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Student Experiences of Tutoring in an Associate Degree Nursing Education Program

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Student Experiences of Tutoring in an Associate Degree

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Abstract

Retention in higher education is a topic of concern, especially in high demand programs. The nursing profession is currently experiencing a shortage and nursing schools are seemingly not able to successfully graduate enough candidates to overcome the shortage. Developing targeted retention solutions for nursing education programs that work not only impacts the higher education community but the nation as a whole. Peer and professional tutoring services specific to nursing education as a retention solution may provide the academic and integrative impact that assists students in performance and improves retention. Understanding the experience of the student tutee is important in developing and modifying the tutoring services to create the greatest impact on retention. This study examined student experiences with peer and professional tutoring. The goal was to determine what aspects of tutoring the students felt helped them to persist in their nursing coursework. The study also attempted to determine why students prefer peer or professional tutoring based on their experiences. Participants included associate degree nursing students from a variety of semesters who attended either peer or professional tutoring. Individual interviews using a semi-structured format were conducted with participants. Colaizzi's method of analysis was be used to identify themes from the data collected. Jeffreys (2013) Nursing Universal Retention and Success Model was used as a theoretical framework. Findings reinforce the model, indicating that professional integration through engagement with peers and nursing professionals help alter student academic factors and psychological outcomes. Students interviewed articulated that all of these elements together improved their academic outcomes, increasing persistence and program retention.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Student attrition and retention in higher education is an essential topic of discussion at institutions across the country. Retaining students has an impact on both the financial and accreditation status for the institution or program. Financially, the U.S. Department of Education spent more than $650 million in the 2008-2009 academic year on first-year community college students who subsequently dropped out (Schneider & Yin, 2011). Colleges and universities depend on student-retention numbers and high progression rates to maintain the financial health of the institution (Christie, Munro, & Fisher, 2004). Accrediting bodies for nursing programs require expected levels of achievement (ELA) rates determined by the faculty and based on student demographics to be maintained for full accreditation credentialing (Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, 2017).

The ongoing national decline in student enrollment at community colleges has also generated a push to increase incoming student enrollment full-term equivalent (FTE) (IPEDS, 2016.). The steady decrease in enrollment as the nation recovers from the recession is further compounded by the ongoing lack of legislative funding, creating a combined decrease in the overall subsidy community colleges receive (Fain, 2018; Hiltonsmith & Huelsman, 2014). Production of a high-quality education while demonstrating increased enrollment and retention numbers is the ultimate goal of higher education institutions (The University of Texas System, 2013). Instituting retention interventions such as tutoring are goals targeted to improve all three of these measures.

While there is an ongoing decline in student enrollment overall, nursing programs are facing the unique situation of having an overabundance of applicants for a prescribed number of

slots (Kavilanz, 2018). In 2018, nursing programs across the United States turned away 56,000 qualified applicants (Kavilanz, 2018). A decrease in the number of qualified educators and clinical sites plays a role in limiting the number of students any one program can take and still meet accreditation, as well as state board standards (Kavilanz, 2018). Over the next six years, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017) estimates that the nursing profession will grow by 16 percent, with an estimated 1.07 million nurses needed to replace and grow the profession. Retaining the nursing students who are enrolling and getting accepted to nursing programs is vital to the overall economy.

Definition of Terms

Academic Support: Focuses solely on learning the cognitive or psychomotor skills requested by the tutee (Jeffreys, 2012).

Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN): Non-governmental accrediting body that supports nursing education by recognizing institutions that have met or exceeded standards and criteria for educational quality. The accreditation commission looks at state examination and licensing rules related to preparation for entry-level practice (Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, 2013).

Expected Level of Achievement (ELA): Associated with the accreditation process used for program accreditation by ACEN. Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (2016) defines this as "a measurable index that reflects a desired outcome" (p.5).

Health Education Systems Incorporated (HESI): Review and testing solution offered by Elsevier publishing company. Computerized testing that provides "valid and reliable HESI

exams allow you to assess student progress throughout your program and evaluate their readiness for NCLEX examination" through the use of NCLEX style questions (Elsevier, 2019)

National Council Licensure Examination-RN (NCLEX-RN): Standardized exam that is administered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing used to determine if a candidate is prepared for entry-level nursing practice (All-Nursing Schools, n.d.; GraduateNursingEDU.org, 2017).

Nontraditional undergraduate nursing student: A student who is enrolled at the undergraduate level and meets at least of the following characteristics: "1) 25 years or older, 2) commuter, 3) enrolled part-time, 4) male, 5) member of an ethnic and/or racial minority group, 6) speaks English as a second language, 7) had dependent children, 8) had a general equivalency degree, and 9) required remedial classes" (Jeffreys, 2012, p.9).

Pastoral Support: Providing all-around support and guidance on a variety of aspects of student life. This support can include guidance or discussion about personal welfare, financial support available, health issues and can also provide links to additional sources of support where appropriate (Newnham College: University of Cambridge, 2018)

Peer Mentor: A student who demonstrates academic and professional excellence in their courses mentors another student who is at the same course level. The peer mentor assists in guiding the mentee by nurturing "professional nursing values, beliefs, practices, expectations, and attitudes" (Jeffreys, 2012, p.136). The mentor does not provide academic support as a tutor would.

Peer Tutor: Frequently, a student who is at a more advanced level within the educational process. A student who has shown to be strong both academically and demonstrated professional excellence (Jeffreys, 2012).

Professional Tutor (Nursing): A licensed Registered Nurse (RN) who provides academic support to students within the nursing programs. Professional tutors work with students in content areas and test-taking skills as directed by student request (Chamberlin University, 2018).

Program Retention: Continuous enrollment in a nursing program by taking required coursework to fulfill the program's graduation requirements. Includes students who may have to repeat courses for either withdrawal and/or failure (Jeffreys, 2012).

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The ultimate goal of studying tutoring in nursing is to "improve student experience and to improve retention and progression" (Stevenson, 2009, p. 118). The nursing department at a mid-sized community college in the Midwest determined that due to the current educational and job market environment, student retention is a high priority. Concerns related to decreased ELA numbers, lower National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) first-time pass rates, and demand from community employers to produce more nurses have put pressure on the department to improve student outcomes. The decrease in ELA and an increase in attrition rates lead the nursing department to institute interventions to decrease student attrition, including offering both professional and peer tutoring services.

The nursing department has identified three areas of need for increased achievement development. The primary goal of adding nursing-specific tutoring services as a tactic is to decrease the amount of attrition the associate degree nursing (ADN) program is experiencing. A

secondary goal of nursing-specific tutoring is to improve the program ELA rates within the nursing program, graduating students within six semesters of starting the program. The third goal of the tutoring services is to improve first-time NCLEX pass rate percentages, meeting or exceeding expectations set by ACEN.

The development of a plan is to gain maximum benefit from the tutoring services. The priority is to enhance the achievement of the three goals. The initial step to enhancing services was to develop a thorough understanding of student experience when attending tutoring services. Understanding student experience can assist in creating changes to improve nursing-specific tutoring services. Developing an understanding of how outside student factors influence their tutoring experience is also essential (Jeffreys, 2012). Knowing how these factors impact a student's learning, especially those with nontraditional characteristics, is important for developing proper tools to help retain students. Examining student relationships with peer and professional tutors is vital for improving services. The development of both academic and social relationships can help to improve retention in college students (Tinto, 1987). Additionally, the development of nursing-specific professional integration during the tutoring process may help improve student success and retention in nursing coursework (Jeffreys, 2015). Improvement in the tutoring services is meant to help the nursing department reach and exceed the goals discussed above.

Viewing the tutoring program as a financially beneficial tool provides greater appeal to the administration and outside stakeholders when discussions occur about the viability of such services. Gaining a more in-depth understanding of how the students' value, utilize, and describe the tutoring services provides clear evidence to the administration and outside

stakeholders regarding the need for continued funding for tutoring services. Patterns of increased retention throughout the program, as well as increased first-time pass rates on NCLEX testing, may further demonstrate the ongoing need to fund nursing-specific tutoring services.

An additional variable that may alter the experience of students in the nursing program is the fact that many of the students are considered nontraditional. Juszkiewicz (2014) found that nationally at public two-year institutions, 87.9 percent of community college students are nontraditional. The large population of nontraditional students is similar to the college where the study took place. Gaining an understanding of nontraditional student perspectives regarding tutoring and the impact on their educational experience helps determine programmatic changes to the tutoring services.

Tinto (1987) discusses that older adult students may be more committed to the pursuit of educational goals, but these students also often experience greater demands in external life. Based on the data, since many students enrolled at a community college are classified as nontraditional, it is essential to understand how these students cope with demands and what variables make some students persist when creating improvement plans for the tutoring programs (Juszkiewicz, 2014). The knowledge of stressors or interactions that impact student persistence in nursing programs is essential when discussing interventions to improve attrition, ELA, and NCLEX scores.

Statement of the Problem

Student retention as an indicator of program success and financial feasibility is vital within the realm of higher education. For nursing programs, this is especially vital to maintain accreditation. This study explores that tutoring services impact students in a meaningful way

and improves their persistence, success, and therefore increases program retention. Within the last two years of cohort tracking, completed by the college, ELA rates have not been met at the 70 percent mark needed to maintain accreditation through ACEN (Rochester Community and Technical College, 2018).

If schools are unable to meet ELA rates, ACEN requires that the college report a substantive change related to not meeting ELA rates (Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, 2018). Part of the substantive change plan that the nursing department created included detail about retention efforts implemented to improve ELA rates. The retention plan included tutoring services as a means of improving program ELA. This was sent to ACEN in spring 2016 to demonstrate that the department is concerned and responding to decreasing retention (Rochester Community and Technical College, 2016). One of the critical elements of the retention plan included the implementation of both professional and peer tutoring services specific to nursing coursework.

Knowledge about how tutoring services affect students in both academic and social aspects is necessary when making future decisions about tutoring services (Reinheimer & McKenzie, 2011). It is crucial to understand student impact to make determinations about funding, staffing, and improvement plans (Ishiki Hendricksen, Yang, Love, & Hall, 2005). The hope is that by gaining a better understanding of the impact the tutoring services provide, a development plan can be modified to reach a wider group of nursing students, improving persistence and program ELA. Understanding factors that impact student retention when developing a plan is essential for impacting student success (Heldman, 2008). If we cannot understand the student experience, we cannot improve that experience, or increase student

performance and retention. For nursing programs, it is especially vital to understand how tutoring improves retention and maximizes this benefit to improve ELA rates. If ELA rates are not maintained as expected, the program risks losing accreditation (Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, 2018). Accreditation is required to operate a nursing program that is recognized by licensing boards (Revisor of Statutes, State of Minnesota, 2016).

Another critical aspect of the research is learning why students choose one type of tutoring service, peer versus professional, over another. Understanding why students choose one type of tutoring over another and what prompted them to make that choice is important when making changes or initiating tutoring services. Determining what social and academic impacts on persistence each of these groups provides to nursing students can help to guide institutional change concerning tutoring services.

Knowledge about what prompts these students to attend tutoring services is essential since the goal is to involve as many students as possible in these services. Based on Tinto's (1987) model of student retention, interactions in both the social and academic realms improve student persistence within college environments. Jeffreys (2012) revealed similar findings specific to nursing students in her NURS model of student retention. Students who limit themselves in these types of interactions may be less likely to persist within the nursing program, causing concerns for decreased ELA numbers, and potential loss of accreditation. Knowledge of what items present barriers or challenges for students attending tutoring assists in creating plans to improve services with the hope of eventually increasing program ELA. Also, understanding where or if students get social and academic support from other services helps provide a window into how colleges might be able to tailor programs that better align with student vision.

Definition and Scope of the Research

For the purposes of the study, I interviewed ADN students who attended both peer and professional tutoring services to understand their lived experience better. The study occurred at a mid-sized Midwestern community college with a thriving associate degree nursing program. The researcher interviewed students who attended peer or professional tutoring using semi-structured individual interviews. The data was then analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) method, exposing themes common to the participants.

The study applied Jeffreys's (2015) Nursing Universal Retention and Success model to analyze and interpret the data collected. Jeffreys described how a variety of multidimensional influences, both internal and external to the college experience, impact nursing-student retention. Addressing the student profile, environment, academic, and integrative characteristics of students will help to frame students' understanding of their experience. Applying a nursing-specific framework to the study allows for professional values to be addressed that are otherwise missing from broader higher education retention models. Jeffreys describes nursing coursework and interaction as unique in comparison to the college experience of those taking liberal arts courses. The model also addresses many characteristics associated with nontraditional students. Community college students enrolled in an ADN program are more likely to have nontraditional characteristics than those enrolled in a baccalaureate program (Juszkiewicz, 2014)

The study pays specific attention to the academic and social support mechanisms tutees felt assisted them during the tutoring process. The research highlights the preferences and differences expressed by the students between the two types of tutoring. Also included is an attempt at gaining a deeper understanding of the environmental factors that affected their

tutoring experience. Gaining a more in-depth understanding of why students choose one type of tutoring over another was investigated during the interview process. Understanding where these students gained support that motivates them to persist is essential when planning for future tutoring services.

Examining retention issues involving both internal and external communities is helpful when creating or improving tutoring services. The understanding that colleges are made up of both academic and social structures is essential when examining the roles tutors fill when interacting with tutees. Beyond the academic perspective, tutors offer pastoral support, reaching beyond and building relationships that could improve college retention. Tutoring services may help to fill the asymmetric gap that students find between the academic and social realms of college life (Tinto, 1987).

Professional integration in nursing is gained through interaction with peers and nursing professionals who tutor (Jeffreys, 2015). Additionally, the support gained from professional and social integration may help students who present with environmental, student profile, and academic barriers (Jeffreys, 2012). Specifically, understanding how integration in nursing programs may present different student responses than those of the more generalized community college student is of interest. Greater understanding allows for improvement in targeted services that may impact student success in nursing courses.

Gaining an understanding of what support mechanisms the nursing student tutees value is crucial for improving the tutoring services offered by colleges. The successful development of a retention program in nursing may expand, leading to an enlarged institutional retention program involving tutoring services (Tinto, 1987).

Research Questions

The purpose of the study is to understand the lived experiences of ADN students at a mid-sized community college who attend professional tutoring or peer tutoring services. Research questions investigated include:

1) What attracts students to a specific type of tutoring services (peer vs. professional)?

2) What are students' experiences with tutoring services?

3) In what ways do students feel that attending tutoring services impacted their ability to persist in the nursing program?

Assumptions

Assumptions for this research study include that the sample participants will provide honest, accurate information during their interviews. Participants should demonstrate appropriate professional behavior when discussing tutoring experiences with their peers or professional counterparts. The institution granted access to student information, and the researched contacted potential participants regarding requests for an interview.

Delimitations

The study is limited to one mid-sized community college located in the upper Midwest and is interviewing only ADN students. The sampling technique used to determine potential tutee participants may have also limited the applicability, as students who participate in tutoring may be more intrinsically motivated than those who did not participate in tutoring services. Students who attended fewer than three tutoring sessions from a single service potentially have a higher likelihood of error than those to attend services with greater frequency. Students will not

be included in this study if they did not attend tutoring services. Research involving how integration, social, and academic factors affect the persistence of those who did not attend tutoring becomes too broad for this study.

Qualitative research in the naturalistic inquiry tradition has limitations in its reductionist fashion (Polit & Beck, 2008). I attempted to limit any pre-conceived notions of concepts investigated and instead allow the concepts to emerge from the data collected using Colaizzi's (1978) method of analysis (Polit & Beck, 2008). Keeping in line with Jeffreys's (2012) framework, the focus of the study is on the positive aspects of students actively participating in the learning process by attending tutoring services.

Summary

The literature review in chapter two will expand further upon Jeffreys's (2012) conceptual framework as it applies to nursing students and tutoring services. Barriers to retention within the literature, primarily specific to nursing students, are explored. Themes described by Jeffreys's framework related to family, academic, and environmental factors are discussed, as well as the impact of professional integration. The study addresses the experiences of the tutee, peer tutor, and professional tutor. Review of the types of support offered by tutor services are highlighted. Other topics that touched on that surfaced in the literature related to tutoring include relationship boundaries, time management, and retention effects.

Expanded discussion regarding the methodology of this project is included in chapter three. The study took place at a mid-sized community college in the Midwest using associate degree nursing students as the sample. Participants were initially interviewed in an individual setting using a semi-structured format. No additional individual interviews took place to gather

further information after the first round of individual interviews was completed. The data

collected was analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) process for data analysis to reveal themes present

in the participant interviews. Chapter three also discusses limitations, trustworthiness, and

validity.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The effect of tutoring on a student's post-secondary education becomes clear as one reads through the literature. Several authors discuss the development of supportive relationships beyond just academic support (Braine & Parnell, 2011; Gammon & Morgan-Samuel, 2005; Gidman, 2001; Jeffreys, 2012; Por & Barriball, 2008). Knowledge about the identifying factors that impact student progression, performance, and completion is "instrumental in the planning and development" of pre-licensure nursing programs (Pitt, Powis, Levett-Jones, & Hunter, 2012, p. 904). Understanding how peer and professional tutoring support affects student success and retention within associate degree nursing programs is significant to this study.

Knowledge regarding student stressors and barriers to completion allows for program improvement initiatives to be made to tutoring services. A better understanding of the literature allowed me to ask targeted questions to study participants based on previously discovered concepts and theory.

Jeffreys's (2012) model of Nursing Undergraduate Retention and Success (NURS) is used as the framework for this study. The model demonstrates a multidimensional approach to addressing student performance and retention. Important topics within the model include a) student profile characteristics, b) environmental characteristics, c) academic factors, d) self-affective factors, and e) psychological factors (Jeffreys, 2012). Well researched aspects within each of the categories were examined to develop a better understanding of the student experience in an associate degree nursing program. Jeffreys's model addresses several of the themes as they provide direct association with retention and performance issues that affect a student's success.

Within the NURS model, Jeffreys (2015) describes self-affective characteristics as being separate from student profile characteristics. Self-affective characteristics and psychological outcomes are underlying student profile features and included under the heading of student profile characteristics. Based on the most commonly seen student characteristics in the associate degree nursing program, I chose to address the topics of a) age, b) race and ethnicity, c) gender, and d) student affective factors under the subheading of student characteristics.

Aspects of environmental factors that may impact student persistence are discussed. Environmental factors impacting students include student employment, family, and financial issues. These environmental issues potentially play a role in influencing student performance and retention.

I examined how prior educational experiences within a nursing program's educational experience and educational support services impact student success within nursing. Student integration is explored, within both the general educational environment and nursing program to determine what effect this may have on student success.

Jeffreys (2012) points to the value of professional integration within nursing programs as being beneficial to students' success and retention. The literature review explores both general student integration as well as nursing-specific professional integration. Jeffreys describes how professional integration into nursing may be more beneficial than the general college integration for students' success.

Other items outside of topics covered in Jeffreys's (2012) framework appear when researching the tutoring literature. The topic of relationship boundaries between tutor and tutee become an issue, primarily with professional tutors. The study examined professional tutoring

experiences and student views of relationship boundaries during the interviews. The final topic that was present in the research literature was the time balance or issues with time that both students and tutors felt impacted their experiences. Discussion about how time can impact tutoring experiences and tutors is explored further in this chapter.

Finally, the study takes an in-depth look at Jeffreys's (2012) NURS framework and how the model is applied to this research. The study also evaluates the model and how it directly applies to associate degree nursing students who receive tutoring.

Factors Affecting Retention

Students may decide to exit college courses for a variety of reasons related to several factors associated with their academic or personal issues. Jeffreys (2012) describes how the interaction between student profile, environmental, student affective, professional integration, and outside surrounding factors impact student success and retention in nursing. Examining these issues is vital to determine what processes a college could institute to promote retention, thus boosting the financial health of the institution (Christie et al., 2004). An ever-present increase in the number of students, differences in the level of preparedness, and diversity of students attending college has changed the landscape of learners over the past decade (IPEDS, 2017; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). Christie et al. (2004) cite this change in student population as one reason why challenges with retention occur in colleges and universities.

A deeper understanding of how the variety of student characteristics influence success and retention is essential when investigating how students experience tutoring. Knowing how some of these factors impact student success allows me to ask pertinent questions during the interviews, gaining a deeper understanding of the students' experiences that may have impacted

attendance at tutoring. To develop a better understanding of student characteristics, I present a

review of research related to student profile, environmental, financial, and student affective

factors in this section.

Student Characteristics

The institution in this study recognizes the concern associated to the underprepared

student in the nursing department. Understanding of outside characteristics that the student

brings with them into nursing education is vital to be aware of when developing plans to improve

student success (Jeffreys, 2012).

Nursing programs have begun recognizing that some student characteristics impact

success, particularly prior course grades (Jeffreys, 2007). Nursing programs are currently

receiving more applications than they have slots available (Kavilanz, 2018). The competitive

nature of admission into nursing programs has resulted in programs instituting additional testing

requirements as part of the admission process. The nursing department examined in this study

has recently instituted mandatory pre-admittance testing as a determining qualifier for admission

into the ADN program. At the beginning of the spring 2018 semester, students were required to

complete the Testing of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) test prior to application. This score

factored into program admission. The testing was meant to narrow down the students that would

be more likely to succeed in coursework. This demonstrates that the nursing program studied

recognizes that at least some student characteristics play a role in affecting success and retention.

