Bridging Program's Education Environment and Internationally Educated Nurses' Role Transition

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INTRODUCTION

In Canada, nursing bridging programs have been developed to help IENs provide evidence of recent practice, address identified gaps in their education and work experience, and support their role transition. Different models of bridging programs exist across Canada. There is currently limited information available that focuses on a bridging program’s education environment and how this contributes to IENs’ ability to transition to the workplace. While there seems to be some anecdotal evidence that such programs are useful in helping IENs pass the licensure exam in Canada, it is not clear what these programs’ value is in preparing IENs to transition to the workplace. It is extremely important to understand IENs’ experiences with bridging programs, and how these programs influence their ability to practice and transition within a Canadian health care context. This information will make it possible for bridging program providers to develop and implement policies and practices that are most meaningful to IENs in transitioning to their new roles and responsibilities as nursing professionals in Canada. Therefore, this study sought to explore a bridging program’s education environment and role transition of internationally educated nurses (IENs).

METHODS

• Transitions theory (Meleis, 2010); Meleis, Sawyer, Im, Hilfinger Messias, & Schumacker, 2010) (see Figure 1)
• Purpose sampling
• Research ethics board clearance
• Survey instrument
• socio-demographic characteristics; students’ perception of bridging program education environment using the Dundee Ready Education Environment Measure (DREEM) (Roff, 2005); students’ role transition using the Role Transitions Survey Instrument (Doody, Tuohy, & Deasy, 2012)
• Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis

RESULTS

Majority of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 40 years old. Fifty-nine were females. The number of years that the respondents in this study worked as RNs before coming to Canada varied greatly. More than half of the respondents have lived in Canada from four to six years. Fifty-three of all the respondents worked as nurses prior to arriving in Canada. Most of the respondents were working in Asia before coming to Canada. Twenty-two respondents have not worked as nurses for 1 – 3 years since arriving in Canada. Results showed that all bridging program education environment components were described as “agree.” Additionally, results indicate that all role transition subscales were described as “agree.” There is no significant relationship between the respondents’ socio-demographic characteristics and their perceptions on role transition. There is a significant relationship between the respondents’ perception of the teaching process within their bridging program’s education environment and role transition. Respondents identified four categories of problems/issues in their bridging programs. These were: concern with teachers, program content issues, program pace, and financial issues.

CONCLUSIONS

The program administration (PA) should endeavour to address the specific needs of its students by creating individual learning plans. They should also put in place quality improvement initiatives to understand the issues raised by students. Additionally, PA should consider collaborating with placement agencies in developing practices and programs that will help make school to work role transition less stressful for IENs. It is further suggested that the PA consider exploring other aspects of IENs’ socio-demographic characteristics to determine possible relationships with regard to their role transition. Further research involving a larger population may help provide a better understanding of a bridging program’s education environment components and how it influences IENs’ perceptions of role transition. PA program administration should look into reports of incivility raised by students, and find ways to address this concern. For future researchers, using a longitudinal, mixed methods design may provide a much deeper understanding of the relationship between and among the dependent and independent variables of the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The program administration (PA) should endeavour to address the specific needs of its students by creating individual learning plans. They should also put in place quality improvement initiatives to understand the issues raised by students. Additionally, PA should consider collaborating with placement agencies in developing practices and programs that will help make school to work role transition less stressful for IENs. It is further suggested that the PA consider exploring other aspects of IENs’ socio-demographic characteristics to determine possible relationships with regard to their role transition. Further research involving a larger population may help provide a better understanding of a bridging program’s education environment components and how it influences IENs’ perceptions of role transition. PA program administration should look into reports of incivility raised by students, and find ways to address this concern. For future researchers, using a longitudinal, mixed methods design may provide a much deeper understanding of the relationship between and among the dependent and independent variables of the study.


