identify current scientific knowledge, nursing theory and nursing research necessary to deliver quality health care in accordance with the ANA Standards of Care and Code of Ethics for Nurses.
5. Identify leadership roles within interdisciplinary health care team and the profession of nursing.
6. Identify components of compassionate, sensitive, spiritual and culturally appropriate nursing care for patients at any stage of the life span.
7. Determine local and state issues in the context of cultural diversity.
8. Identify a health care environment that is conducive to wellness and health promotion.

Level Two:

By completion of level two, the student will be able to:

1. Apply critical thinking skills through the nursing process in the planning and provision of nursing care for persons with common alterations in health.
2. Incorporate effective communication in a variety of spoken, written, and technological formats.
3. Demonstrate competence and initiative as member of the health care team.
4. Demonstrate current scientific knowledge, nursing theory and use of nursing research to deliver quality health care in accordance with the ANA Standards of Care and Code of Ethics for Nurses.

5. Incorporate leadership roles within interdisciplinary health care team and the profession of nursing.
6. Provide compassionate, sensitive, spiritual and culturally appropriate nursing care for patients at any stage of the life span.
7. Analyze national issues in the context of cultural diversity.
8. Advocate for a health care environment that is conducive to wellness and health promotion.

Level Three:

Graduates of the BNP will be able to demonstrate the role of the professional nurse by:

1. Critiquing the application of critical thinking skills through the nursing process in the planning and provision of nursing care.
2. Evaluating effective communication in a variety of spoken, written, and technological formats.
3. Demonstrating competence, initiative, and commitment to the nursing profession.
4. Integrating current scientific knowledge, nursing theory and nursing research to deliver quality health care in accordance with the ANA Standards of Care and Code of Ethics for Nurses.
5. Assuming leadership roles within interdisciplinary health care teams and the profession of nursing.
6. Evaluating compassionate, sensitive, spiritual and culturally appropriate nursing care for patients at any stage of the life span.
7. Analyzing global issues in the context of cultural diversity.
8. Creating a health care environment that is conducive to wellness and health promotion.

NURB 327 Course	Didactic Topic	Assigned Content/Readings	Other Assignments, Exams, Etc
Calendar Date Unit I: Week 1	<i>NURB 327</i> A. Orientation B. Evaluation Process C. APA Requirements	Week 1: APA Learning Module	* Note all assignments for the course are due by Sunday 11:59pm unless otherwise noted. Note that all initial discussion board posts for the course are due by Thursday's and posts to peers by Sunday midnight. Discussion Board, Syllabus Agreement Form, Student Handbook

			Agreement Form, APA Quiz, & APA Mini Paper
Week 2	Socialization Process Professionalism	Week 2: Socialization and Nursing as a Profession Learning Module	Discussion Board Assignment
Week 3	Philosophy Science of Nursing	Week 3: Science of Nursing Learning Module	Discussion Board Assignment
Week 4	Nursing Theory	Week 4: Models and Theories Learning Module	Newsletter Paper Assignment
Unit II: Week 5	Health Care Delivery Systems	Week 5: Health & Health Care Delivery Systems Learning Module	Discussion Board Assignment
Week 6	Evidence Based Practice	Week 6: Research and Evidence Based Practice	Research Paper Assignment
Week 7	Cultural Competencies Health Literacy	Week 7: Cultural Competencies & Health Literacy Learning Module	Discussion Board Assignment
Week 8	The Environment and Health Care	Week 8: Environment Learning Module	Discussion Board Assignments
Unit III: Week 9	Public Policy	Week 9: Public Policy Learning Module	Discussion Board Assignment
Week 10	Teaching and Learning	Week 10: Teaching and Learning Module	Teaching and Learning Paper Assignment
Week 11	Leadership	Week 11: Leadership Learning Module	Leadership Paper Assignment Discussion Board Assignment
Week 12 & 13	Quality Improvement. Technology in Health Care: Nursing Informatics	Week 12 & 13: Technology and Quality Learning Module	Discussion Board Assignments
Unit IV: Weeks 14-16	Society: Influence on Health Care Career Options Professional Nursing Careers	Week 14-16: Future Directions Learning Module	Final Paper PowerPoint Presentation & Discussion Board Assignments
Week 17: Finals		Finals	