Racial and ethnic diversity. The National Nursing Workforce Survey conducted by the

National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) found that only 19.5 percent of RN

respondents identified as being a racial or ethnic minority (National Council of the State Boards

of Nursing, 2016). Racially and ethnically diverse students face higher attrition rates in nursing

programs (Gardner, 2005; Jeffreys, 2012; Pence, 2011). Pence (2011) surveyed 397 associate

degree nursing students from across Illinois over one semester. In comparing student grades

with their demographic factors, Pence (2011) found that students felt racial and ethnic

background variables (*p<0.001)* were significant predictors of retention at the end of the first

semester in an associate degree nursing program. Pryjmachuk, Easton, and Littlewood (2008)

found data suggestive that "more non-white students than expected complete late" and that

almost twice as many as expected non-white students were removed from nursing programs in

the study (p. 155).

In comparison with Caucasian students, ethnically diverse students were less likely to

graduate from an associate degree nursing program (Jeffreys, 2007). Forty-two percent of Black

students in the program did not graduate, along with 25 percent of Hispanic students (Jeffreys,

2007). Mulholland, Anionwu, Atkins, Tappern, and Franks (2008) examined 1,808

undergraduate nursing students finding that ethnicity (*p=0.001*) and country of birth (*p=0.001*)

were the most significant predictors of non-completion among nursing students (p. 54). Students

enrolled in nursing at Arizona State University who identified as being Black were statistically

less likely to be successful at completing their coursework in four semesters (*OR=0.098*)

(Herrera, 2013, p. 6).

Alternatively, Peterson (2009) found that there was no significant correlation between

ethnicity and academic success when examining 350 full-time residential students. The

participants in Peterson's study were reported as being more ethnically diverse than the national

average, with 34.8 percent African American, 18.2 percent Asian, 15.2 percent Hispanic, 13.6

percent Caucasian, and 18.2 percent as Other (p. 415). Nationally 75 percent of prelicensure

nursing students report as their ethnicity as Caucasian (Peterson, 2009, p. 415).

The combined two factors of diverse students having challenges enrolling in the nursing

program, along with being at risk for increased attrition once admitted, should provide an alert

that these students could be targeted for extra support. Prior discriminatory experiences may

create a fear that continues to be perpetuated by nursing education via stereotyping, prejudice, or

discrimination (Bosher & Pharris, 2009). Gardner (2005) found that minority students felt

isolated or depressed and were treated differently by faculty than their white counterparts.

Minority students also felt that they lacked support both at school and at home during their

nursing education, putting them at a higher risk of attrition (Gardner, 2005). There has to be

some questioning then about if the participants in Peterson's (2009) study felt less isolated

because of the broader range of ethnic groups represented in their courses, increasing their ability

to be academically successful.

Those students who speak English as an additional language are also more likely to feel

isolated or less valued (Gardner, 2005). Gardner (2005) found that students who spoke English

as an additional language felt as though they were less valued than their white peers.

Salamonson et al. (2011) compared 352 pre-licensure nursing students. They found that students

who were native English speakers were twice as likely to complete a nursing course in the

minimum time in comparison to those for whom English was a second language (*OR*=2.00) (p.

89). Sanner and Wilson (2008) found that non-native English-speaking participants did not

perceive that their reading and language skills contributed as much to their academic difficulties

as the stereotyping and racism they faced in their educational experience. English as an

additional language students may feel as though they should conform to the faculty expectations

and those of their peers, negatively impacting their self-concept (Sanner & Wilson, 2008).

Understanding how failed support systems and subtle racism affects minority students is an

important factor when considering targeted solutions for retaining minority students within

nursing programs.

Age. Another group of students who requires us to reflect upon how they might learn

differently are those in the nontraditional age category. These students often have additional

responsibilities that could impact their work-school-life balance. Additionally, colleges need to

consider how students in a nontraditional age bracket socially integrate into the college

experience. Those students who are socially integrated have greater rates of retention than those

who feel socially isolated (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Jeffreys, 2015).

Reports as to whether nontraditional age students have differences in retention and

progression show that often as a student's age increases, the likelihood that they will be retained

decreases. Murtaugh, Burns, and Schuster (1999) found that retention rates dropped as students

age increased, with those in the 25-60 age category being less likely to be retained ($p=0.341$)

than those in the more traditional 18-20 age at first admission to university ($p=0.602$) (p. 362).

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2017) describes similar patterns of

retention with students over the age of 24 only persisting at a rate of only 52.7 percent, which is

lower than the persistence rate of 78.2 percent for those under 20 years of age. Mulholland et al.

(2008) found that a younger age was a significant predictor of success in a nursing program

($p=0.011$) (p. 53). Results of a retention intervention program in an associate degree nursing

program demonstrate that younger students were more likely to be retained when compared with older students (Fontaine, 2014).

When examining age impact, specifically in nursing education, much of the data follows the pattern of general college retention. Although, in nursing education, some researchers have found inconclusive or positive data demonstrating that older students are better retained (Peterson, 2009; Pryjmachuk et al., 2008). Peterson (2009) found no significant correlation between age and academic success in a baccalaureate nursing program where the mean age was 24 years old. Pryjmachuk et al. (2008) compared median age groups of 20.5, 22, and 24 years of age for entry-level nursing students in the United Kingdom and found that the age on entry had a small-moderate effect ($r=0.16$) on completion. Unfortunately, what is not discussed by Pryjmachuk et al. (2008) is the effect on students over the age of 25 years old, or those who are typically grouped into the nontraditional age category.

Age did become a factor in retention with associate degree nursing students in a study conducted by Pence (2011). Pence (2011) investigated retention rates for associate degree nursing students in the first semester. He found that "age remained statistically significant ($p=0.39$) with regards to retention at the end of the first nursing course" (p. 134), which means that the odds of retention for older students completing the first nursing course were decreased in comparison to their younger counterparts. Jeffreys (2007) examined 112 associate degree nursing students entering their first clinical course and found that older students enrolled were less likely to be retained to graduation ($p=0.007$) (p. 413).

While retention rates lack positivity, some research has demonstrated that older students who are retained do better academically than their younger counterparts. Ofori (2000) found that

when tested on material related to social sciences, older students, those over the age of 25, performed better than younger students with significantly fewer 'lower grades' (*p*<0.02*)*. Richardson (1995) questions whether this better performance is due to a potentially increased intrinsic motivation and previous life experiences. There may be a variety of factors that contribute to the decreased retention of older students. Kevern and Webb (2004) found that in interviews with mature female nursing students participants felt that their age and life experience "provided them with useful time-management and multi-tasking skills, which they could apply to their learning" (p. 302). Courses for nontraditional age students that take into account their additional responsibilities may be lacking in some college or university systems (Murtaugh et al., 1999).

Student age may impact success and retention in nursing programs. There is some debate on whether older students are more or less likely to be successful in their course work. Recognizing that age may be a factor affecting retention in nursing programs, particularly associate degree programs with more nontraditional students, is essential when developing retention programs to increase student success.

Gender. The gender gap in nursing presents another issue concerning a population who experiences increased stereotyping and societal misperceptions. Nursing is primarily viewed as a feminine position in nature, potentially making it challenging for men to enroll in nursing programs. Before even getting accepted to nursing programs, male students experience gender marginalization when seeking material related to nursing from school counselors (Kelly, Shoemaker, & Steele, 1996). Suggestions from school counselors that nursing is not an appropriate profession for men or the sheer lack of information about nursing schools often

provide a barrier to entry into nursing programs (Kelly et al., 1996; Meadus & Twomey, 2011).

Whittock and Leonard (2003) write about similar findings from their participant interviews

describing how there is a distinct lack of failure to target males at nursing recruitment events or

representatives to visit the schools to discuss the nursing profession.

There is some conflicting data in the research regarding gender being a factor in nursing

student retention. Pryjmachuk et al. (2008) found that nearly twice as many men as expected

were removed from nursing programs studied (p=0.009), while there were fewer than expected

removals among female participants (p. 154). Among nursing students examined by Herrera

(2013), male students had an odds ratio of 0.223, demonstrating that the male-gendered students

were less likely to complete their coursework in four semesters (p. 6).

Alternatively, Peterson (2009) found that there was no significant correlation between

gender and academic success with baccalaureate students enrolled full time at three large

residential campuses. Jeffreys (2007) describes that upon graduation both female- and male-

gendered associate degree nursing students taking their first clinical course remained at the same

percentages as when the cohort was admitted.

A consequence of entering a primarily female profession is that men may experience a

sense of marginalization and may often feel as though they are what Juliff, Russell, and Bulsara

(2016) describe as being the outsider within. The description from participants was that male

students often felt the impact of being a minority student in nursing education courses (Juliff et

al., 2016). This feeling of being an outsider within the nursing environment due to being from

the non-normative gender creates self-segregating behavior (Juliff et al., 2016). Stott (2007) also

found that male nursing students felt a sense of isolation from academic and clinical settings.

Male students felt a need to create "self-formed male groups in an attempt to nullify the outsider within feeling" (Juliff et al., 2016, p. 47). Kelly et al. (1996) found similar comments from their study participants with male students stating that they perceived their opportunities as being different from their female counterparts and that they "felt separated from everyone" (p. 173). Male nursing students also noted that they were often not included in female conversations "unless they made the first move" (Kelly et al., 1996, p. 173). Bell-Schriber (2008) described how male nursing students reported small numbers of male students in their nursing courses and that there was a level of social isolation.

The sense of isolation can also be seen in communication patterns within nursing education. Dyck, Oliffe, Phinney, and Garrett (2009) discovered during their interviews that male nursing students felt as though there was an "overemphasis on emotion in the nursing curricula" (p. 652). The participants also expressed frustration in the emphasis that female colleagues placed on "relationships, feelings, and personal experiences which they felt often occurred at the expense of efficiently accomplishing tasks and meeting learning needs" (Dyck et al., 2009, p. 652). The instructors in the courses utilized reflection as a means to assist students with their learning experiences, which the male students felt was not an efficient means to accomplishing a learning goal (Dyck et al., 2009). As a primarily female-driven profession, these types of assignments are potentially geared toward the feminine perspective and learning methods.

Men may experience attendance in nursing programs differently than their female counterparts. Knowledge of how being non-female gendered affects student success, especially integration, is essential for developing programs to increase student success. Knowledge of how

male experiences with tutoring may differ from females allows for insight into programmatic changes that could be made to target the male population better. Unfortunately, the research into nursing programs has not branched out far enough to study students who identify as non-binary, transgender, or gender fluid. Defining experiences from this group of students would be helpful in further understanding and developing programs to support success.

Student affective factors. To understand how nursing students best succeed in programs, there has been an interest in how a student's self-esteem or self-efficacy impacts their ability to be successful in nursing courses. Tutoring may have the potential to assist with increasing student self-esteem or self-efficacy by altering the affective variable of self-perception or the cognitive variable of academic performance to improve student success. Researchers have shown that self-efficacy and self-esteem have significant correlation with each other (Peterson, 2009; Peterson-Graziose, Bryer, & Nikolaidou, 2013). In a study conducted by Peterson (2009), students in a baccalaureate nursing program on a residential campus were found to have a significant correlation between student self-esteem and self-efficacy (r=0.453) (Peterson, 2009, p. 415). Similarly, Peterson-Graziose et al. (2013) found that when examining 52 RN to baccalaureate nursing students with primarily nontraditional characteristics, self-efficacy positively correlated to self-esteem (r=0.540, p=0.001) (p. 353).

In examining baccalaureate students, Peterson (2009) found that no significant relationship between a student's self-esteem and academic success (r=-0.022), or self-efficacy and academic success (r=-0.025) (p. 415). Peterson-Graziose et al. (2013) found no significant relationship of chi-squared tests between the dependent variable of student attrition and the independent variables of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and life stressors when examining a group of

52 RN to baccalaureate nursing students. In contradiction to those findings, Peterson-Graziose et al. (2013) discovered that students in an RN to baccalaureate nursing program with more nontraditional characteristics demonstrated a significant negative correlation between self-esteem and student attrition (r=0.403, p=0.05) (p. 353). Napoli and Wortman (1998) found that after controlling for all other factors, student self-esteem had a significant and positive impact on goal commitment. Dante, Vaoppi, Saiai, and Palese (2011) found that students who remembered intending to leave their nursing coursework had a higher probability of not graduating from a nursing program (OR 2.53, IC 1.05-6.15). However, the probability was not significant in relation to their retention (p=0.166) (p. 61-62).

Napoli and Wortman (1998) found that students who had a more positive self-image, social skills, and have had more negative life events were more likely to obtain social support from within the college system. Students who had adverse life events were more likely to seek academic and social integration (Napoli & Wortman, 1998). No further discussion occurs from Napoli and Wortman (1998) about why these negative life events had an impact on student likelihood of obtaining support. Potentially because they may have received support for those negative life experiences, they were then more aware of and comfortable with using support mechanisms within the college system.

There is evidence to suggest that greater degree aspirations are associated with higher degree outcomes (p=0.001) (Mattern & Shaw, 2010, p. 675). Castles (2004) found in student interviews that having healthy coping mechanism strategies was an essential factor for student's persistence. Students also felt that they had a strong "love of learning" that helped them to persist in their coursework (p. 176). Having this strong "love of learning," coupled with healthy

coping mechanisms, and being a life challenger, all appear to have been items that students interviewed by Castles (2004) felt added to their ability to persist. Similarly, based on subscales of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, Pence (2011) found a significant relationship between greater extrinsic motivation ($p=0.043$), increased time and studying ($p=0.043$), and effort regulation ($p=0.040$) leading to increased retention (p. 134). Students feeling as if they have a greater internal motivation to complete coursework may play a role in higher retention. A question the research literature does not investigate is whether there is a connection between the impact of professional interaction during nursing courses and if that plays a role in students developing more motivation to succeed.

Rogers (2010) describes a theme that emerged from student interviews of the fact that to be successful as a nursing student, you "have to really want it" (p. 97). Mature female students described how they felt that "there's much more thirst for knowledge as you get older," demonstrating a potentially strong drive to complete nursing courses while being challenged to find a balance with outside life and academics (Kevern & Webb, 2004, p. 302).

Students in Castles's (2004) study also described that they felt that having good physical and psychological health would impact their ability to persist. Rogers (2010) discusses similar findings from her interviews with students. There was an unexpected theme that emerged in her research, where greater emphasis was placed on personal well-being, rest, and nutrition, rather than prioritization and time management (Rogers, 2010).

The indication then is that those students with lower self-esteem, particularly those with more nontraditional characteristics, may be more likely to have higher attrition rates from nursing programs than those with higher self-esteem (Castles, 2004; Dante et al., 2011; Rogers,

2010). Student interaction with tutors may provide both academic and pastoral support that may

help positively impact student self-esteem, increasing the likelihood of student success and

retention. Focus on self-esteem issues, and other non-cognitive factors, such as networking,

personal growth, and peer support may be an item that associate degree nursing programs need to

focus on more regarding student retention.

Environmental Factors

Environmental factors that potentially impact student persistence include student

employment, financial, and family issues. Jeffreys (2012) included all three of these items as

potentially impacting persistence for nursing students. Nontraditional student characteristics

may indicate a greater risk of these students having issues with environmental factors affecting

their persistence (Jeffreys, 2012). Understanding of how these issues impact a student in nursing

programs is essential when planning strategies to improve retention.

Employment. As discussed above, many students enrolled in associate degree nursing

programs fall into the category of nontraditional based on their characteristics. Nontraditional

students are more likely to be older, have family, and other obligations outside of the classroom

(Jeffreys, 2013). Nontraditional students may be more likely to take on additional working

hours. Salamonson et al. (2011) found that students who worked more hours during the time

they were enrolled in a baccalaureate program were less likely to complete their coursework on

schedule (p=0.018) (p. 91). Students who worked 16 hours or less per week were more likely to

have a higher GPA and continue their studies (Salamonson et al., 2011).

Similarly, Salamonson, Everett, Koch, Andrew, & Davidson (2012) found a significant

difference in student GPA between students working greater than 24 hours per week and those

working less than 16 hours per week or not at all. A statistically significant correlation between

the mean hours of paid work a student participated in and their GPA (p=0.001) was also

demonstrated in the study by Salamonson et al. (2012, p. 582). Mean hours of paid work was a

significant negative predictor for student GPA (<0.001) (Salamonson, et al., 2012, p. 582).

Dante et al., (2011) state that students who work more than 16 hours per week had a higher

probability of not graduating than those working less. However, the results showing a difference

in retention between the two groups was not statistically significant (p=0.945) (p. 61).

Coakley (1999) found that 90 percent of students interviewed in a diploma program

worked some form of part-time employment to supplement their income. Students felt that their

employment impacted their "self-directed learning time," potentially impacting their academic

success (Coakley, 1999, p. 763).

Students may also be more likely to work an increased number of hours as they move

through their coursework and seek healthcare-related employment. Salamonson et al. (2012)

compared first and third-year student's employment within nursing programs. They found that

students were working significantly more hours in the third year of their coursework (p<0.001)

and that they were moving from non-nursing type jobs to nursing type jobs (p<0.001)

(Salamonson et al., 2012, p. 582). Changing of a workplace to a healthcare-related job may be

the result of the student wanting to gain ongoing experience with patient interaction or a better

salary, the researchers do not clarify reasons for why students choose to switch jobs as they

progressed through nursing coursework.

There is a potential for the job switch to occur based on the students wanting to become

more comfortable in the healthcare industry while attending nursing programs. Rogers (2010)

found that students who worked in a healthcare job while attending nursing courses believe that working in these types of jobs gained them experience that contributed to their growth and success.

Family issues. Schrum (2015) found that 22 percent of students stated that they withdrew from the associate degree nursing program because of a family crisis. The family crisis compromised of poor academic performance, personal reasons, relocation, or financial issues (Schrum, 2015). Dante et al. (2011) found that students with family commitments were less likely to graduate than students without family commitments ($p=0.002$)(p. 61). The researchers found that having no family commitments coincided with an at least 88 percent reduction in failure risk (Dante et al., 2011). Since it is well-known that associate degree programs enroll more nontraditional students than traditional student groups, there may be more of a need for them to have tutoring services to provide support, interaction, and academic assistance.

Students enrolled in four cohorts of an associate degree program who reported financial or family crisis did not significantly differ when compared to other students in regard to using a retention specialist for tutoring (Schrum, 2015). However, of the 46 students who withdrew from the nursing program during the course of the study, 37 reported that they withdrew due to family crisis (Schrum, 2015). Many of the students who withdrew did so in the first year of the program did not use the retention specialist for tutoring services (Schrum, 2015). Jeffreys (2015) indicates that by not attending tutoring services, the students were not as exposed to professional integration, which may have helped them develop less of a sense of isolation in their education process, potentially affecting their decision to withdraw from nursing coursework.

Knight et al. (2012) found that students who reported unplanned family crisis expressed having more difficulty achieving educational goals and that these events often compounded their financial hardships. Participants also expressed that the need to balance their educational goals with family and personal needs created additional stress (Knight et al., 2012). While balancing family responsibilities can be stressful, family can also be a source of support for the student (Jeffreys, 2015; Knight et al., 2012).

Castles (2004) found that a third level of importance for adult learners' persistence included that students felt they would have increased academic success if they had neither a family or personal crisis arise during their studies. In interviews conducted with students and instructors from an associate degree nursing program Rogers (2010) found that participants commented on the importance of stress management in coping with, "complex circumstances, multiple roles and responsibilities, and personal well-being" (p. 98). Students who left a nursing program commented on how it was not generally one personal issue that caused them to leave, but instead a combination of personal issues (Blowers, 2008). Thus, it appears that the ability to be able to cope with and adapt to stressful situations before enrolling in nursing courses may be a predictor of success in a nursing program.

Students with children may have more difficulty managing time for coursework and clinicals (Kevern & Webb, 2004). Women expressed relying on good friends or child care for assistance with providing care to their children so that they could fulfill coursework obligations (Kevern & Webb, 2004). These women also expressed concerns about knowing how to handle the situation if their child was ill when they were required to be in class.

Family issues can provide challenges that are difficult to deal with and can significantly impact students within the academic realm. As educators understanding how supportive mechanisms, coping strategies, and relationship bonds appear to be important when attempting to improve student success and retention. Jeffreys (2015) describes how creating nursing-specific bonds by integrating students into the profession may be helpful to combat some of the social isolation and further develop supportive relationships that allow students to adapt to a family crisis. Understanding how family issues impact students tutoring experiences provides insight into service improvement and developing stronger bonds that could improve student retention.

Financial issues. Other factors impacting non-completion once admitted to the nursing program include financial difficulties leading to withdrawal or failure from college coursework (Christie et al., 2004; Bowden, 2008; Moore-Cherry, Quin, & Burroughs, 2015). Changes in living costs related to altered employment, student loans, and familial contributions are a source of stress for some students (Bowden, 2008; Christie et al., 2004; Knight et al., 2012). Half of the participants interviewed by Bowden (2008) stated that financial issues were a source of stress while they completed nursing coursework. The financial burden meant that some students needed to seek additional employment to support themselves, leaving limited time for them to study content related to their coursework (Bowden, 2008). Issues with the unexpected cost of education, lack of loans, and limited financial aid were additional reasons students left college (Moore-Cherry et al., 2015).

Dante et al. (2011) found that 32.5 percent of the students they interviewed experienced some economic difficulties while attending a nursing program. Interestingly, students who experienced economic difficulties while taking nursing courses did not differ in their academic

success or failure rates from other students (p=0.89) (Dante et al., 2011, p. 62). The authors did not describe if these economic difficulties were in addition to the working hours students were already involved in or if they were additional difficulties.

Timmins and Kaliszer (2002) found that when surveyed, 99 percent of students in the nursing program expressed finances as a source of stress. The indication with the Timmins and Kaliszer (2002) study may be suggestive of the fact that students at that university are unable to fulfill part-time work obligations because of considerable coursework obligations. There would be no indication in the Timmins and Kaliszer (2002) study if this financial stress caused attrition. In a qualitative study, Castles (2004) describes that a theme derived from student interviews included that a sudden increase in financial problems was perceived as a challenge to persistence. Nursing students from a diploma program in Ireland describe how the extreme financial and caring burden placed on them leads to attrition from the program (Coakley, 1999).

Blowers (2008) found that students who left their nursing coursework describe financial stress as an issue because it left them little time to study. Mature female students enrolled in nursing courses expressed financial difficulties paying for child-care so that they could have time to attend courses or study (Kevern & Webb, 2004).

Financial issues and employment hours worked appear to be aligned to impact at least some student's success in nursing coursework (Blowers, 2008; Castles, 2004; Kevern & Webb, 2004). Especially for nontraditional students, the financial impact of providing an income to support their family may play a role in their ability to be successful. Students may demonstrate integration with one another, seeking support during financial hardship that helps them persist.

Knowledge of how financial issues impact tutoring, especially for those in the nontraditional category, is vital for development of supportive services.

Academic Factors

Students seeking out admission to an associate degree nursing program may have a variety of backgrounds related to their educational experience, which could impact some students in program experience (Jeffreys, 2012). Conflicting evidence suggests that some types of prior courses are predictive of student success in nursing coursework (Abele, Penprase, & Ternes, 2013; Harris, Rosenberg, & Grace-O'Rourke, 2014; Jeffreys, 2007; Peterson, 2009; Potolsky, Cohen, & Saylor, 2003). In-program coursework has also been found to be a predictor of student retention in nursing courses (Dante et al., 2011). Support services offered and integration within the college environment also impact student's ability to persist in nursing coursework (Jeffreys, 2012). Discussion about these topics is essential to understand all of the factors that affect students attending tutoring. Knowledge about how integration and prior educational experiences may affect the ability to persist can help determine program modifications improving tutoring outcomes.

Prior educational experience. Prior educational experience may be predictive of retention in nursing programs. There is some debate over whether science courses are a predictor as to how successful a student is predicted to be in a nursing program (Abele et al., 2013; Harris et al., 2014; Potolsky et al., 2003). Harris et al. (2014) found that students enrolled in an associate degree nursing program who received grades of less than a 'C' in anatomy and physiology courses were statistically more likely to fail or withdraw from nursing courses. Students who had lower than average ACT scores, those in remedial math, and students who

repeated anatomy and physiology courses were also at higher risk of attrition from nursing

courses (Harris et al., 2014). Harris et al. (2014) found that remedial English courses were not a

statistically significant indicator of attrition from a nursing course.

Jeffreys (2007) discussed similar findings in her study, noting that there was a moderate

correlation (r=0.23, p=0.04) between student attrition in an associate degree nursing program and

their performance in anatomy and physiology courses (p. 412). Peterson (2009) found that past

academic performance, as measured by GPA, had a statistically significant, positive correlation

on academic success in a nursing program (r=.514, p<0.01) (p. 415). Similarly, Salamonson et

al. (2011) found that students who had a higher GPA were more likely to complete a

baccalaureate program within the planned number of semesters when compared to continuing or

dropout groups (p<0.001) (p. 88). Dante et al. (2011) found that students who had good marks

on the entrance exam into the nursing program were four times more likely to graduate on time.

Pre-nursing GPA moderately correlated (r=0.41, p=0.001) to student attrition in an

associate degree nursing program (Jeffreys, 2007, p. 412). Using a two-tailed Pearson

correlation coefficient Potolsky et al. (2003) found a high positive correlation between student's

average prerequisite science course grades and their mean nursing pathophysiology grade

(r=0.77, p=0.01) (p. 249). Although not as significant, a moderate correlation was also seen

between prerequisite science grades and nursing pharmacology course grades (r=0.60, p=0.01)

(Potolsky et al., 2003, p. 249). The data presented indicate that the overall GPA is indicative of

success and retention in nursing coursework.

Pryjmachuk et al. (2008) found that students who entered a nursing program with only

"minimum entry qualifications were less likely to complete" nursing coursework (p. 157).

Comparison of those with predominately vocational versus predominantly academic preparation demonstrated that the type of preparation was irrelevant in terms of completion rates (Pryjmachuk et al., 2008).

Based on the findings indicating that student performance in science courses impacts nursing course retention, institutions now often incorporate science course minimum grades as an entrance requirement into the nursing programs. At Arizona State University, the requirements include coursework in anatomy and physiology I, anatomy and physiology II, and microbiology (Herrera, 2013). The college location where the study takes place uses raw science GPA scores as an entrance requirement into the associate degree nursing program. A moderate correlation was found between the net GPA for those courses and the likelihood that a student would complete nursing coursework in four semesters (Herrera, 2013). Robinson and Niemer (2010) identified previous biological science course failure or student GPA 2.5 or less as indicators to enroll in peer mentor tutoring programs.

Interestingly, Rogers (2010) found in qualitative interviews with students and instructors in an associate degree nursing program that "none of the participants cited pre-nursing academic achievement as an important factor" in completing the nursing program (p. 97). Instead, students and instructors felt that multiple other factors were contributing to the success in completing nursing coursework (Rogers, 2010).

Some researchers have found that courses other than hard sciences are also predictors of student success in nursing programs. Herrera (2013) found that students who moved up one grade level in a human nutrition course increased their odds of completing the nursing program in four semesters by 2.801 (p. 6). The clinical healthcare ethics course had similar findings. As

students moved up one grade level, their chances of completing nursing coursework in four semesters increased 3.818 times (Herrera, 2013, p. 7).

Alternatively, Abele et al. (2013) found that when comparing the most commonly failed science and nursing courses from a school, the psychology course "introduction to the lifespan developmental psychology" was the only course statistically significant in predicting student success in a nursing program (p. 260). Abele et al. compared the psychology course with the biology course "introduction to human microbiology" along with nursing courses "acute care I" and "pathophysiology" (p. 260). Statistically significant results show a positive relationship between a high psychology course grade and an increased likelihood of student success in nursing coursework (p=0.05) (Abele et al., 2013, p. 260). For each full letter grade increase that occurred, the odds of the student completing the nursing program were raised by 60 percent (Abele et al., 2013).

Abele et al. (2013) discuss how the psychology course used in their study "mimics how our nursing content is taught" from a lifespan perspective to help students develop critical thinking skills (p. 260). Rogers (2010) found in participant interviews that students felt that even if they did well in other courses, nursing was a challenge because they did not "know how to think before," or use critical thinking as a nurse would (p. 98). The mimicking as Abele et al. (2013) describe appears, at least partly, because the psychology department developed the course in collaboration with the nursing department. This interdepartmental course development may be the reason that the psychology course correlated greater than the human microbiology course, which was not created in consultation with the nursing department. Creation of coursework that helps the students develop their critical thinking skills similar to nursing may prove beneficial for

the retention of students once admitted into the nursing program (Rogers, 2010). It, however, does not explain why there is no statistically significant correlation between success and the two nursing courses designed by the nursing department.

In program academic predictors. Getting admitted to a nursing program is just the beginning when examining student retention. Student characteristics upon admission are not a guarantee that those students will do well or be retained until graduation. They are examining what program issues challenge retention, which are vital to address when developing tutoring services. Dante et al. (2011) found that those students who always passed the annual practical examinations had a higher probability of graduating than those students who failed a practical examination but not at a statistically significant level ($p=0.372$) (p. 61). Failure of at least one theory examinations in the program was not a significant indicator of success or failure to graduate ($p=0.372$) (Dante et al., 2011, p. 61).

Blowers (2008) found in interviews with students who withdrew from a nursing program that the two most significant stressors reported were examinations and writing assignments. Often students did not know what the expectations of the writing assignments were or understand the academic writing style expected by the nursing faculty (Blowers, 2008). There is some indication that students do not realize the challenges of entering a nursing program and that this impacts their ability to be retained (O'Donnell, 2011). O'Donnell (2011) interviewed students who voluntarily withdrew from nursing coursework and found that student's unrealistic expectations regarding the amount of coursework were a significant factor in their decisions to withdraw. These students also found it difficult to adjust to the rigorous academic demands within the nursing program in which they were admitted (O'Donnell, 2011).

Students in a nursing program were more likely to graduate if they had fewer transfer credits, higher medical surgical nursing course grades, and a higher pre-nursing GPA (Jeffreys, 2007). Jeffreys's (2007) data reflects both the pre-registration influences as well as those courses in the nursing program that may be predictive of success. Targeting students early who do poorly in those nursing courses for tutoring and getting them support may help retain more struggling students.

Kevern and Webb (2004) found three main themes emerged from interviews with mature female nursing students enrolled in nursing coursework: a) "didn't know what to expect," b) "reality shock," and c) "learning the game" (p. 299). Participants describe how entering the nursing program resulted in a significant change in their social and personal lives. This shift created a challenge in maintaining a routine at home, and many felt that they had insufficient time for study. There was also a sense that the coursework had taken over their lives, affecting all their relationship and that it was more complicated than they had anticipated. Many questioned their academic abilities and felt that one of the most reassuring aspects of that time was being able to relate to other mature female students in their nursing courses.

Associate degree nursing students often have at least one of the characteristics to categorize them as a nontraditional student. Recognition of this and supporting students through the significant changes that can accompany attending nursing courses could impact retention and success. Taking those characteristics into account for ongoing planning related to support services is necessary for making the services successful.

Support services. A factor that Christie et al. (2004) found to affect student completion is the presence or lack of student support services available to the student. Students who found it

difficult to get involved with activities on campus were less likely to succeed in college (Christie et al., 2004; Tinto, 1987). Challenges with involvement may also play a factor in seeking professional help or support for academic assistance once a student falls behind. Christie et al. (2004) found "little evidence" that once students were experiencing problems, they sought out assistance from professionals for help or support (p. 630). Similarly, Blowers (2008) found in student interviews that students did not seek help because they did "not think their problems were that bad," or they were worried about other people knowing about their problems (p. 55). It can be challenging to target students if staff are unclear whether this lack of seeking assistance is due to unwillingness to attend known support services or a lack of knowledge regarding available services.

Some suggest that colleges and universities could do more to publicize available services or improve perceptions of current support services that are accessible to their students (Christie et al., 2004). Early identification of at-risk students based on prerequisite course grades may allow faculty to intervene, offering supportive measures such as tutoring or mentoring that may give the student a better chance of success (Abele et al., 2013).

Interdepartmental collaboration between nursing and departments offering prerequisite courses may impact student success (Abele et al., 2013). The integration of content and key concepts being taught potentially allows students to begin developing critical thinking skills that are necessary for nursing coursework (Abele et al., 2013). Rogers (2010) describes similar importance to the fact that faculty and coursework prior to nursing should be more targeted at helping students with their critical thinking ability and development of critical thinking skills.

Kevern and Webb (2004) interviewed 32 mature female nursing students regarding their experiences. One of the themes that arose was that students felt there were limited understanding and support from the institution for them as mature students. Gaining a better understanding of what the mature student experiences and desires in support systems is especially important when planning for an associate degree nursing program. Students are overwhelmingly likely to have at least one of the nontraditional characteristics meaning that the college experience will likely be different for them, and the support systems offered should recognize that difference.

Integration. Self-esteem is also directly related to social integration in that those students who have a greater positive self-image are more likely to be socially integrated (Napoli & Wortman, 1998). Jeffreys (2015) describes how social integration is especially important for nursing students. Students who do not socially integrate and are more isolated are likely to have more difficulty being successful in their nursing coursework (Jeffreys, 2015). Napoli and Wortman (1998) found that students who were more socially (β=0.197) and academically (β=0.064) integrated were more likely to persist term-to-term (p. 440). Almost half of the non-continuing students in a study conducted by Christie et al. (2004) stated that they "found it difficult to get involved in student activities or felt alienated" by the college atmosphere (p. 623).

Blowers, Ramsey, Merriman, and Grooms (2003) found that a characteristic of tutees who attended peer tutoring services was that they were not as actively engaged in the learning process when compared to the more successful students. These students also tended to be less likely to initiate interaction with their peers, creating a gap in their social support system.

Students may be more likely to persist in nursing programs if they feel supported both psychologically and functionally by their instructors (Shelton, 2003). Based on students

completing a Perceived Faculty Support Scale, students who felt as though they had more faculty support were more likely to persist in the nursing program. Associate degree nursing students who persisted felt they had significantly greater perceived faculty support than those who were either required ($p < 0.001$) or voluntarily withdrew ($p < 0.001$) (Shelton, 2003, p. 73). The limitation of this study is that it is retrospective, examining students who already had left the program. Variations on their thoughts of faculty support may be impacted by their lack of success in the nursing program.

Christie et al. (2004) suggest that having quality relationships between the tutor and student affect student retention. In interviews with students who had left nursing coursework, they felt that their primary source of support was people within the university, both academic and support staff, as well as peers (Blowers, 2008).

A consequence of the intensity of being enrolled in nursing coursework may be that students severing previously established relationships, decreasing peer interaction. Mature female students describe how the challenge of finding time to manage family and coursework left them with insufficient time to manage previously established friendships (Kevern & Webb, 2004). The women spoke of how they either pushed friends away to allow themselves to have more time to study for their nursing coursework.

Kevern and Webb (2004) found that these women were able to find a vital source of support in other mature women within their nursing courses. Women in the courses were able to form significant and enduring friendships that provided a steady source of support, helping them cope with the challenges of nursing school. Support networks of nursing student peers

experiencing similar events allow for the students to relate to one another along a shared journey (Knight et al. 2012).

Development and support networks for student integration appear to be an essential factor influencing student success. Integration into the general college environment with other students, faculty, and staff may affect a student's ability to be successful and persist in college. Jeffreys's (2012) model looks more specifically at professional integration within the nursing program as affecting student retention. This is discussed more in-depth further along in this paper. The understanding of how students integrate themselves into the college experience and how this may affect persistence is often overlooked by the staff at the college where the study will take place. The hope is that by better defining the student experience with tutoring services, faculty can gain a better understanding of how those experiences, whether general or professional integration, affect student retention.

Tutee Characteristics

Characteristics of students who attend tutoring services are not well-delineated in many research studies. Often the tutee characteristics are blended into portions of data either in the sample or discussion portions of the articles. The focus is not on specific characteristics that individual students need to focus or improve upon, but rather is often on if tutoring, peer or professional, worked to improve student performance as interpreted by improved GPA or skill performance. Students attending voluntary tutoring services at the University of Louisville had a greater chance of receiving financial aid, along with overall lower ACT and GPA scores than the general student population at the university (Grillo & Leist, 2013).

Blowers et al. (2003) examined students enrolled in a baccalaureate degree nursing

program who were attending a public university in the southern Appalachian region. Blowers et

al. (2003) describe students who attended tutoring services as those who have poor reading and

class note-taking skills and are at risk for failure. These students' primary learning method is

often memorization. The thought among these students is they believe they will know the

material better with memorization. Blowers et al. (2003) state that use of this memorization

technique does not help students to develop the critical thinking skills necessary for nursing

coursework and will not be beneficial for student success in a course. Tutees also have difficulty

with categorizing, organizing information, and perceiving connections between concepts, making

it challenging to develop the critical thinking skills when they are viewing items through a purely

fact-based lens (Blowers et al., 2003).

Students may also attend tutoring in response to the reality shock of the challenges faced

regarding the nursing curriculum (Kevern & Webb, 2004). Students may be motivated to seek

out assistance and clarification of material from tutors (Kevern & Webb, 2004; McKenna &

French, 2011). Seeking out tutoring services, primarily peer, to discuss informal learning

content related to nursing coursework may also be a reason why students attend tutoring services

(McKenna & French, 2011). Students surveyed by McKenna and French (2011) expressed some

doubt that peer teaching has a vital role in the tutoring process. These first-year student tutees

attending peer tutoring sessions believed that teaching was less critical in nursing than their

third-year counterparts (McKenna & French, 2011).

The limited amount of distinct literature focus on nursing student tutee characteristics

makes it difficult to generalize the findings from research studies. There is some discussion

about whether it is students with greater motivation attending tutoring, rather than those who are at higher risk. Part of this research study is to investigate student motivation behind attending tutoring services. Even if students are motivated, knowing how they learn, and if tutoring services can help them change their learning style would be an interesting study.

Peer Tutor Characteristics

In opposition to their tutee counterparts, peer tutors are organized and able to perceive connections between nursing concepts (Blowers et al., 2003). Tutors can use the course textbooks as a foundation for learning and build on their learning using various resources beyond the textbook to interact with the content (Blowers et al., 2003). Peer tutors could compare and contrast course material, using metaphors, and medical vocabulary (Blowers et al., 2003). Recognition of passive learning and attempting to move tutees into a more active learning process by assigning them learning activities was one way in which peer tutors attempted to facilitate learning with tutees (Blowers et al., 2003).

The literature on specific characteristics as Blowers et al. (2003) have listed is limited. Many studies using peer tutoring describe tutors as being students who are upperclassmen with a strong academic record (Higgins, 2004; McKenna & French, 2011; Owens & Walden, 2001). Some of the programs offer training for their peer tutors before engaging with tutees (McKenna & French, 2011). There was no indication in the literature if any differences were seen in peer tutor groups who received training compared with those who did not.

Peer Tutoring

There is a lack of evidence-based data for utilizing peer tutoring in nursing programs (Brannagan et al., 2013). Peer tutoring plays a limited role in nursing programs but may provide

a wide range of benefits (Branagan et al., 2013). Blowers et al. (2003) found that the peer

tutoring relationship is focused primarily on academic skills and also includes the development

of study skills. When the tutor and tutee can have shared interaction, this can be beneficial in

acquiring knowledge and skills (Blowers et al., 2003). The limited research demonstrates some

positive outcomes that merit further investigation into the efficacy of peer tutoring in nursing

programs (Brannagan et al., 2013).

Tutee Experiences

Peer tutoring relationships can develop to be either a strong, supportive relationship or a

non-functional relationship that is abandoned by the tutee (Blowers et al., 2003). Faculty are

often far removed from the experience of being a nursing student, and the development of peer

relationships through similar circumstances may be beneficial to retention (Blowers et al., 2003).

The development of a shared learning style, similar background, and mutual regard can influence

the functionality of the peer tutoring relationship (Blowers et al., 2003). One baccalaureate

nursing tutee described feeling as though "the peer tutors though not as authoritative as teachers

are at a level appropriate for me; I can easily understand and remember the knowledge they gave

me" (Li, Petrini, & Stone, 2018, p.237).

Owens and Walden (2001) surveyed students who attended peer-facilitated learning over

three years and found that 99 to 100 percent of students felt that interaction with the peer

instructor-facilitated meeting course objectives for their nursing coursework. Fontaine (2014)

found that from a variety of interventions students were the most satisfied with peer tutoring as a

retention intervention. A small group of returning students who had previous failure in an

associate degree nursing course demonstrated increased retention and academic success with the

use of peer tutoring (Bryer, 2012). Bryer's (2012) research fails to disclose if the previous

course failure was an academic failure or voluntary withdrawal related to other variables that

may have affected student performance.

Students enrolled at a community college were significantly more likely to pass computer

information courses when they attended a drop-in tutoring session with senior peer tutors

(p=0.05) (Satyanarayana, Li, & Braneky, 2014, p. 4). There is no explanation provided to

determine if the students who attended tutoring sessions had better course grades before

attending tutoring services. The authors offer no thoughts about student motivation to attend

tutoring services within the institution.

Peer tutoring benefits may include a decrease in both tutor and tutee anxiety (Iwasiw &

Goldenberg, 1993; Sprengel & Job, 2004). The reduction of anxiety that students experience

from the support of peer tutoring has a positive effect on their learning (Brannagan et al., 2013).

Owens and Walden (2001) found that 69 percent of students who used peer instruction felt that

their anxiety decreased during psychomotor testing. McKenna and French (2011) found that

tutees expressed that they felt able to communicate more freely with peers than with faculty

members and were less anxious performing skills in from of their peers. A student interviewed

by Li et al. (2018) stated that "I prefer to contact with peer tutors. We are all students, so I dare

to discuss more topics with them. More mature students have longer school lives than us, they

can share some useful experiences with us" (p. 237). Friendships expanded through the peer

tutoring process, creating a collaborative learning environment (Li et al., 2018). This positive

effect on learning could provide students with an improved overall experience that translates into

better retention throughout the nursing program.

Tutee participants reflected upon the feeling of being heard by the peer tutors and that this relationship allowed them to feel more confident and competent (McKenna & French, 2011). Sprengel and Job (2004) paired freshmen nursing students with sophomore mentors for clinical experiences and found that freshmen students commented on how the experience "made them feel more at ease" (p. 248). Returning students who attended mandatory peer tutoring in an associate degree nursing program found they were able to develop a sense of trust in their peer tutor, allowing them to share feelings about the course and faculty issues (Bryer, 2012)

Similarly, Goldsmith, Stewart, and Ferguson (2006) received feedback from first-year tutee students that they felt "comfortable in the learning relationship" that developed with their third-year peer tutor (p. 128). First-year students also responded that they felt the peer tutors were patient and friendly partners, indicating that they developed relationships that potentially affected their retention (Goldsmith et al., 2006). The relaxed environment also provided an opportunity for students to feel as though they could get a level of understanding that would not have occurred with faculty (McKenna & French, 2011).

Another benefit of peer tutoring is the development of self-efficacy for the tutees (Brannagan et al., 2013). The ability of the students to interact with peers to learn a skill or concept provides them with a level of modeling behavior that is beneficial for developing cognitive learning. Modeling provides the opportunity for the students to learn rules and strategies from the peer tutors that they are then able to apply to real-life patient care situations (Bandura, 1997; Bandura, Vittorio Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino, & Pastorelli, 2003). Owens and Walden (2001) note that senior-level peer tutors "brought "real world" experiences to the laboratory with comments related to what they had experienced at hospitals and clinics" (p. 376).

Brugnolli, Perli, Vivani, and Saiani (2011) found that students felt they learned more about clinical practice when allowed to "experiment by themselves but with professional supervision" (p. 154)

Participants also felt that peer learning went beyond formal skill discussion (McKenna & French, 2011). Tutee students were able to ask more senior peer tutors about their experiences in the nursing program, particularly in the clinical setting (McKenna & French, 2011). Blowers et al. (2003) found similar feedback from tutoring participants in that tutors were able to coach tutees on instructors' typical cues, which was helpful for the tutee moving forward in the classroom. Similar to their peer tutors, the tutee students expressed that they felt teaching to be a crucial role for nurses (McKenna & French, 2011).

When examining the experience of individuals participating in dyad tutoring, students were able to gain direct, immediate feedback from peer tutors in the individuals tutoring sessions where items could then be more targeted toward their learning style (Blowers et al. 2003). First- and third-year nursing students involved in peer tutoring found when learning styles were not taken into consideration, that it became a barrier to the success of the tutoring sessions (Goldsmith et al., 2006). Students felt that staff pairing the tutor groups needed to look at individual student's learning needs when matching them to a peer tutor (Goldsmith et al., 2006).

In the dyad groups, tutees were often partnered with another person with similar levels of ability, allowing for the development of a new relationship within the academic setting to provide support (Blowers et al. 2003). The dyad groups also allowed for some deflection away from the tutee to the other student, potentially making the tutee more comfortable in the tutoring sessions (Blowers et al., 2003).

Students in small group tutoring identified some differences in experience from those of the individual or dyad groups (Blowers et al., 2003). Small group tutoring sessions allowed for the development of potentially high-level group interaction that allowed the tutor to use more of a Socratic method of learning (Blowers et al.). The downfall is that if group energy is low, and there is limited student interaction, learning may be compromised for everyone in the group (Blowers et al., 2003).

Goldsmith et al. (2006) examined peer teaching between third- and first-year nursing students. What they found was that third-year students, who were the peer tutors, had significantly more positive responses than the first-year students regarding the increased performance of fundamental skills ($p=0.002$) and enhanced learning ($p=0.003$) (Goldsmith et al. 2006, p. 127). Tutee students also commented that while feedback was valuable, there was limited practice time and poor organization of the unit where tutoring occurred (Goldsmith et al., 2006).

Tutees participants interviewed by McKenna and French (2011) demonstrated a slightly positive skew regarding peer tutoring that was not as significant as those of the tutor group. The tutees in the study were first-year nursing students who may have been more critical of the relationship if they were unable to get the assistance desired from the third-year tutors. The results may also demonstrate that tutors feel they benefit more from the tutor-tutee relationship.

The tutee experience during peer tutoring can be impacted by any of the student characteristics discussed above. Additionally, as is noted in the literature, the interaction with the peer tutors can also provide an impact on tutee learning experiences, providing either

beneficial or detrimental to student learning. The goal of this research is to understand better

how student characteristics play a role in the tutee experience.

Tutor Experiences

The ability of the peer tutor to relate to the tutee, incorporating personal experience

potentially stimulates the learner to gain a better understanding of the material as it applies to a

real patient care situation. McKenna and French (2011) found that tutors reflected upon their

own "knowledge and learning," which they felt was beneficial to their own learning (p. 143).

There was also a sense of achievement and confidence developed during the peer tutoring

process (McKenna & French, 2011). Sophomore nursing students who provided peer mentoring

for clinical to freshmen nursing students felt that the experience helped them to gain more self-

confidence and that they were better able to understand the nursing content when they had to

teach it to another student (Sprengel & Job, 2004).

The peer tutoring process allowed students to "review their skills," "evaluate their

knowledge base," and provided a chance for "good reflection" (Goldsmith et al., 2006, p. 128-

129). Peer tutors were able to role model successful academic behaviors directly to the tutee in

the process of learning (Blowers et al., 2003).

Dennison (2010) found that the peer tutor benefits from the leadership and teaching skills

they gain while providing tutoring services. Student tutors identified that previous positive

experience of being tutored by peers influenced them to become peer tutors (Brannagan et al.,

2013). Peer tutors also felt that the experience of being a tutor would be of value in their future

nursing practice by enhancing their professional and collaborative skills (Brannagan et al., 2013).

Some students found that the experience sparked their interest in a future career in nursing

education (Robinson & Niemer, 2010). Similarly, McKenna and French (2011) found that peer

tutors in their study strongly believed teaching to be a crucial role for nurses and that their

experience as a tutor would benefit them in practice.

In one-on-one tutoring sessions, peer tutors found it easier to identify tutee weaknesses

and provide individualized assistance for that student (Blowers et al., 2003). Tutors function to

diagnose and role model for students in individualized tutoring sessions (Blowers et al., 2003).

Role modeling of successful academic behavior is directly communicated to the tutee during the

learning process, benefitting them to see how successful students accomplish their academic

goals (Blowers et al., 2003). Relationships are built by the tutor, sharing more of themselves and

becoming invested in the tutee, providing additional support and interaction (Blowers et al.,

2003).

Jeffreys (2015) discussed how social isolation impacts student success and retention in

undergraduate nursing programs. Successful interaction with a peer tutor appears to benefit not

only the tutee who is seeking assistance but, in many ways, the peer tutor who is providing the

learning experience. The benefit of interaction within the professional group of nursing and role

modeling professional behavior is evident in the literature.

Financial Benefit

A final benefit that peer tutoring brings to the institution is that the services they provide

are often cost-effective (Brannagan, 2013). Hiring peer tutors at a lower cost than a professional

tutor is perceived as beneficial to institutions, especially those under strain of budget shortfalls.

Peer tutoring may also be a volunteer effort, meaning that the student-tutor gains some other type

of benefit for volunteering to provide tutoring services. The use of peer mentoring can also help

to lessen the faculty burden of meeting with individual students to discuss study skills and concepts (Dennison, 2010).

While qualitative descriptions indicate that both tutors and tutees benefit from the peer tutoring experience, the question remains of whether peer tutoring is beneficial to academic success and retention. Higgins (2004) conducted a study pairing 26 at-risk students with peer tutors for one-to-two hours of interaction per week. At the end of the semester, statistical analysis indicated a significant relationship between academic performance and retention, and participation in a peer tutoring program with results of a Fisher's exact test being 0.0278 (Higgins, 2004, p. 320). Furthermore, the attrition in the medical surgical course, where participants were enrolled, decreased from 12 percent to 3 percent (n=20) (Higgins, 2004, p. 320).

Professional Tutoring

The role of a professional tutor differs from that of a peer tutor in a variety of ways. The most noticeable difference was that the professional nursing tutor, as licensed personnel, demonstrates an increased level of knowledge regarding nursing-specific content. Professional tutoring staff may be a faculty member or an outside licensed staff member hired specifically to tutor nursing students. Professional tutors may also be licensed personnel volunteering their time to assist students. Some institutions utilize online computer tutoring services, which are available to students off-campus and during a broader period.

Tutee Experiences

Newton and Smith (1998) found that students benefited from the development of an interpersonal relationship between professional tutor and tutee. However, when the interpersonal

relationship between student and the faculty member did not develop, students in the study commented that they felt increased anxiety interacting with the faculty member (Newton & Smith, (1998).

Students who Newton and Smith (1998) studied also stated that they found value in the fact that the professional tutors could speak to specific practice areas within the nursing discipline. Roldan-Merino, Miguel-Ruiz, Roca-Capara, and Rodrigo-Pedrosa (2019) state that a theme developed from focus group interviews with tutees was the desire to have a tutor who can link theory and practice. Professional tutors are practicing nurses, with some also working in a faculty role, allowing them to link theoretical information to their own practice experiences. The ability to have a thorough understanding of a specific practice area can have a double-edged sword effect. The tutor may know one type of practice area but lack the knowledge related to content in another, leaving gaps in student learning experiences. Rego de Andrade, Rodrigues, Nogueira, and Fagundes de Souza (2018) describe how students interviewed felt that the basics concepts of theory and practice in nursing are most important for students to succeed in further courses. Gidman (2001) discussed similar concerns with personal tutors who may not have expertise in various clinical placements as struggling to make the connection with students in those placements.

Using non-nurse professional tutors may present a limited effect since tutors are not able to teach specific content. Potolsky et al. (2003) found no statistically significant differences in course grades between students who attended four or fewer tutorial sessions in comparison to those who attended five or more tutorial sessions with a generalized tutor. The data presented by Potolsky et al. brings into question if differences in academic performance might occur when

comparing tutors who are qualified licensed nurses tutoring nursing content with tutors teaching generalized learning strategies. There is also some question with the open model of tutoring that Polotsky et al. used whether high performing academic students attended fewer sessions because of felt they did not need the services. Students who attended four or fewer tutoring sessions had an initially higher GPA and received higher course grades in pathophysiology and pharmacology. Examining student motivation for attending open tutoring services and relation to prerequisite GPA needs to be further studied to determine what association may exist.

Guerra-Martin, Lima-Serrano, and Lima-Rodriguez (2017) explored the likelihood of students passing courses through the use of structured tutoring. Students in the experimental group were assigned a professional nursing tutor whom they met with for a minimum of nine individual tutoring sessions over an entire academic year (Guerra-Martin et al., 2017). Students in the experimental group were significantly more likely to progress from a failed subject to a passed subject when compared to the control group who received no tutoring ($p<0.000$) (Guerra-Martin et al., 2017, p. 97).

Potolsky et al. (2003) examined the impact on the academic performance of adult learners using non-nurse professional tutors. Tutors were available in the Nurse Learning Resource Center, a small library with materials to supplement learning. Tutoring focused "helping the students become better learners" and gaining "better time management strategies, organizational skills, and study habits" (Potolsky et al., 2003, p. 248). Sixty-seven percent of the students surveyed felt that the tutors were able to provide explanations, and 76 percent felt that tutors were able to give examples and illustrations that "best matched their learning style" (Potolsky et

al., 2003, p. 249). There is some indication then that based on training, professional tutors can target student learning styles that may assist in relaying content to the tutee.

Brannagan et al. (2013) found that compared with peer tutoring, some students felt less anxiety when the instructor gave feedback and assistance. The students found instructor feedback "moderately more helpful and increased gains in knowledge" when compared with peer tutoring (Brannagan et al., 2013, p. 1444). This data differs from findings presented by and French (2011), who found that tutee students "felt more comfortable performing skills" with peer tutors than with an instructor (p. 144).

In a study conducted by Gammon and Morgan-Samuel (2005) nursing students who attended structured tutoring sessions had significantly lower mean stress ($p<0.001$) and higher mean self-esteem scores ($p<0.001$) than those drop-in tutoring sessions only (p. 166). Coping skills were significantly higher in the structured tutoring group ($p<0.001$) (Gammon & Morgan-Samuel, 2005, p. 167). There is some probability with the study that the students in the structured tutoring group already had higher self-esteem and coping skills, along with lower stress before attending sessions. While subjects were randomly assigned, there was no pre-testing to determine if changes were due to the groups or to the variable (Gammon & Morgan-Samuel, 2005).

Students may also find that relationships outside the tutoring interaction impact their decision even to attend tutoring services if the tutor is an instructor. Timmins and Kaliszer (2002) found in a survey that approximately a third of the students reported that a source of stress for them was relationships with their teachers and clinical placement coordinators. Students also reported stress from other interpersonal relationships, including tutors (Timmins &

Kaliszer, 2002). The stress from these relationships did not correlate with academic stress experienced by the students. However, one has to wonder if students would be less motivated to attend tutoring services if the tutor-student relationship is strained in the student's belief (Timmins & Kaliszer, 2002).

Tutee students reported stress when working with professional tutors and having questions asked of them when they were seeking the answers from the tutor (Dobinson-Harrington, 2006). The frustration may be a result of mismatched learning styles or the expression of students wanting to be passive learners in the tutoring. Dobinson-Harrington (2006) describes how a student's learning work was influential in helping them know how to achieve learning goals, including how often and when to ask for help.

Blowers (2008) found that for students who seriously considered leaving nursing coursework, they felt that some of the most influential people they interacted with were the tutors. Six of the eight respondents felt that the tutor was able to help them by providing pastoral support (Blowers, 2008).

Students interviewed by Stephen, O'Connell, and Hall (2008) describe different experiences where they felt a lack of support from the tutor because of an emphasis on independent learning. When students could connect with the tutors, there was a distinct mix of focus on both the personal and academic realms of their life (Stephen et al., 2008).

Tutee experiences with professional tutoring are often varied, and as the text above points out, conflicting. There may be some shift in view depending on the type of student, along with the type of tutoring service provided. Understanding the needs and experiences of associate degree nursing students is vital to this research study.

Tutor Experiences

Professional tutors and students are often working towards the same goal of student achievement both personally and professionally (Ross, Head, King, Perry, & Smith, 2014). There is also the need to develop students' sense of autonomy and independence to prepare them for the nursing profession (Ross et al., 2014). Professional tutors express a need to create a strong and meaningful relationship with students to help develop a productive relationship (Ross et al., 2014).

Professional tutors have also expressed concern related to "coaching learners too closely" (Dobinson-Harrington, 2006, p. 39). The concern can be especially challenging when the tutor is the same faculty member who is writing testing materials. The potential leading of students in tutoring to content specifically on exams could be viewed as that tutor unfairly assisting students who attend tutoring services. This concern of favoring students in tutoring leads to changes in "how support work was provided" that might otherwise not occur with peer tutoring (Dobinson-Harrington, 2006, p. 39).

Tutors sometimes felt as if they were helping students function in crisis mode once students sought help (Dobinson-Harrington, 2006). Tutees wanted tutors to explain the content to them rather than work through the process to gain a productive learning experience, which leads to frustration from both the tutor and tutee (Dobinson-Harrington, 2006). While tutees express that they wanted to be more passive learners, the tutors expected them to take an active part in the learning process (Dobinson-Harrington, 2006).

Tutor experiences are not always easy, especially as relationships develop. Tutors sometimes find that the vulnerable students are the ones who require the most support with both

their academic and personal issues (Por & Barriball, 2008). Sometimes professional tutors find themselves in the difficult situation of addressing with the weak students that nursing may not be the profession for them (Por & Barriball, 2008). Students seeking out support for personal rather than academic issues can confound the process of tutoring. Students attending tutoring for personal reasons, rather than academic reasons, may muddy the waters of the tutoring process, pushing relationship boundaries (Por & Barriball, 2008).

Understanding the experiences of the professional tutor is critical to this study so that I can reflect upon the literature and pose questions to the study participants based on that content. Questioning about ideals of passive or active learning as experienced by the tutee may be especially important.

Tutor Roles

Tutor roles have been delineated into two primary categories in the literature, pastoral support, and academic support. Pastoral support provides students all-round support and guidance on a variety of aspects of student life. This support can include guidance or discussion about personal welfare, financial support available, health issues and can also provide links to additional sources of support where appropriate (Newnham College: University of Cambridge, 2018). In contrast, academic support focuses solely on learning the cognitive or psychomotor skills requested by the tutee and generally does not allow for additional guidance or support beyond the academic realm (Jeffreys, 2012).

Pastoral Support

The boundaries in tutoring relationships can be viewed as more fluid and flexible, leading to an expanded relationship between tutor and tutee (Zieber & Hagen, 2009). Development of an

interpersonal connection outside of the traditional classroom setting allows for varying types of

support beyond academic assistance to blossom (Gidman, 2001). Por and Barriball (2008) found

that student support from the tutor came not only in the form of academic help but also in the

sectors of personal help and pastoral care. Pastoral support can include tutors asking about

students' support structures, referral to outside support networks, monitoring student progress,

and general guidance (Castles, 2004; Por & Barriball, 2008). As discussed above, the reasons

why students leave postsecondary education vary beyond simply struggling with academic work.

Providing pastoral care and support may help to target some of those other challenging areas,

allowing for students to receive support, potentially decreasing the non-completion rate.

Por and Barriball (2008) found that targeting vulnerable students with tutoring was

useful, especially if there were "good bonds between the students and the personal tutor" (p.

101). Braine and Parnell (2011) similarly found that students "commented on how a good

relationship with their personal tutor was to their learning and progression" (p. 908). Targeting

high risk or vulnerable student populations to attend tutoring to include both academic and

pastoral support may potentially decrease the attrition rates within the nursing program. While

academic help and information seeking is generally the primary reason why students attend

tutoring, there is the potential for other beneficial relationship development that fosters student

progress within the nursing program (Braine & Parnell, 2011; Por & Barriball, 2008).

Castles (2004) found in a qualitative study on student persistence of adult learners that

the "most important aspect of support was that it could be provided by anyone" (p. 175). If a

family were not available to provide pastoral support, then other students or tutors were able to

substitute and provide adequate support. Castle found that at the third level of importance was

the students' successful interaction with the institution and tutor. Successful interaction with the

tutor was of essential importance (Castles, 2004).

Similarly, Coakley (1999) found that students who experienced a successful relationship

with their tutor expressed that the relationship was particularly valuable and helpful, especially

when "getting them through the bad times" (p. 764). Students expressed that the support they

received from professional tutors developing an interest in them as a person and the development

of a supportive friendship was beneficial in their college experience (Dobinson-Harrington,

2006).

Nursing-specific tutors could provide an outlet for students to discuss issues that could

not be filled by family members or non-nursing peers because those supports did not "really

understand what they were going through" as nursing students (Blowers, 1998, p. 56). Kelly et

al. (1996) describe how students interviewed felt that nursing school was like "learning a foreign

language and much harder than they expected" (p. 173). Napoli and Wortman (1998) found that

with two-year community college students, social support had a direct and positive impact on

student's GPA.

Bryer (2012) describes how students created meaningful relationships with peer tutors

who acted as advocates for when conflict arose with clinical instructors or other students.

Roldan-Merino et al. (2019) describe a similar theme that came to light during focus groups of

tutees who related that they received pastoral support when discussing conflicts regarding other

peers and personal tutors. Peer tutors also offered emotional support for tutees before and after

exams, assisting with emotional support beyond the academic need (Bryer, 2012; Roldan-Merino

et al., 2019).

Students enrolled in structured tutoring with professional nursing tutors who were also their instructors commented that they felt professors became positively interested in them beyond the typical student relationship (Guerra-Martin et al., 2017). The perception by the students was that the faculty had a better understanding of their students, potentially providing greater motivation for the students to overcome emotional and educational difficulties because of the relationship (Guerra-Martin et al., 2017).

One barrier that faculty identified in providing pastoral support for students was that they are not equipped to deal with severe mental health issues that present themselves (Laws & Fiedler, 2012). Nursing faculty have a broad range of education on topics but are often not able to provide the services or support to deal with mental illness in students (Laws & Fiedler, 2012). Knowing when to defer and seek alternative support is an essential aspect of pastoral support for students.

Support beyond the initial academic assistance sought by tutees may occur in the form of pastoral support. Support and interaction, especially with other nursing students or faculty, provide professional integration (Jeffreys, 2012). Professional integration decreases social isolation that can be seen in the nontraditional student and connects students with those under similar circumstances who are in the nursing field (Jeffreys, 2015).

Academic Support

Gammon and Morgan-Samuel (2005) found that structured tutoring promoted student personal control, empowerment, and assertiveness associated with their coursework. Students also report reduced stress levels and confidence associated with coursework when they attended tutoring services (Gammon & Morgan-Samuel, 2005). Coakley (1999) found in interviews that

many students were pleased with the academic support they received when attending tutoring services. Staff at the same institution reported that they felt a lack of use of the study support materials by students, potentially because of the "perceived stigma attached to the use" of such materials (Coakley, 1999, p. 764).

Potolsky et al. (2003) found no statistically significant differences in average prerequisite course grades for students who attended tutoring sessions that focused on "time management strategies, organizational skills, and study habits" (p. 248). No findings of statistical significance demonstrating correlation were found between tutoring and students' pathophysiology or pharmacology grades (Potolsky et al., 2003).

Robinson and Neimer (2010) found that student mentees had significantly higher test scores than those who did not receive peer mentoring throughout the year for their nursing coursework ($p<0.001$) (p. 288). There was no significant difference in the GPA of the group receiving mentoring and the control group (p=0.284). While attrition from the nursing program remained similar to in previous years, the mentee group accounted for only 1 percent of the total attrition from nursing coursework (Robinson & Niemer, 2010). Faculty teaching nursing courses describe that students receiving mentoring appeared to have a better ambient understanding of the content as evidence by increased class participation (Robinson & Niemer, 2010).

When examining associate degree nursing students from four cohorts, Schrum (2015) found that students who used a retention specialist for tutoring were significantly more likely to be retained ($p<0.001$) than those who did attend tutoring (p. 84). Students were more likely to progress beyond the first year ($p<0.001$) and were more likely to graduate if they attended tutoring ($p<0.001$) (Schrum, 2015, p. 84-85). Higher course grades ($p=0.000$) and mean

graduation GPA (*p*<0.001) were also achieved by those students who attended tutoring with a retention specialist (Schrum, 2015, p. 84).

There is an indication in the literature that nursing-specific tutoring using professional or peer tutoring positively affects the academic success of nursing students. Understanding what students view as academic support or barriers in their learning process is a central component of this study. While traditional items of GPA and course grades will not be measured, student interviews should shed light on if they felt tutoring impacted their academic success.

Relationship Boundaries

The constructions of boundaries by tutors are viewed as a sometimes-necessary part of the relationship to "prevent flagrant and potentially destructive boundary violations" associated with the interpersonal contact between tutor and tutee (Zieber & Hagen, 2009, p. 357). The development of boundaries is significant to all of the faculty tutors interviewed by Zieber and Hagen (2009). Setting firm, explicitly stated boundaries was the exception as tutors felt that this was neither warranted nor helpful in developing student relationships (Zieber & Hagen, 2009). The professional tutors may explicitly convey clear boundaries regarding issues such as confidentiality and sexual relationships because of concerns related to the potential power they have over students (Zieber & Hagen, 2009).

Participants in the Zieber and Hagen (2009) study struggled with the balance of wanting flexible boundaries with students to facilitate learning but with firm boundaries to develop appropriate professional relationships. As student interaction time increased, instructors felt that they were able to be more flexible with relationship boundaries (Zieber & Hagen, 2009). Three

themes emerged from the data collected: a) "personal sharing and self-disclosure", b) evolution of relationships over time, and c) "nature of touch" (Zieber & Hagen, 2009, p. 358).

Being mindful of boundaries so that students did not become friends in the process of interaction was necessary for instructors to acknowledge (Zieber & Hagen, 2009). Alternatively, faculty interviewed by Por and Barriball (2008) describe feeling as though a student was more of a friend in her relationship. Personal sharing and self-disclosure demonstrate the instructor's ability to set boundaries about how much to reveal to the student (Zieber & Hagen, 2009). Instructors felt that disclosure at times may be necessary for the learning experience and would then become clear as to why they were self-disclosing to the student (Zieber & Hagen, 2009). Being able to model an appropriate balance of self-disclosure may be an appropriate way to teach students how to reflect upon their own behaviors (Zieber & Hagen, 2009).

There is some balance with the need to function as academic help and provide pastoral care to students. Participants in Por and Barriball's (2008) study describe finding themselves getting sucked into student's problems and emotions to the point where she perceived advice that she gave was not always appropriate.

Development of relationship boundaries that assist student learning but also enact professional values is of concern for faculty. Research on peer learning boundaries in tutoring and nursing is limited. Knowledge of boundaries for both peer and professional tutor groups is essential to understand when developing a tutoring program. Learning how tutees feel about relationship boundaries as potential barriers to learning and supportive relationships with the tutors is crucial in program development. The tutees may see a demonstration of professional

integration into practice and role modeling of these boundaries as beneficial for their future practice.

Time Balance

Coakley (1999) describes that while some students experienced fulfilling relationships with their tutors, others found that time was often a limiting factor. Students describe that when a tutor is busy, "you feel like a burden to start with," so discussing issues and relationship building with that tutor is more difficult (Coakley, 1999, p. 764). Faculty also acknowledged that the role is unexpectedly time-consuming and that the responsibilities of the role are not suited to everyone (Coakley, 1999). Por and Barriball (2008) state similar findings that faculty tutors describe the development of a good relationship with students as taking a reasonable amount of time and energy. Faculty tutors felt that the time and workload were the most significant constraints when it came to tutoring students (Por & Barriball, 2008).

The amount of time can impact the development of relationships with students that both peer and professional tutors are allotted to spend with a student. Zieber and Hagen (2009) found that instructors did not feel the same connections with students who were with them in shorter clinical rotations.

Student comments from a structured experimental group design tutoring program included a desire for more meetings with their professional tutor (Guerra-Martin et al., 2017). Both student and professional tutors commented on the fact that encounters between the two were not as long or as often as they would have liked (Dobinson-Harrington, 2006). Even if tutors are willing to make time to meet students may perceive them as being too busy with other

activities to take an interest in the student and that students felt they were taking up too much of the tutors' time (Stephen et al., 2008).

Student and tutor responses indicate that time constraints present a barrier to successful tutoring relationships. These responses demonstrate that when investigating student experiences with both peer and professional tutoring, questions about issues regarding time should be examined. Questions about if tutees felt time, adequate or insufficient, impacted their experience with tutoring and building a relationship with tutors. This question should be asked to investigate the concept further.

Professional Integration

Professional integration into the nursing role that students will fill is vital because as they become nurses working within the profession, there needs to be an understanding of the nursing culture and how they play a part. Students from an associate degree nursing program described in interviews that they felt communication with faculty and the level of faculty involvement with students was essential to their success in the nursing program (Rogers, 2010). Based on this information Rogers (2010) recommends that faculty should make an effort to "mentor students and form trusting relationships" (p. 99).

Dobinson-Harrington (2006) describe professional tutoring characteristics of knowing how tutors had to "think and act in different ways and achieve a transition to professional behavior, unlike learner studying other subjects" (p.40). Role modeling professional behavior for integration into practice even outside of the clinical or classroom environment may be necessary for nursing students. Acknowledging professional standards and practices when interacting with students may be vital in building relationships.

Jeffreys (2012) discusses that professional integration is an essential piece of her framework for increasing student success and retention. Incorporating students into the nursing profession through its standards and code of ethics by role modeling behaviors can increase student accountability and success (Jeffreys, 2012). Examining how these professional integration factors play a part in how students experience tutoring, and if it helps them feel more integrated into the nursing courses, is vital for this study.

Theoretical Framework

While several models produced in higher education research focus on student retention, Jeffreys's (2012) model of nursing undergraduate retention and success provides a model that specifically targets the research sample this study examined. Other models presented in the literature considered for this study include Tinto's (1987) model of student retention, which provides an opportunity to view the research project through a lens that includes student support structures within both the academic and the social integration realms. The integration Tinto (1987) discusses as affecting student retention includes faculty relationships built outside of the typical classroom encounters. The constraint is that Tinto's (1987) model is limited in the fact that the research sample used included only traditional-aged university or college students at a baccalaureate level. More recent research conducted by Karp, Hughes, and O'Gara (2008) has demonstrated that Tinto's integration framework applies to community college students within the nontraditional age group. The same academic and social integration connections that students make in community college relate to continued persistence (Karp et al., 2008).

Cabrera, Nora, and Castaneda (1993) attempted to combine Tinto's (1987) student integration model with Bean and Metzner's (1985) student attrition model to better describe how

both internal and external factors affect college student persistence. Cabrera et al. (1993) added additional outside factors that could impact persistence, including "financial attitudes" and "encouragement from family and friends" (p. 134). While social integration is a continued part of the Cabrera et al. model, the focus is shifted away and directed more towards support received by family and friends. The primary area of focus for this study is the support that students receive at the college from peers and professional staff during the tutoring process. The component of persistence related to social integration due to interaction with professional tutors and faculty creates a gap that Tinto's (1987) model can fill and where Cabrera et al. (1993) fail to acknowledge.

Bean and Metzner (1985) address the issues from the perspective of nontraditional students. Community college students often fall into the category of nontraditional students (Jeffreys, 2013). Characteristics of nontraditional students include: a) over age 25, b) part-time attendance, c) married, d) commuter, e) has dependent children, and f) completed secondary education via a different route than usual (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Jeffreys, 2015). Jeffreys (2015) states that nontraditional students in nursing education include those who are male, minority students or those from a diverse racial or ethnic background, and those for whom English is a second language. Students categorized in the nontraditional group spent less time on campus interacting with the social environment outside of class (Bean & Metzner, 1985). Jeffreys (2015) also commented on how nontraditional students report feelings of social isolation. Due to this finding, when Bean and Metzner (1985) created their model, they focused on social integration as having only a compensatory effect on the nontraditional students. While the benefit of Bean and Metzner's model is the focus on nontraditional students, the lack of

association regarding the potential effect of social interaction and integration with a student is lacking.

In 2012, Jeffreys incorporated both Bean and Metzner (1985) and Tinto's (1987) concepts to create a model specific to nursing student retention. The model recognizes student profile characteristics that apply to both traditional and nontraditional students (Jeffreys, 2015). The original model produced focused solely on prelicensure undergraduate nursing students and has since been shown to apply to post-licensure students as well (Jeffreys, 2015). The framework titled Nursing Universal Retention and Success (NURS) (Fig.1) addresses the multidimensional factors that affect nursing students (Jeffreys, 2015). The shift with the model is away from the factors affecting attrition to factors affecting student success in nursing programs and how those factors can be best optimized for nursing student retention (Jeffreys, 2015). The model "indicates that retention decisions are based on the interaction of student profile characteristics, student affective factors, academic factors, environmental factors, professional integration factors, academic outcomes, psychological outcomes, and outside surrounding factors" (Jeffreys, 2012, p. 13).
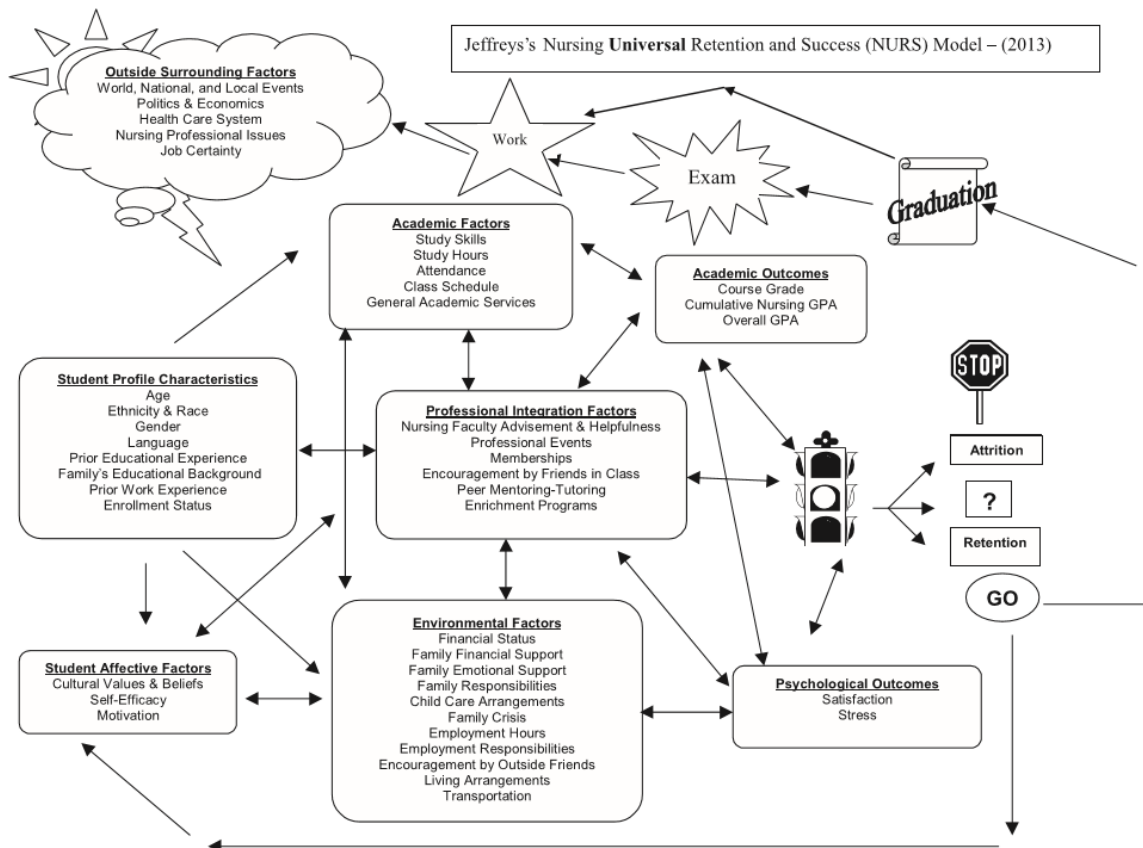
Figure 1: Jeffreys's Nursing Universal Retention and Success Model (2013)

The framework was created in an effort for higher education to be able to examine

nursing student retention and assist in identifying at-risk students who may need more support

through nursing coursework (Jeffreys, 2015). Educators are then able to use the framework to

help guide the identified students into programs that may increase their success in the nursing

program. The framework provides an opportunity for educators to examine issues that can affect

student success and target innovations in how to teach learning strategies to increase student

success (Jeffreys, 2015).

Initial assumptions created for the NURS model have been modified over time based on international research findings (Jeffreys, 2015). Jeffreys (2015) states that those assumptions include:

1) Nursing student retention is a priority concern of nurse educators worldwide;

2) Student retention is a dynamic and multidimensional phenomenon that is influenced by the interaction of multiple variables (factors);

3) Environmental factors and professional integration factors greatly influence nursing student retention;

4) Psychological outcomes and academic outcomes interact and influence persistence;

5) All students, regardless of prior academic performance and work experience, can benefit from professional socialization and enrichment throughout the pre-professional and professional education;

6) Nursing student retention is best achieved by focusing more comprehensively on success as going beyond the minimal standards towards optimizing outcomes aimed at achieving peak performance potentials; and

7) Optimizing outcomes necessitates a holistic approach that focuses on proactive inclusive enrichment (PIE) and avoids exclusive remediation (ER) (p. 426).

Jeffreys's (2012) model includes several factors that influence nursing student success. Student profile characteristics are those characteristics present prior to entry into nursing courses. These characteristics include: a) age, b) ethnicity, c) race and heritage, d) gender and sexual identity, e) family's educational background, f) first language, g) prior educational experience, and h) enrollment status (Jeffreys, 2015).

As the study examined associate degree nursing students, there is an increased likelihood that students will fall into the nontraditional category. Jeffreys (2012) categorizes nontraditional students as having one or more of the following criteria: a) 25 years of age or older, b) commuter, c) enrolled part-time, d) male, e) ethnically or racially diverse, f) non-native English speaker, g) having dependent children, or h) having completed secondary education through a nontraditional route. Jeffreys's model takes into account the experience of the nontraditional student, as her initial focus was specifically on nontraditional student retention (Jeffreys, 2003). The fact that the model considers nontraditional student experiences, including a greater sense of social isolation, within a specific profession assists with the applicability to this study design (Jeffreys, 2015).

A variety of environmental factors also impact student success and retention (Jeffreys, 2012). Financial issues, family crises, family responsibilities, and employment all affect how successful a student will be with their academic ventures (Jeffreys, 2012). Bean and Metzner (1985) describe that environmental influences are some of the most influential in student academic success and retention. Unexpected environmental challenges can occur, especially for nontraditional students, influencing persistence, and achievement (Jeffreys, 2015). Managing unexpected environmental challenges and having a back-up plan to manage challenges may be especially important in preventing attrition from nursing programs (Jeffreys, 2015). Additionally, students with multiple roles may face more challenges in successful persistence through the nursing program (Jeffreys, 2015).

Jeffreys (2012) describes academic factors that influence student success as being items that include study skills, attendance, and general academic services. These factors align closely

with academic outcomes and a student's ability to develop critical thinking skills (Jeffreys, 2015). Students who have more considerable self-direction and are actively engaged are viewed as able to have greater success (Jeffreys, 2015).

The final characteristic I feel that has a substantial impact on student retention from Jeffreys's (2015) model is professional integration factors. Professional integration includes modeling of behavior by both the peer and professional tutor, emphasizing academic integration, and socialization (Jeffreys, 2015). Several researchers describe the positive impact of generalized social integration on retention (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Cabrera et al., 1993; Tinto, 1987). Jeffreys (2015) feels that socialization and integration into the nursing profession are different from general socialization in the college process. Professional integration factors influence and enhance the students' interaction with the college system as a whole in addition to specifically "within the context of professional socialization and career development" (p. 429). Interaction with peer and professional tutoring provides students the opportunity to develop professional socialization. Professional socialization can create a sense of commitment within the student, potentially decreasing attrition from nursing programs (Jeffreys, 2015). Educators also need to realize that professional integration is multidimensional, affecting the students' cognitive, affective, and practical dimensions (Jeffreys, 2015).

Outside surrounding factors are also emphasized in Jeffreys's (2015) NURS model. While it appears that outside surrounding factors can influence student success, there is less overall impact than the other factors within the model. For the purposes of this study, outside surrounding factors will not be an area of primary focus, rather student experiences with tutoring

will remain the focus. As the data developed, no outside surrounding factors appeared as a theme in the data.

Jeffreys (2015) describes how any of the factors within the model may provide either a positive or a negative impact on student retention and success. Some students may perceive factors as providing support for retention and success, while others view those same factors as limiting and restrictive (Jeffreys, 2015). Determining the student view of the impacting factor is essential for understanding successful interventions to elevate student success or combat student attrition (Jeffreys, 2015).

The impact of retention on the educational system is always a concern, particularly in areas where there is a demonstrated need for trained personal to fill available jobs. By applying Jeffreys's (2012) NURS model to associate degree nursing students who attended tutoring services, the hope is to demonstrate how student profile, environmental, academic, and professional integration factors impact student success and retention. Understanding the underlying features that students possess and how that impacts their success in nursing coursework is vital to creating and improving educational programs to increase retention. Developing and improving a plan for student success in associate degree nursing programs needs to start with an understanding of students' experience with retention measures implemented. The goal of the research with examining experiences of associate degree nursing students who attended peer or professional tutoring is to determine the validity of Jeffreys's (2012) model based on findings from qualitative interviews with students. Having a better understanding of how the model applies specifically to associate degree nursing students with primarily

nontraditional characteristics is helpful, moving forward with a retention planning for two-year colleges.

Summary

Multiple student characteristics factor into student retention and success in nursing programs. Recognition of the factors that potentially affect student retention is essential when examining why students attend tutoring services. Knowledge about how both internal and external factors impact their learning, ability to be successful, and functionality within an associate degree nursing program provides insight when developing support services to assist them on their path. Bringing these items to the forefront of the development process allows students to give input into strategies that could help with retention and increasing overall program ELA. Seeking a better understanding of why nursing programs are losing students is vital for the improvement of accreditation results and ensuring that there are enough nurses in the workforce.

Chapter 3: Methodology

To gain a full understanding of the lived experiences of the ADN student, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews to gain a detailed basic qualitative inquiry description of student perspectives. Rich description of the structure of the student experience was completed to gain student perspective (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, and Morales (2007) explain qualitative research as describing characteristics that all participants within the study experience. Basic qualitative research is the understanding that "individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24).

The perspective, or view, of the student experiences related to tutoring are crucial to understand in order to gain the detailed description necessary to find themes within the data. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) describe a significant feature of qualitative data as focusing on "naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings" (p. 11). Qualitative inquiry research is evidence derived from first-person accounts of life experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The understanding of what the individuals have experienced and how they have experienced it allows for themes to be found in the data and meaning to be derived from those themes (Moustakas, 1994). Examining the differing perspectives of students who attend varying types of tutoring allows for themes to be drawn out from the data. Understanding the shared experience of tutoring makes it a useful tool to motivate change within the nursing program to improve tutoring experiences. Qualitative research is the understanding that "individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24). Basic qualitative inquiry is viewing "people's experience of their life world" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 26).

Research Design

Qualitative research allows the researcher to gain thick description of the experiences and perspectives of study participants as viewed through their lens (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Polit and Beck (2008), qualitative research is the "investigation of a phenomena, typically in an in-depth and holistic fashion" that includes the use of "rich narrative materials using a flexible research design" (p. 763). The primary belief in qualitative research is that there is an ongoing construction of as people interact and then make meaning of their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). An in-depth understanding of the ADN student's perspectives within this study allows for a greater understanding of what processes within the tutoring services are working well and what improvements to the services could be instituted. Understanding why students choose to utilize specific types of tutoring services offered within the nursing department was investigated to determine potential process improvements that could occur to improve attendance at either of the tutoring options.

Semi-structured interviews occurred with students who attended tutoring as a means of gaining an in-depth, holistic understanding of the ADN student's experiences with tutoring. The study allows for a greater understanding of what processes within the tutoring services are working well and what improvements to the services could be instituted. The first step in understanding what works well for students in tutoring was conducting interviews to gain perspective about what they felt were meaningful experiences within the tutoring process.

The research for the study sought to answer three questions: a) what attracts associate degree nursing students to a specific type of tutoring service, b) what are students' experiences with the tutoring service, and c) in what ways does the student feel tutoring has impacted their

ability to persist in through their nursing coursework. The study focused on student experiences with tutoring, perceived student experiences with tutoring that impact persistence, and why they choose to attend a specific type of tutoring. It is essential to understand why students choose specific tutoring services to help determine potential process improvements that could occur to improve attendance for either of the tutoring options.

The research was conducted at a mid-sized community college in the upper Midwest. The college nursing education department provides degree/certificate options including: a) associate degree nurse (ADN), b) diploma practical nurse (PNM), and c) nursing assistant (NA) certificate. Currently, the PNM program has additional supplemental instruction (SI) services, and the NA program receives no nursing-specific tutoring services. The ADN students have the option of utilizing both peer and professional nursing-specific tutoring services at the college. To provide consistency for this study, only ADN students were interviewed. Students enrolled in the ADN program also make up the largest volume of nursing students represented at the study location, allowing for the opportunity for a larger sample size.

The study investigated the experiences of ADN students who choose to attend peer or professional tutoring services. Peer tutors are members of the Alpha Delta Nu honor society and are supervised by a nursing faculty advisor. Alpha Delta Nu members are nursing students in their third or fourth semester who have a GPA greater than 3.8 in their nursing coursework. As a requirement to be inducted into Alpha Delta Nu students must participate in service hours and peer tutoring. Peer tutoring is offered on a rotating schedule based on peer tutor availability, generally 2-to-5 hours weekly. Alpha Delta Nu students manage the schedule themselves, communicating information to the lab assistant who posts the available hours on the Nursing

Resource Site for all nursing students to access. Peer tutoring takes place at the nursing lab on campus.

Professional nursing tutors include registered nurses (RN) who are currently employed in a variety of positions within the college and/or major medical center within the community. All professional tutors who have a master's degree in nursing are compensated for their time spent tutoring students. During the research, the professional tutors provided by the major medical center and program stakeholders were no longer available. Students interviewed that were in the first and second semesters did not have the opportunity to interact with paid professional tutors who were non-faculty members. Those in previous semesters were able to interact with non-faculty paid professional tutors. All student groups were able to interact with two unpaid volunteer tutors that are associate degree RN's working to complete their bachelor's degree in nursing. In total, four professional nurse tutors were working for the program before being unavailable for the first- and second-semester students who were interviewed. Additionally, there are program faculty who volunteer their time to tutor students. A majority of nursing faculty members in the department volunteer a varying number of hours for tutoring. With the loss of outside professional tutors, an increase in the number of faculty provided tutoring hours occurred. Professional tutoring is offered at least three times weekly in two to four-hour blocks of time. Tutoring sessions are scheduled in the nursing resource room, located near the nursing department.

Sample

Typical purposeful sampling was used to recruit tutee interview participants (Punch & Oancea, 2014). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe purposeful sampling as a technique that

allows for the researcher to "discover, understand, and gain insight" from a population where the greatest amount of information is most likely to be obtained (p. 96). There is an emphasis that when using purposeful sampling, researchers can get participants who have information-rich cases pertaining directly to the topic studied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Typical purposeful sampling to recruit students from both groups was initially used. Initial recruitment participants were sampled from either of the tutoring groups and attended at least three tutoring sessions. The population sampled all attended a similar tutoring event and represent a typical case of the student tutoring experience.

A further variation of sampling described by Punch and Oancea (2014) is the stratified purposeful sampling technique, which illustrates subgroups and facilitates comparison. Stratified purposeful sampling allows for the researcher to "capture major variations rather than to identify a common core, although the latter may also emerge in the analysis" (Patton, 1990, p. 174). Each of the groups receiving tutoring represents a specific subgroup allowing me to review and compare the two different subgroups. As described above, the comparison of the subgroups allows for a better understanding of how these groups experience tutoring services and can help direct the college on how to improve tutoring within the nursing department.

Only students enrolled in the ADN program were recruited to participate in the study. Students in the ADN program were not required to attend tutoring sessions, meaning they were voluntary above and beyond class expectations. Attendance records for the tutoring sessions were kept in logbooks within the nursing department. Potential study participants from each of the tutoring subgroups were identified using these logbooks. Students who attended a minimum of three tutoring sessions from at least one of the groups were included in the first round of

contact mailings. Participants who attended both types of tutoring were contacted and interviewed for both peer and professional experiences. Interviews with those who attended both types of tutoring permits for comparison of peer and professional tutoring occurring within the same sample of students.

As described in the literature review, a variety of student characteristics, environmental and academic factors can influence student persistence in nursing programs (Jeffreys, 2012). While these factors may affect student persistence, they did not impact the inclusion or exclusion of a student from the sample population for this study. These factors were further examined during both the semi-structured interviews and coding process to determine if potential themes related to student characteristics, environmental and academic factors influence student's tutoring experience.

The sample for the research study included participants who were enrolled in the associate degree nursing program and actively taking nursing courses. Participants included in the study must have attended at least three tutoring sessions offered by the nursing department in the college pertaining to one type of tutoring, peer or professional, within the previous or current semester. The sample size included seven students willing to participate in interviews. I felt that data saturation was met after six interviews. A seventh interview was included as it was already scheduled, and I felt this additional data would be helpful.

Participants were chosen based on their responses via the email seeking participants. The participants were chosen because they had attended at least three tutoring sessions and were willing to meet for an interview. The students interviewed represented all four semesters. Two were in their first semester, two in their second semester, two in their third semester, and one

who was in their fourth semester of courses. Five of the participants were women and two were men. Women are the primary gender identity of students enrolled in the nursing courses at the college, and this sample is representative of that. Participants ranged from ages 21 to 55, with most being in their mid 20's. This data aligns with the idea that most of the community college student body fits into the nontraditional category. Three of the students had prior educational degrees beyond high school and were seeking nursing as a second career. Four students reported that English was not their primary language and that they had all immigrated to the United States as adults. I felt that overall the sample was representative of the student body enrolled in nursing coursework at the college being studied.

Data Collection

Once students were identified using stratified purposeful sampling as described above, potential participants were approached via an email with information describing the study and asking if they were willing to participate. After two weeks, potential participants who did not respond received a follow-up email again requesting if they were willing to participate. A third follow-up email was sent two weeks, later requesting assistance and explaining what the research would entail. Once contact was made with participants, the researcher scheduled individual interviews. Participants were allowed to choose the meeting location and time. All but one participant preferred to meet on campus in my office. One participant chose to meet at a coffee shop.

Once the participant and researcher agreed upon time and place for the individual semi-structured in-depth interview participation consent forms were signed. Interview questions were semi-structured with a chance for participants to express additional input throughout the

interview process. Interviews lasted between 24 and 45 minutes, depending on how much

content the participant disclosed. Participants were encouraged to contact me if additional

information about the interview content emerged after the meeting. None of the participants

have thus far contacted me to discuss further any items related to tutoring. Ongoing analysis and

clarification throughout the interview process occurred in an attempt to eliminate data that may

become unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Colaizzi's (1978)

method of analysis was used throughout the data collection process to assist with identifying

similar themes from participant interviews.

Data was collected during interviews using an audio recording. Participants all agreed to

be audio recorded. The recorded data was then sent to a transcribing service, REV.com. The

transcribing service had been authorized for use by the institutional review board and signed a

non-disclosure agreement to ensure participant anonymity.

Student Demographics

To allow the reader to gain a better understanding of the participant statements, I have

opted to use pseudonyms within the following chapters. It is essential to understand the

complexity of the students interviewed so that the reader might attempt to see statements through

their lens. Seeing through the participant lens allows for the reader to get greater depth and

meaning from the content. For the ease of the reader, the table below includes participant

pseudonyms and demographic information.

Table 1

Pseudonym and descriptive information of study participants

Pseudonym	Demographics
Sam	22-year-old male enrolled full time in fourth-semester nursing courses. Prior educational experience is limited to high school. English is his primary language.
June	29-year-old female enrolled full time in first-semester nursing courses. Prior educational experience is limited to high school. English is not her primary language.
Allison	39-year-old female enrolled full time in second-semester nursing courses. Has a prior college degree. English is not her primary language.
Emily	35-year-old female enrolled full time in first-semester nursing courses. Has a prior college degree. English is not her primary language.
Dorothy	23-year-old female enrolled full time in third-semester nursing courses. Prior educational experience is limited to high school. English is not her primary language.
William	21-year-old male enrolled full time in third-semester nursing courses. Prior educational experience is limited to high school. English is his primary language.
Rose	55-year-old female enrolled full time in second-semester nursing courses. Has a prior college degree. English is her primary language.

Students interviewed ranged in age from 21 to 55 years of age, with four of the participants stating that they were in their twenties. This aligns with the description of a nontraditional college student, whereas with traditional students who would be entering the program would be eighteen or nineteen years of age.

Four of the participants identified that they had no prior higher educational degrees before entering the nursing program. Two stated that they had previous bachelor's degrees. Rose stated that she had higher educational experience as a "communications major, theater arts major, and a Spanish major." Emily stated that she received a baccalaureate degree "back in China" and that she majored in "computer stuff." Allison stated that she had a "Master's in finance." These three participants have previous educational degrees that may have influenced their expectations and experiences while attending the program involved in the study. The other four students may still have been impacted by their experiences in high school or while completing their general education requirements before being admitted to the nursing program.

Students from all four semesters of the nursing program participated in the interviews. June and Emily were in first semester. Allison and Rose were in their second semester of the associate degree nursing program. Dorothy and William were actively involved in their third semester of the nursing coursework, and Sam was in the fourth and final semester of the associate degree nursing program.

Five of the participants identified as female gender, while the remaining two stated they were male gender. Nursing programs generally have a higher rate of female students than males, so the sampling used closely depicts the ratio of male to female students enrolled in this community college's associate degree nursing program.

Four of the participants were married, while three were single or unmarried. Two of the married students had at least two children. Six of the participants acknowledge that their families were supportive of them attending higher education and completing their nursing degree. June, a married student, stated that "It's me and my husband and ... We are in a long-

distance now. We have an issue with immigration system now." There were also concerns that the family June was living with was not supportive. She stated, "I know. I don't have no support except here. That's it. None of my family approve this program for me." One of the aspects of Jeffreys's (2012) model includes the impact of family emotional support on student psychological outcomes and student affective factors such as cultural beliefs and values. From the description the student gives, it becomes clear that the lack of family emotional support based on the underlying cultural belief system is impacting the student stress level and that the support to be successful in the nursing program comes from the relationships made in the academic setting.

All of the participants worked in some form of a healthcare setting. Hours of work varied from working on an on-call basis where they can pick up shifts as they fit into their schedule to one student who stated that they worked consistently 24 hours per week. While all the participants were working in some form of healthcare, the jobs varied from working as a patient care assistant at the hospital to a nursing assistant or medication technician at a nursing home.

Analysis

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) discuss that basic qualitative inquiry seeks the understand the participant experiences and how they make meaning from those experiences. I attempted to limit bias brought into the interview and analysis process by using bracketing before interviews. The concept of bracketing, as described by Moustakas (1994), was used in an attempt to limit bias. Bracketing includes identifying these preconceived notions or beliefs as much as possible (Creswell, 2013). The goal of using bracketing to set aside previous feelings and beliefs when researching the participant experience, being able to view through fresh eyes (Creswell, 2013). I

kept a personal reflective journal to acknowledge bias that occurs from personal assumptions, observations, and confusions (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Being able to reflect upon the process and assumptions can help to maintain an "ongoing sense of caution about the role personal bias plays when making sense of the data" (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007, p. 176).

Data analysis and coding of data occurred using Colaizzi's (1978) method to guide the analysis of the research. The use of Colaizzi's (1978) method of data analysis model allowed for initial open coding to be completed and themes to be extracted to understand participant experience better. Colaizzi's (1978) method of analysis is composed of seven steps. The first step includes reading and rereading each participant interview or protocol to gain a feeling of the experience described by the research participant and "make sense of their account" (Colaizzi, 1978; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007, p. 176). Interviews were read and reread after they were transcribed. This allowed a check for the accuracy of the transcriptions as well as to gain a better feeling of the student experience.

The second step involves delineating significant statements from the interviews that pertain to the experience. Extracting significant statements allows for the researcher to eliminate repetitious statements and identify significant statements (Colaizzi, 1978). Transcribed and corrected interviews were loaded into an encrypted ATLAS ti program to assist in organizing data during this second step. Once data was uploaded, I used open coding to identify significant participant statements.

The third step involves formulating meanings "to illuminate hidden meanings in various contexts" of the experience (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007, p. 177). Colaizzi (1978) states that this step involves the researcher being creative, leaping from "what his subjects say to what they

mean" (p. 59). During the third step in the process, it was important for me to "go beyond what is given in the original data and at the same time, stay with it" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 59). In the third step, the transcripts were reread. The researcher looked to pull meaning from the data through the eyes of participants, putting aside bias as much as possible. The integration of the personal journal I kept was important in this step in an attempt to maintain an accurate description of student experiences. As the interviews progressed, it became clear that the use of reflective listening during the interview process was essential to developing accurate meaning while making that "leap" during this third step.

Step four involves aggregating the formulated meanings identified in step three, creating clusters of themes (Colaizzi, 1978). Once the statements and meanings are identified, the researcher was able to see clusters of themes common to all participants (Creswell, 2013; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). I then referred back to the original transcripts to validate clustered themes and emerging conclusions (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). An effort was made during step four to "refuse the temptations of ignoring data or themes which don't fit" into my view of the experience (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 61). I again reflected upon the bracketing done to reduce bias and assumptions impacting the data. Themes were created based on similar clusters of data from the open coding completed and interpreting what students meant through a description of their experiences. Similar data was categorized into broader themes of meaningful experiences.

The use of intuiting occurred primarily during these first four steps in the analysis process. Intuiting is developed through participating in active listening, critical reflection, and a "concerted effort to understand "what it must be like." (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007, p. 176). During the research, these activities were done primarily during the interview process.

Rephrasing, reflective listening, and clarification were used throughout each of the interviews.

The process of intuiting should leave the researcher feeling as though they have personally lived

the participants' experience or feeling as if though they have "walked in their shoes." Bracketing

out balanced with intuitiveness at this stage became vital so that I could move forward without

significantly influencing the data with my own bias.

The fifth step in Colaizzi's (1978) method of data analysis involves providing an

exhaustive, in-depth description of the experience (Creswell, 2013). Step five includes

describing the experience as it represents a broader population. The broader population that this

research applies to is undergraduate nursing students, with a focus on associate degree registered

nurse programs. Wojnar and Swanson (2007) state that step five "includes coding segments of

text for topics, comparing topics for consistent themes, and bridging themes for their conceptual

meanings" (p. 176). The description in step five allows for anyone who has lived through the

experience, in this case, tutoring, to be able to identify with the themes derived from the

research. The broader themes and research findings that apply to this study, as described in step

five, are described in chapter four.

Authors differ on the sixth step in the process. Colaizzi (1978) describes that the

researcher should attempt to formulate an exhaustive description of the experience, attempting to

retain as much of the fundamental structure as possible. More recent authors state that step six

includes returning to participants interviewed for the research and validating the findings

(Creswell, 2013; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). I followed the original Colaizzi (1978) text,

attempting to describe the student experiences while maintaining the fundamental structure of the

participant responses.

The final step in the analysis process involves the inclusion of commentary from the participants after a review of the research findings (Colaizzi, 1978; Creswell, 2013; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Colaizzi (1978) describes the final validating step as returning to select participants and allowing them to review the data. Any "relevant new data that emerges" from the review of data "must be worked into the final research" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 62). In the final step, four selected participants were sent data from the final research findings. The students were to review the data and give feedback via email correspondence. After a two-week time period, none of the participants responded with comments or feedback regarding the research.

I used Colaizzi's method of analysis for data reduction with open coding techniques based on transcribed interviews and researcher field notes to extract significant statements and create themes around the core experiences (Creswell, 2013; Punch & Oancea, 2014). The data was coded after each interview was transcribed. I did additional coding after completion of all participant interviews. This was to revisit the data and find common themes of the student experience. Reading and rereading the participant interviews allowed for me to gain better understanding of the participant experiences, as well as led to new ideas on what should go into the data display for coding (Creswell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014). The goal of further coding and creation of themes at the fourth stage is to break information into themes without losing a significant amount of information (Punch & Oancea, 2014; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007).

Once data was reduced through the identification of significant statements and formulating meanings, the data was displayed using software to "organize, compress, and assemble information" (Punch & Oancea, 2014, p. 224). The display allowed me to more easily understand and delineate themes based on the first three steps in Colaizzi's (1978) method of

analysis. Data was organized for coding using ATLAS ti software. The categorizing of data

through this display method allowed for clumping of similar themes from interviews for easier

review. The categorizing of data aligns with Colaizzi's fourth stage of analysis of describing by

including "coding segments of text for topics" and "comparing topics for consistent themes"

(Wojnar & Swanson, 2007, p. 176).

Identifying the data themes occurred when the ATLAS ti document displays were

merged, with overlapping themes from participant interviews noted. Data was reviewed again,

incorporating the ideas of intuition and bracketing into the analysis of the themes to ensure that

an accurate description occurred. The description stage also included reviewing coding

segments to "bridge themes for their conceptual meanings" (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007, p. 176).

Bridging themes occurred after completion of an exhaustive categorization and identification of

themes. Once a final description was created, I returned to four select participants in an attempt

to validate the findings of the research. Input from the participants regarding the research

findings would then be included in the final document. Four participants were emailed the

completed research findings and feedback was requested. None of the participants contacted

provided feedback after two weeks.

Trustworthiness

Four criteria that Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest for developing trustworthiness in

qualitative research include: a) credibility, b) dependability, c) confirmability, and d)

transferability. Authenticity was added later as a fifth criterion to the initial framework (Lincoln

and Guba, 1994). The analysis steps in Colaizzi's (1978) model correlate with the criteria that

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe.

The first criteria of credibility is related to reading and re-reading the transcripts to be able to understand participants experiences thoroughly (Colaizzi, 1978). After determining clusters of themes, I then focused on the participant experience in an attempt to see the experience through "through the eyes" of the participant. Credibility is expressed by presenting these experiences in a contextual and believable way (Polit & Beck, 2008). Data collection to the point of saturation occurred once I began noting repetitive themes emerging during the interviews. Data saturation in qualitative inquiry is essential to allow for maximum understanding of a collective human perspective of experience. Credibility was ensured through the seventh step in Colaizzi's (1978) framework by returning to four selected research participants to verify themes identified and to determine if the participant feedback aligns with themes identified in the data reduction process. None of the four participants contacted responded with additional feedback or input related to the research findings sent to them.

Dependability becomes intertwined with credibility when assessing to see if the data will remain stable over time and conditions (Polit & Beck, 2008). Careful documentation of participant interviews, researcher notes, and researcher journaling occurred throughout the study in an attempt to increase dependability.

I used bracketing during the analysis process to decrease researcher bias and improve researcher objectivity when evaluating the data (Moustakas, 1994). The bracketing process helped to complete the necessary critical self-reflection needed prior to interpreting and analyzing the interview data (Polit & Beck, 2008). Repeated listening and review of transcripts of participant interviews before identifying themes within the data occurred to increase confirmability. Member checking allowed for interview participants to give feedback on

"preliminary or emergent findings" that the researcher draws during the data reduction process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 246). I used member checking in situ during the interviews to "summarize major themes or viewpoints in real time" (Polit & Beck, 2008, p.545). I provided both formative and summative reflective summary during the interviews that allowed participants to react, reflect, and discuss rich data as the interview progress as well as at the end to ensure that all topics were discussed and clarified (Polit & Beck, 2008). Member checking during the seventh step of Colaizzi's (1978) framework was completed by returning to four select participants to review the research findings. During the review, participants were encouraged via email to "provide critical feedback about factual errors or interpretive deficiencies," ensuring that findings align with participant experiences (Polit & Beck, 2008, p. 545). None of the four participants contacted with data findings responded within a two-week timeframe.

The goal of the research study was to provide a broad enough scope that results apply to a variety of tutoring programs both within and outside of the nursing department, increasing the transferability of the data. Developing data by understanding the experiences of community college students rather than classic undergraduate students will hopefully provide data that applies to a more nontraditional student population. Use of thick description related to student experience was provided to the reader with the opportunity to feel as if though they have "walked in" the participant's shoes becomes an essential step in intuiting and transferability of the data (Polit & Beck, 2008; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007).

I ensured authenticity by attempting to represent the multiple realities experienced by participants (Polit & Beck, 2008). A thick, vivid description of the data, as described in the sixth

step of Colaizzi's (1978) framework, was being used to enhance authenticity. The use of

transcribed data to relay direct quotes and experiences of research participants helps to maintain

an authentic approach. I utilized member checking during step seven of the Colaizzi (1978)

framework to allow for selected research participants to review the findings, ensuring that their

voice has been portrayed (Polit & Beck, 2008). Member checking was also used in situ during

the interview process to clarify, connect, and expand upon the information discussed during the

interview.

Bias

Potential bias related to myself may be present in the following aspects. I am a faculty

member employed at the college where the study took place. I have been a faculty member

involved in professional tutoring sessions offered to the ADN students at the college. Frequently

I have had close interaction with several of the participants through classroom and lab practice

experiences. I have promoted both the professional and peer tutoring sessions that occur within

the nursing department. There have been occurrences where I have corrected information given

by a peer tutor while a tutee is present. I recognize that the college involved in the study may

receive benefit from the results and represents a large stakeholder. The nursing department at the

college involved in the study currently demonstrates retention rates below the ELA set for

accreditation. Due to these falling numbers, the college has submitted a retention plan to ACEN

that includes providing tutoring services to decrease attrition within the ADN program.

Role of Researcher

As noted above, the study was conducted at the researcher's place of employment with participants whom I was currently teaching. There is a benefit to completing the study at the researcher's place of employment, allowing for extra insight into specific processes that occur within the nursing department affecting study outcomes. I acknowledge that there are also risks involved in completing the study in a familiar environment. Participants may not be as open to discussing sensitive topics or providing full disclosure answers due to the authoritative position I hold. Measures to minimize participant discomfort and maximize the openness of participant's responses included allowing the student to choose time and place of the interview. I reassured the participants that confidentiality was maintained regarding the participant's role in the study. I did not interact with the participants in the tutoring space during the semester before or over the time the study occurred.

Ethical Considerations and Internal Review Board Process

I have completed all required Institutional Review Board (IRB) training required for researching at the institution where the study will occur. The research utilized normal educational practices that are already occurring on campus. Students agreed to participate in the interview process, a curricular activity beyond tutoring. Participants in the study were all be at least 18 years of age or above. The sample may have included students who were pregnant or are economically/educationally disadvantaged if they meet the criteria for sampling. Students were not asked specifics about if they were pregnant or economically/educationally disadvantaged. I did not directly seek out these types of participants. However, they may have been included because that information was not screened before participation in interviews.

Sampling techniques included use of non-public lists that allowed for me to determine which students have attended a specific type of tutoring. I contacted the administration at the institution and obtained a letter of support, allowing for the use of those records in the research described. No monetary or non-monetary compensation was provided to participants agreeing to be involved in the research study. Participants were informed that involvement in the study would not in any way affect their academic record or grading.

Data was collected using an individual semi-structured interview process and kept confidential. Data was recorded and transcribed using encrypted software. Data was kept using password-protected software. All documents for data coding had identifying components of participants removed. The data key that matched participant names to pseudonyms was kept in a locked file cabinet. Pseudonyms were used for coding data displays, and these documents were kept using password-protected software on a secure drive. Recorded data was transcribed via the transcription service Rev. Rev maintains a TLS 1.2 encryption service and requires all transcription employees to sign confidentiality agreements (Rev, n.d.). Rev also completed a non-disclosure agreement provided by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. This non-disclosure agreement was submitted to the institutional review board at St. Cloud State University for approval. Once the recordings were transcribed and returned from Rev, I requested that Rev delete all audio transcription files they may have.

Documents then transferred to ATLAS ti for coding were kept encrypted and under password protection. Only the principal investigator, faculty advisor, and transcriptionist have access to the data set. The principal investigator is the only person who had access to the data key. After three years, all recordings will be destroyed to maintain ongoing confidentiality. All

participants were treated respectfully throughout the entire research study process and beyond in the classroom.

Data presented in the findings section using both direct and indirect de-identified quotes. Four participants have had the opportunity to review the completed findings section with the opportunity to provide feedback and clarification. Quotes have been de-identified by using descriptors and pseudonyms.

Anticipated benefits of the research include developing a greater understanding of student experience with tutoring in the nursing department and the impact on persistence. Students may receive the benefit of developing a greater understanding of their ability to persist in nursing education from the reflective questioning during the interview process. The reflective process may also have impacted students' ability to understand how tutoring impacted their learning, either positively or negatively. Larger programmatic and institutional benefit may include a better understanding of student tutoring experience along with suggestions in the conclusions section for targeted improvement of the tutoring process, which in turn may increase overall retention and ELA rates.

Anticipated risks to participants of the research study are minimal. Participants were not placed in a high risk or high reward situation that would impact their academic progress. I did not approach potential participants from the sample list outside of the recruitment email regarding the research. Participants had the option to remove themselves from the study at any point with no penalty. Participants who presented sensitive material or psychological stress that required additional services beyond what I could provide would have been referred to those services during the interview process. I did not contact the participants regarding these issues

after the interview process. I did not grade or otherwise evaluate students during their academic career at the institution if they participated in the interviews. I did not tutor students in the previous or current semester the research occurred in an attempt to mitigate false skewing of data. Faculty or administration do not have access to data key, audio, or data set. Faculty and administration only have access to the final published dissertation work with de-identified data.

The research study did not involve any physical involvement, invasion of privacy, sensitive information, or deceptive techniques. The research was not designed to elicit any undesirable or unexpected psychological changes. However, if this occurred during the research process, I assisted in identifying outside resources that the participant may use to help resolve these issues. Participants were required to sign a consent form outlining the information listed above prior to the interview process. Research approval by the IRB at St. Cloud State University and approval of the IRB process at the institution where the research occurred was obtained before any research interviews being conducted. All requirements for IRB approval were met before contacting potential participants for the study.

Summary

Finding a solution to help decrease the attrition from nursing programs is a priority for ADN nursing programs. Peer and professional tutoring services may potentially help to decrease student attrition while simultaneously increasing student's GPA scores and student confidence in the knowledge of nursing material. Understanding what motivates students to attend tutoring within the nursing department is vital to increase the use of tutoring services and incorporate increasing services that students are seeking. Demonstrating that peer-tutoring and professional tutoring services can improve retention specifically provides validation for continued funding of

the intervention. Improvement, both GPA and student confidence, is the icing on the cake for the students and the faculty. Developing students who are successful in both college and the workforce is the priority end goal.

Chapter 4: Results

As presented in the literature review, the factors impacting success are numerous, particularly in the field of nursing education. Examining how those factors play a role in the success of nursing student retention is a broad, complex topic, as Jeffreys (2012) describes in her text. It is essential to understand that student experiences with tutoring are one piece of a complex retention puzzle, potentially increasing student success in nursing education programs. Increasing retention and completion is a critical factor for nursing programs to maintain accreditation, which is a board requirement to graduate licensable students. Finding the best means to provide worthwhile services to increase retention and completion, as well as improving NCLEX pass rates, becomes a challenging, complex task.

Evaluating how the initial tutoring services work for students and understanding what draws students to those services is vital for process improvement. Gaining an in-depth understanding of student experiences from those who attended tutoring becomes a crucial step in creating a successful support service. Looking in-depth at and beyond the academic support provided is essential because of the complex lives that students live beyond their curricular studies. Jeffreys's (2012) model provides multiple examples of factors that impact student learning. During the research, an attempt was made to understand not only student experiences during the tutoring process but also what motivated them to attend tutoring. Themes that emerged during the interviews included the academic piece of tutoring was only one supportive factor that was provided to students. Pastoral support provided emotional and psychological support that helped decrease student feelings of anxiety.

The participant interviews were viewed through the lens of the theoretical framework developed by Jeffreys (2012). Jeffreys's framework incorporates characteristics of the nontraditional student population, of which all participants interviewed are categorized. Based on this information, the interviews were approached with the understanding that findings may include a multitude of factors beyond academic concerns. Jeffreys's model "indicates that retention decisions will be based on the interaction of student profile characteristics, student affective factors, academic factors, environmental factors, professional integration factors, academic outcomes, psychological outcomes, and outside surrounding factors" (Jeffreys, 2012, p. 13).

The three research questions were developed to better understand student experiences with tutoring in the nursing department. The intent with gaining answers to these questions is to improve services for the students with the hope of then increasing student retention in the nursing program. Each of the themes expressed by participants surrounding the three questions was expanded upon during the semi-structured interview process to gain a fuller understanding of student experience and thoughts. The research questions for the study were as follows.

1) What attracts students to a specific type of tutoring services (peer vs. professional)?

2) What are students' experiences with tutoring services?

3) In what ways do students feel that attending tutoring services impacted their ability to persist in the nursing program?

The findings in this chapter begin by presenting themes relating to each of the three research questions with specific data from the interviews included providing context for the themes identified. Presentation of completed synthesis of data will follow, demonstrating how

the student experience is applied to each research question and help the reader gain a fuller

understanding of their experiences and interpretation. Finally, a summary is provided, pulling

the data together, offering a developed picture to move forward into the discussion section.

Decision to Attend Tutoring

Student decision to attend tutoring services varied based on student motivation, desire for

prompt feedback, and awareness of the services provided. Participant interviews revealed a

variety of reasons that motivated students to attend tutoring. Barriers were also identified that

precluded students from attending tutoring services.

Student Motivation

Students' decision to attend tutoring revolved primarily around internal motivation to do

their best in the nursing courses they were attending. Three of the students directly responded

that they attended tutoring because they wanted to do well in the program. Rose stated how she

felt that "I needed guidance. This was my first shot at it, and I wanted to do well." William

found that "My motivation was to prepare myself as much as possible for it," meaning nursing

coursework. Sam described how he was motivated to attend tutoring "Because I wanted to do

well in school." While some students attended tutoring as a preventative tool to help them

succeed, others sought out tutoring services only after performing marginally in their nursing

academic coursework. Sam described his experience as:

> In first semester I didn't do very well in school. I barely passed…I was also told that I
>
> wasn't going to pass the rest of the nursing program. So, then I was like, "Well, maybe I
>
> should try this tutoring thing out."

The push of performing marginally in coursework along with being informed by instructors that he would not be successful "…motivated me because I wanted to do well in school." William felt internal motivation, stating that "I chose to do both because I've always had to study a little bit harder than others to do well." The statement demonstrates self-awareness and understanding that there might be a need to seek additional assistance based on previous experience, having difficulty understanding the content.

Attendance at the tutoring sessions was all voluntary on the part of the student, so there is an indication that some level internal motivation was present if students attended the services offered. Students relayed internal motivation and self-efficacy in the interviews. Participants expressed realizing that a single teaching tool might not be sufficient, leading them to seek out additional learning techniques. Sam commented that "You can't just rely on your one teacher to know everything and make sure you understand because you have to take the initiative yourself." Rose stated that she "Wanted to do the best that I could, and I recognized that someone who has previous experience would be able to explain the situations or procedures better."

Based on student responses, there is some question of an association between students who are more internally motivated to attend tutoring, demonstrating additional persistence characteristics that help them to succeed in academic coursework. Jeffreys (2012) relates student affective factors such as self-efficacy and motivation to an association with retention in nursing courses.

Prompt Feedback

Participants expressed a need to be immediately corrected regarding content, especially related to clinical skills, as a motivating factor to attend tutoring. June, Allison, Emily, and Rose

expressed a desire to have immediate feedback regarding theory and clinical content as a

desirable part of the tutoring process. During the interviews, students directly expressed the

feeling of needing to have immediate feedback about how they were performing. June stated

that "I feel like somebody is knowing my weakness and telling me instead of doing it alone that I

don't know what I'm doing wrong or right." Emily expressed that "…like someone corrected

you at the beginning. It's better than you wait last minute to correct." Allison stated that she

sought to "Know that what I'm doing is correct." Expressing that this was a motivator for her to

attend tutoring services as a way to "…build confidence" in her ability to perform well in theory

and clinical content.

Peer Tutoring Prompt Feedback

Students who attended peer tutoring in the lab expressed motivation to attend based on

the peer tutor being able to demonstrate a skill. The peer tutoring provided clarification and an

opportunity for students to get immediate feedback while being observed doing hands-on skills.

Student statements included, "I like to be able to have someone show me how to do something"

and that there was a desire to have "Some additional description and demonstration of the

process" related to the lab skills. Some students felt that the mix of demonstration and then

having the immediate correction when performing the skill to ensure correct technique was an

appealing reason for attending peer tutoring. After having the peer demonstrate, the student

would practice and then if "Someone watching and saying you're doing this wrong, you don't

know that you're doing it wrong," allowing for immediate correction.

Awareness of Services

Student motivation to attend a specific type of tutoring often centered around whether they knew the service was available or not. Sam, June, Emily, William, and Rose expressed that they attended both types of tutoring services. Allison and Dorothy attended only peer tutoring services. Allison stated that "I didn't know about the professional tutoring. Yeah. I mean I knew instructors come in. But I didn't know that there's a specific spot." Dorothy stated that "Yeah, I had no idea they did professional tutoring." Allison and Dorothy further stated that they would have attended the services had they been aware of the option. Allison stated, "Oh, yeah, definitely. Cause sometimes I'm studying, and I have specific questions." This fits with the description above the student desire for getting immediate, correct feedback was part of the motivation for attending tutoring services.

Professional Tutoring Expectations

Student expectations of tutoring included having the tutors guide them through the content, answer questions, and observe them while they practiced skills. Students who attended professional tutoring said that the knowledge they were seeking related to theory or lecture exams. Because professional tutoring focused primarily on lecture content, the expectations were often targeted toward the written exam content. William described how, with professional tutoring, "My expectations for that were to kind of figure out how the exams are worded and kind of how nursing exams work." Dorothy expressed a desire for the professional tutor to help "…answer my questions, and kind of help me understand better the content, that was my expectation." Students interviewed generally expressed a strong expectation that the tutoring would help them better understand both the theory and lab content but appear to be looking for

different teaching techniques from each of the tutors depending on the content for which they are seeking help.

Professional Tutoring Experiences

Students who reported that they attended professional tutoring services all stated that they sought out this specific type of tutoring to help them learn lecture content. June stated that "I only go for lecture," Emily described how, with professional tutoring, "…if I have a lecture question, so she can help me with that question." William stated that "The professional mostly did lecture." The students who were unaware of the professional tutoring services both stated that they would have attended to review the lecture content if they had been aware that this service was available.

Students who attended professional tutoring felt that they enjoyed being able to access a licensed nurse rather than a peer to help guide them with the lecture material. Sam stated, "I feel like as a professional, I would rather have someone with experience and be using examples." June stated that her concern with peer tutoring was that "I trust teachers." Students expressed a greater desire to review lecture content with the professional tutor rather than with the peer tutors, who were primarily viewed as a tool to help with skills content. Students expressed feeling like they were on a more level playing field with their peer tutor comrades related to skills, but that with the complexity of the lecture content having a professional there to answer questions was more comforting. Sam stated for tutoring related to practical skills that he liked peer tutoring, "That would be where I would go to the peers, because that's more where we're at."

Students often seek out professional tutoring for help with clarifying the lecture material they received in class. Clarification included the use of storytelling, phrasing content into realistic practice as a tool for the student to be able to apply the content learned in the classroom. There was also a feeling from June that the professional tutor would help "Get like more clear stuff. Because the words in the PowerPoint or the books are so confusing." June found that the professional tutor was able to help keep her on track when the material felt overwhelming. She stated that "We just go to her and she just tell us, 'This is what you're supposed to learn. Don't go abroad.'" The feeling of direction was comforting to June, "It was nice. Kind of like if we drift to the wrong side, she brings us back." In addition to providing direction, students viewed the tutor as a reference. Emily attended professional tutoring so that "If I have a lecture question, so she can help me answer the question." Attendance at professional tutoring initially always manifested itself as students seeking academic support.

Students who were English as a second language learners attended professional tutoring for clarification of material as well as help using medical language. June, Allison, Emily, and Dorothy related that English was not their primary language and that the professional tutoring sessions helped them understand the material by clarifying issues related to a language barrier. June stated that the medical terminology was especially difficult because "I'm trying to learn it in English. But it's not English. It's Latin." Even those whose primary language is English found that putting the medical terminology into context could be difficult, and having the tutor to help clarify was beneficial. Rose experienced a feeling that "Yeah, it's so different…it just threw me off" and identifying that "The little words can make a difference" in understanding the content.

Students stated that during their time in professional tutoring, they were often exposed to a variety of alternative learning methods that helped them better understand the content they had questions about. These learning methods often included storytelling, use of online quiz materials, and NCLEX style questioning by the professional tutor. Storytelling or using realistic examples to help students learn became a prominent learning technique that students expressed as being helpful. Sam student stated that it was helpful when the tutor was "Putting more into realistic practice, and it's always nice to have someone with experience to tell you that because then you know it's true, you're just not reading it on a slide." Other students expressed that the professional tutor was able to use scenarios or examples to help portray the content in a more realistic manner that was then easier to understand.

The use of an online quiz program was something that at least one of the professional tutors recommended to several students. All five of the students who attended professional tutoring stated that they used some online quiz tools during their time with the tutor. Online quiz tools varied from "Quizlet" to searching for "Certain topics of nursing, and then she had this one website that was always pretty reliable." Rose expressed that sometimes the tutor "Would use more HESI style" case study questions that are formatted in NCLEX style. These case studies are a resource purchased by the nursing department, and all students have online access. All of the students who attended professional tutoring stated that these online quiz tools were helpful for them to learn the material and practice example test questions for the lecture content.

Some of the students stated that they would often attend professional tutoring in small groups, knowing that all the students in that group had similar questions. Emily remarked that "…for the friends together, and we have a ton of questions," which allowed for those students to

reflect on other material that was presented based on fellow student's questions. June found that "The more student go to her like, I hear different ... questions." Other students stated that they preferred to attend tutoring alone to get the full attention of the tutor and attempt to eliminate distractions.

Professional Tutoring Academic Support

The primary goal for all of the students interviewed was that by attending tutoring, whether peer or professional, they would receive assistance with their academic issues. Five of the seven tutees interviewed attended professional tutoring as a way to primarily help with lecture-focused content. The tutees who attended professional tutoring were Sam, June, Emily, William, and Rose. William stated that "I would say the peer did both skills and lecture, and then the professional did mostly lecture." During interviews, the consensus was that professional tutoring was primarily targeted at lecture content and peer tutoring at practical skills. Students who attended both services generally felt that the tutors were able to help them with the content that they presented.

Dorothy felt that the tutors were able to "Kind of rephrase the information," and Allison expressed that tutors were able to "…better explain it. And then you're like, 'Oh, now that makes sense.'" A theme identified by students was that they felt the tutors were able to help provide focus in a sea of overwhelming information. William found that with professional tutoring:

> She was able to clarify, especially when I started first semester, our first exam
> PowerPoints. She was able to talk me through them and kind of point out key things to
> focus on and kind of clarified any things I wasn't too sure on.

William's comments echoed similar experiences, primarily with the professional tutor, "She was able to talk me through them and kind of point out key things to focus on and kind of clarified any things I wasn't too sure on" and "It really helped me narrow my studies, which saved time." Sam commented that he found the professional tutor was able to help him organize and focus on content for the week that he could then review independently. He stated that "We would go over the content, and I would ask my specific questions, and then I would study for the week," at which time he would return to tutoring to gain further clarification and plan for the next week. Students that sought professional tutoring for academic support often discussed how that support manifested itself in clarification and rephrasing of content, helping them better understand.

Professional Tutoring Alternative Learning Methods

The professional and peer tutors used a variety of alternative learning methods to support student retention of content. The professional tutors used online quizzing, alternate textbooks, online case studies, and storytelling to reinforce or reframe content.

Professional tutoring storytelling. Tutees identified multiple times that both tutoring areas used storytelling or real-life examples to help them learn the content. Tutees felt that having these examples gave them a chance to relate to the content more than as it was described in the text. Sam described:

Whereas professional they would be putting more examples into it, putting more into realistic practice, and it's always nice to have someone with experience to tell you that because then you know it's true, you're just not reading it on a slide.

Sam also stated that the professional tutor was able to "…put it in a real-life situation. Like, 'Oh, this what happened,'" and that this helped him relate to the content being reviewed. He did

express a preference that it was the professional tutor providing examples, rather than the peer; "I feel like as a professional, I would rather have someone with experience and be using examples. Because I feel better if you have examples." William described a similar feeling that when content was reframed by another professional, they were able to understand the material better.

> Because sometimes it's better to talk through someone else in different words. Because sometimes a teacher may not connect to you in class, and then having another nursing professional, whether they have experience going through here or working here will have a different way of seeing something that makes more sense about what was described in class.

Tutees identified storytelling as a learning technique that professional tutors commonly used to help them understand the content.

Professional tutoring writing and diagrams. An element that came out in tutee description of helpful learning techniques the tutors used included the use of writing and diagrams. Much of this technique is described as occurring in the professional tutoring area. Tutees describe how they were able to use these techniques successfully to help them understand and retain the material. Two of the students specifically described the use of pictures and diagrams that helped them to understand a concept and connect material. June stated that the tutor would use "Like pictures and show me. She said, 'I think you'd do better with pictures.' And she showed me pictures." June described that the professional tutor helped through drawings, "She draw pictures. She draw diagrams to connect" the concepts in the material. The professional tutor appears to be targeting different styles of learning by using more visual cues

for those students. Tutees also described that professional tutors would encourage the use of

writing to help retention.

Two students described how the professional tutor helped teach them how to write out

material for better comprehension and retention. Rose discussed how the professional tutor

helped her discover that writing was a beneficial way for her to learn. She described how "One

method that really helps me learn is to write. She taught me how to write everything out. So, I

would take my PowerPoints and my notes and put them together on blank pieces of paper." June

was able to describe how she was able to expand on the skills taught to her by the professional

tutor, continuing her learning independently at home. She stated that "Then I tried to make my

own medical dictionary. So this is my mission on winter break to understand. And tell the

difference." Tutees described how having someone teach them about the use of other tools that

targeted a variety of learning styles beyond the verbal lecture or textbook reading style was

beneficial for their learning.

Professional tutoring use of online resources. Students discussed the use of online

resources during their professional tutoring. Students did not describe the use of online

resources as a tool that was offered by peer tutoring. Tutees describe a variety of online sites

that helped them find, clarify, and test themselves on the information. Emily described how

"Sometimes, even she showed me like online source. If I have a question, I can go for online

source. She showed me that also." Sam stated that the tutors "...would pull from different

sources" to find resources that weren't available in the required text or PowerPoints. Rose

expressed that one tutor, "She had a specific website that she would always go to. I cannot recall

the name of the website." Two other students stated that the professional tutors would often use

the website Quizlet. From Roses' description, it is reasonable to believe that Quizlet is likely the specific website used.

Students who were shown Quizlet expressed that they found it to be a helpful tool for learning the theory content. Sam stated that "If I have questions, for example, she showed me some Quizlet stuff." Rose describes that "Well, they had resources. Upstairs, they had resources where you could kind of go to and say, 'Hey, look at this. You know, these are options. Look at Quizlet.' I had never thought of that." The wide variety of learning tools and resources available to students is impressive, but if they are unaware of these resources, there is no benefit. Having the tutors available for this service is a helpful tool.

Professional tutoring NCLEX questions. Another tool that was primarily practiced by professional tutors was the use of NCLEX style questioning. The use of NCLEX style questioning in the nursing program is prominent in lecture exams as a way to prepare students for the types of questions that will be on the licensure examination, which they must pass in order to practice as a registered nurse. The questions often have a "what's the best option" type of answer and are heavy in the application of the material to cases. Students can find these questions difficult since they require application and are higher level on Bloom's taxonomy.

The professional tutor would often practice these types of questions with tutees as a learning tool. Sam commented that he "…found that out by doing practice NCLEX questions to kind of familiarize myself with how nursing exams are" he was able to do better on lecture exams. Rose stated that "We would maybe try one or two that had NCLEX style questions in it. It was helpful." Some students described how they pulled NCLEX style questions from their text or HESI (Healthcare Information Systems Incorporated) case studies, an online resource provided

by the nursing program. June described how the tutor would pull "The question examples after each chapter" to help her practice. June stated that the tutor was able to show her an online quizzing resource to help her practice at home. She stated, "Then she tell me you can do Quizlet. And I found a good Quizlet", that helped her to practice NCLEX style questioning. Rose commented on how the tutor "…would use more HESI style. Then she would read that, and then we would try to figure the answers out. So we were trying to learn that process." The reading and discussion about the rationale for the correct answer was described as being helpful.

Tutees found that understanding the rationale for the correct answer could pull together a concept. Sam stated that "Because sometimes reading the question and reading the rationale helps you better than just memorizing what the PowerPoint says. So it's like putting it all together of what I have to know." Questioning that included application of the content, similar to NCLEX questions, was described as being a helpful learning tool. Sam described how "Applying it to questions is when you're really testing your knowledge. I felt like going there every week, and doing that probably helped me the best out of everything." The professional tutor would also work directly with the course content, breaking questioning down by course outcomes. Emily stated that "She recommend we pick one outcome and keep back and forth asking questions to break down the content." Breakdown of the course outcomes and quizzing in this way may be especially beneficial since lecture test blueprints are developed from the course outcomes. As faculty, the professional tutor may have had more insight into this type of testing, which could have helped how students studied for the course.

Professional Tutoring Pastoral Support

Students who attended both types of tutoring described the experience of feeling like they had additional support beyond academic assistance. Sam, who primarily attended professional tutoring, stated that "It's just talking about life too, because there is life outside of school, believe it or not." He felt comfortable enough that "I mean if I was struggling with my own mental health or my own family issues, I would talk" with the professional tutor. Some of the students commented on specifically how they felt they were able to make a connection with the tutors. Sam described his experience with professional tutoring that "I felt like having that connection with her where I could ask her anything because she has years of experience helped me better understand."

June commented that with the professional tutor, she felt that "They're not one of these teachers is like ... Other teacher and we don't have any other relationship." June expressed that the professional tutors were able to help decrease her anxiety, and she discussed with them that she was seeing the school nurse to help her with anxiety related to school. Emily related that the professional tutor was then able to help give her more guidance and advice on how to decrease anxiety.

> With tutor, we tried to say that, to say like "Why do I so worry about that?" to tell them
> how do I think. So they can see that no, they can see it's so anxiety for the first semester,
> and why go through more practice. So yeah, they gave us advice about things.
> Mm-hmm (affirmative). Help me guide through that.

Other students expressed that while they may not have had as much full disclosure with the professional tutor as described above, they felt that if they needed to have that connection, they would feel comfortable going to the tutor to discuss other issues beyond academics.

Rose and William felt that they did not receive pastoral support from the professional tutor, but that the limiting factor was themselves more than the tutors. Rose commented that she was not able to make a connection, "Maybe not, because I already have a more professional persona after 55 years," and that this limited her desire to have a pastoral relationship with the tutor. William found that professional tutoring focused only on the academic piece. When asked if he felt he made a connection beyond academics, he replied, "Not really, though. With me, I don't think I did that, though. It was more of like academic kind of stuff. Yeah, 'cause they learn and then just go." When asked if a pastoral relationship was part of their professional tutoring experience, Emily commented, "Not really, we just focused on the context." It is unclear if some of the differences are entirely student-driven or if they interacted with different tutors who could have altered their ability to create those deeper relationships. There were a limited number of staff members who worked as tutors, and the impression the students brought forth in interviews was that they felt they did not need additional support beyond the academic realm.

Professional Tutoring Mentorship

Some of the ongoing relationships developed into a mentorship rather than just a tutoring relationship. Often students found that they were able to make the pastoral support connection that bridged into a mentor/mentee relationship for nursing coursework and career. Sam described that beyond academic discussion and professional tutoring, "We just talked about all my options and what my future goal is and all that stuff. I mean, it's more than just tutoring too."

June commented that the professional tutor was able to help her, "She kind of guide me," and that with this help, "It took me a good three weeks for me to have a solid procedure." Rose remarked how the tutors were able to help her narrow her focus, stating that "You have to do most of this. It is on you. You have to spend the time. I appreciated that." Having mentorship about how to study and organize coursework was expressed as being helpful for all the students interviewed. Some identified that they received mentorship from only one of the types of tutoring, but all identified some level of guidance.

Another aspect of mentorship that students discussed was what occurred when the tutors were unable to answer their questions readily. The broad scope of nursing material means that there is a likely chance that at some point, the tutor will not have all answers to questions tutees ask. When this occurred, students often reported that the tutors would show them how to find a resource to get the information they were seeking. Sam commented that in professional tutoring, "If they didn't even know the answers, then we would look it up together in the book" or find an online resource.

Peer Tutoring Expectations

Peer tutoring managed by the Alpha Delta Nu students occurred in the nursing lab and primarily focused on skills content. Participants expressed that they often wanted guidance with skills to help them during practical skills testing and in clinical. June stated that with peer tutoring, "What I expect is, that somebody will guide me to the good guideline for the practice exam." Furthermore, that "I want to go through this step, could you just watch me see what I'm doing, and let me know if I forgot a step, or if I need to do anything else different."

While the majority of students interviewed expressed a desire to have assistance with strictly the content focus, other students were looking for more peer support to help them better prepare and understand the program as a whole. William stated that his "…expectations were to get some helpful advice on how to prepare for exams, how to balance taking exams, as well as clinical paperwork and skills." He describes how "They really showed how to kind of balance your calendar and when to focus on exams and when to focus on paperwork." William appears to expect to receive mentorship in addition to tutorial support. Other students described mentorship experiences with peer tutors while attending tutoring, but this was the only student who expected a mentorship type of relationship with the peer tutoring staff.

Peer Tutoring Experiences

All of the students interviewed stated that they attended some peer tutoring services during the course of the nursing program. The students stated that they all attended peer tutoring for assistance with clinical or lab-related skills. Many of the students also expressed that they attended peer tutoring with the idea that the tutors would either be able to demonstrate a skill or observe them perform a skill. The desire for immediate feedback was present. William expressed that "My expectation was too that I would demonstrate it," and then the peer tutors would provide direct feedback about performance of the skill. Students felt that peer tutors were there to observe them and then provide a critique. Allison stated that she would ask the tutor, "This is how I'm doing this skill. Am I missing something? Or, am I doing it correctly?," expecting constructive feedback that would help her perform better on practical skills testing.

Much of the motivation for attending peer tutoring centered on doing well during the practical skills testing. During the high stakes testing, a student must demonstrate the proper

performance of a specific skill in front of an instructor within a specific amount of time. Allison stated:

> It's really because we have this practicals that you get really anxious and you have to practice. Like, I can go in and practice by myself. But, with that, someone watching and saying you're doing this wrong, you don't know that you're doing it wrong.

The idea of being watched in preparation for practical skills testing was a desire expressed by several students. Allison stated, "What helps with them being there is that they will watch and see through a perspective of ... if I was doing a test out, what is she doing wrong?" Having an objective peer observe the skill and provide this feedback from the perspective of an instructor performing practical skills testing was a desire. Since the peer tutors are all at least third-semester nursing students who had completed many of the skills tested on tutees felt that they were able to provide insight and helpful tips regarding the practical skills testing process.

For many of the students, the expectation of having a peer tutor observe and correct them was fulfilling. In doing so, some of the tutees found that their peers were able to help develop their practical thinking skills by presenting various scenarios or challenges during the observation process. William stated that for him, the peer tutor would present scenarios that included examples of how the tutee would correct mistakes during a testing situation. Dorothy described how peer tutors were able to present scenarios to challenge her way of thinking and to adapt to a situation.

> Yeah, they would try to, kind of come up with some things, like challenges, to see how you can adapt to how you're going to do the skill, or like, something like that. More like, keep you thinking out of the box, kind of thing.

These techniques that challenged students to adapt and problem solve is described as being very beneficial once students enter the room for practical skills testing. The ability to adapt to unexpected circumstances helped to lower some of the anxiety students had during the testing process. When asked if this technique helped decrease testing anxiety, William responded, "Yeah. It did a little bit. 'Cause I was super anxious, especially when it came to taking exam, the skill-testing." While this research does not look specifically at if the peer tutoring techniques used decrease practical skill test anxiety, some of the students did express that they felt it was beneficial at decreasing their anxiety level during the testing process.

Peer tutors were able to reframe the content in a way that was helpful for the student. William stated that peer tutors were able to "Come up with new ways to remember some the skills, or some of the steps." During the observation process, a tutor might be able to correct poor technique immediately. Allison felt that the tutors were able to correct her and demonstrate the correct way to perform a skill. Allison said her experience with the peer tutoring "Was really good because she showed me a way that practicing it, it made it a lot easier." Dorothy described how:

> They would explain to you and that they'd tell how for them it worked, kinda show you
> an easy way to grab value, come up with new ways to remember some the skills, or some
> of the steps. You know, so that was really good.

As with lecture content in the professional tutoring area, having someone reframe or portray content differently was viewed as a helpful skill.

Students who expected to have one-on-one peer tutoring sometimes found it challenging to find an available tutor who was able to watch them perform a skill. If there were multiple

students seeking assistance, it could be challenging to get a peer tutor's undivided attention. Students experienced some frustration with finding a peer tutor to help them. When asked if having a smaller peer tutor to tutee ratio would be helpful, Emily replied, "Yes. Especially for clinical stuff." June described how sometimes the tutoring sessions would evolve into a social event that was distracting. Other students felt as though the peer tutors were rushed and they were unable to get the full attention they would have liked during the time they attended. June found that "Sometimes they're always in a rush," and Allison expressed that "I want to know that they want to be there." Another aspect of concern that students expressed was the fact that there were times when space was limited in the area where peer tutoring occurred. Allison stated that "I wish they also had a space," and "when you have a question, even if they have specific hours and you go there and they're not." Each one of these concerns the student presents provides an opportunity for clarification and improvement in the peer tutoring process.

A frustration expressed by Sam was the inability for peer tutors to help him with content. Sam described how "When you're a peer, it's nice to bounce off ideas, but we're almost at the same level, so it's kind of hard to go above." Even though he made a connection with his peers, there appears to be a barrier relating some of the academic content. Other students describe not feeling as though they could trust some of the answers the peer tutors gave them or frustration when the peer tutors were unable to answer a question. Allison stated that she felt the peer tutors were able to "…maybe answer three out of those five" questions that she would ask. Some of the tutees were concerned about the fact that because the tutors were fellow students, they may not be providing accurate information. June stated that "'Cause maybe the way they teach me is different. I don't know." Allison felt some concern with the accuracy of peer tutoring because

"They're also just students." Although, she said, "I feel like I'll be more safe to ask teachers." Sam felt that the peer tutors were unable to give him the alternative learning methods he sought, "But the peer review, I would go there, and it was all PowerPoint-driven." The lack of focusing on lecture material with the peer tutors reinforces the idea that students are attending peer tutoring primarily for the practical skills component.

Others expressed that they felt as though the peer tutors were able to help with any questions. William remarked that he "Felt like if I had any questions about that, I could ask her at peer tutoring." Most of the time, Allison felt she was able to get her questions answered, but other times it was necessary for her to return because the answer given to her was not adequate.

So sometimes, yes, the peers are really great at explaining the stuff. But, if they don't know, they are like, then I have to come back again because I know for sure that this is not explanation that I was looking for

All of the tutees interviewed reported, regarding lab content, they were able to get their questions answered and have new techniques shown by the peer tutors to improve performance. Concerns about peer tutors not being able to answer questions were limited to only lecture content. Ongoing barriers for both tutoring services are further discussed below.

Peer Support

Students interviewed who attended regular peer tutoring sessions described how they felt that the peer tutors were able to give them support beyond the purely academic information that they initially sought. Tutees describe how they felt that creating a relationship with the peer tutors helped them to better prepare for nursing coursework, organize, improve time management, and decrease anxiety. Since so many of the students interviewed discussed how

the specific peer support helped them, I felt it is significant to include a separate section specifically regarding peer support.

Tutees described how they sought out insight from tutors regarding their experiences with clinical and coursework. Allison described how the tutor was able to help give her examples of what the nursing program would be like, "Yeah, situations in the clinical. Everything. Like the nursing program, what it looks like." Emily stated that the peer tutor relationship included sharing "Some information kind of like studying, what happened to the first semester." She felt that "Because we do have something, experience stuff, we have some common" this was helpful for her learning process. The tutees described how having students who had been through their own experience was helpful. Dorothy stated:

> Cause you kinda learning from a student who has already gone through what you're going through right now. And, they're telling you, "Oh, yeah. Sometimes I kinda had the same feeling when I was at that point." So, you know, you feel like you're not alone in that void ...

Allison felt similarly, describing:

> Cause they've already gone through it, and telling you like, they already went through it and telling you the experience, and you know, so it was kind of a good ... Having someone who's gone through it, and talking through it with you, the whole process, and stuff like that.

The sample described a shared sense of validation in what the peer tutors had to offer them based on the fact that the peer tutors had recently taken the same coursework. Tutees describe this

feeling of being able to relate to the peer tutors as helpful in learning coping techniques beyond purely academic skills.

Students expressed a shared sense of feeling lost or overwhelmed when they started their nursing courses and that being able to relate those same feelings with what the peer tutors felt was beneficial. Dorothy stated that:

Yeah, all of them, though, they express their struggle in first semester, and how they worked through it, and stuff like that. First semester was a lot, though. Especially if you're new, like a whole different kind of world. Yeah.

William expressed similar experience with the peer tutors, stating:

With helping me if I became overwhelmed, especially with the peer tutoring, really just being able to talk to another student was really helpful in those situations. If I felt overwhelmed or needed help even more, it was more so the peer than going to the professional tutoring.

Not only did the tutees feel they were able to relate to the peer tutors, but they also felt that the peer tutors were able to give them advice on how to balance the complex school-life balance. Dorothy expressed that:

It was kind of nice hearing people talk it and like, express their concerns upon it. And, we'd also told them, "Oh, we're struggling in this and this." And, they try to talk to you about it. And, try to figure out how to make it a little bit easier, how do you say that? ... Balance your work, kind of stuff.

Peer tutors helped support students by going beyond the practical skills that students came to practice and gave assistance with organizing. William stated for him this was more important

"…even more so now, as I'm taking two classes. It really helps, mostly with the peer tutoring, really helped organize my schedule, my calendar."

Students describe peer tutors as being able to "narrow the focus" of the content that the tutee needed to study. William described how he felt that peer tutors were able to give helpful information about where to focus. By pointing out the focus areas, he felt that "The peer tutors' kind of narrowed it for me." Dorothy discussed how the peer tutors helped her feel less overwhelmed by guiding her to "Take everything one step at a time." The interviews with the tutees revealed that by peer tutors breaking down the content into smaller portions of focus that students felt less overwhelmed by the coursework.

Interestingly, although the tutees describe how they felt that they were able to make a connection with peer tutors, which helped them feel less anxious and overwhelmed, they did not have an ongoing relationship outside of the peer tutoring environment. Tutees described how, while they were able to make a connection within the tutoring environment, there was a sense of disconnect beyond that environment. Rose stated that she felt that "I don't think outside of lab, like a relationship outside of lab would make it better." Allison remarked, "I kind of feel like the ones that I've met, when they're outside of school, I think they don't even know who the students are. At least, that's how I feel." Whether the lack of an ongoing relationship outside of the peer tutoring environment affects student persistence is questionable.

Peer Tutoring Academic Support

Participants' reasons for attending peer tutoring was to gain academic support and assistance, primarily in the area of clinical skills. All of the tutees interviewed attended some portion of peer tutoring, and the majority of those interactions focused on the content related to

practical skills. Allison commented that she felt the peer tutors were more hands-on "So they had to really help me figure out how to do it. And do it properly." Rose felt that students should have one on one observation to ensure that they were correctly completing the skill, stating, "You should have one on one for some of those questions."

Tutees discussed how the peer tutors were able to reframe information as the professional tutor did, but that the reframing was often directly related to performing a practical skill. The art of nursing provides multiple ways to perform a skill as long as it is done in a safe, clean manner. This meant that for students performing practical skills, there could be multiple ways to complete the given task. Often students struggle with this idea because they want a concrete, single way of performing the skill. Peer tutors were able to show tutees a variety of ways to perform a skill and enhance their ability to use practical thinking. Dorothy described how the peer tutors would present a skill "To get the same ... But, they would do kind of different from what they learned." This opportunity opened up a chance for the peer tutors to use a variety of scenarios that helped tutees "...think outside the box" with how to perform a practical skill and troubleshoot problems. Further description of this alternative learning method is included below.

Peer Tutoring Alternative Learning Methods

Peer tutors used a variety of alternative learning methods to support student retention of content. Tutees interviewed found that peer tutoring focused more on the practical skills content, which meant that the alternative learning methods were primarily hands-on. The peer tutors used demonstration, storytelling, and creation of varied scenarios to encourage practical thinking skills helping tutees learn skills.

Peer tutoring storytelling. Just as the professional tutors used storytelling to help students learn theory content, peer tutors did something similar to help students with lab content. Allison expressed that:

Yes. Like one of them, yeah. She'd be like, "Okay, when I'm in clinical, this is what I do." And if ... She would give me an example. How should this approach something if she's in clinical or if she's in ... doing an exam. Like she would give the examples, how should I approach it?

Students related how the peer tutors would then use this information to build upon practical thinking skills of the tutee by challenging them with different scenarios. Dorothy commented that "Some of them actually were really good at that. They would explain to you and that they'd tell you how for them, it worked." From there the peer tutors would branch that into asking the student how they would deal with a specific situation if it happened in clinical or on the practical skills testing. Dorothy described how she felt that while the storytelling was helpful, she still wanted to have the hands-on demonstration by the peer tutors to accompany the information. She stated that "I like to see things when they're being done. The storytelling was good, yeah. But, I wanna see what you're doing, and then I learn better by looking." The desire to have peer tutors demonstrate skills was a common theme expressed by many of the students who attended peer tutoring and explored in greater depth earlier in this paper. Further description of how peer tutors engaged student practical thinking skills is included below.

Peer tutoring practical thinking. The bridge of storytelling into practical thinking application during peer tutoring was something that multiple students described. The initial expectation that students had was that peer tutors would demonstrate a skill and then observe the

students performing the skill. William expressed that he expected to have the peer tutors "point out the errors that I'm making, as well as better ways to do it." Students interviewed described how they felt it was beneficial to have the peer tutor view them performing the skill through the lens of an instructor. They felt that this critique would better prepare them for the practical skills testing environment. Allison commented that she wanted the peer tutors to view her practice through the lens of an instructor grading her and provide feedback on her performance. Peer tutors would then offer tips and techniques to improve student performance.

Nursing is an art form where there is generally no one single way to perform a skill. The idea that there are multiple ways to accomplish a task is often difficult for new students to comprehend. Since the tutors were often farther along in their nursing coursework, they had a better understanding of the "art" of nursing and relayed their insights to tutees. Dorothy expressed that:

> Some of them actually were really good at that. They would explain to you and that they'd tell how for them it worked, kinda show you an easy way to grab value, come up with new ways to remember some the skills, or some of the steps. You know, so that was really good. Yeah.

Rose appreciated that the peer tutors were able to watch her and then give her tips on how to perform the skill in a more effective, efficient manner.

> They would be able to pick apart things that you were doing wrong because you don't always see it. You're accomplishing the task, but maybe there's a better way to do it, or a less clumsy or ... there's all kinds of things.

Beyond the critique and tips, the peer tutors developed a pattern of challenging tutee thinking by incorporating different situations into the skill.

Tutees described these challenges as including common mistakes that the peer tutors often had happen to them while in the testing or clinical environment. Emily described:

For example, for the IV connection, if the port drop on the bedside I'm thinking about "Is it contamination?" And you have the solution, like "How can I fix the problems?" You use the alcohol wipe. These things, while you do practice, you have to think about 'Okay, how can I fix this problem?' It'll probably happen same thing on the test. So I think helping you go through anything possible problem.

William commented that when he worked with peer tutors, they would use techniques that would help troubleshoot situations where sterility may have been broken.

A little bit with the dropping of stuff and the making mistakes, like how we'd react, and how would we fix the situation? If, for example, we broke sterility, what would we do to correct it during a sterile procedure? Yes. That was one of the techniques, things they did.

Students interviewed described on several occasions how the peer tutors were able to challenge tutee practical thinking skills related to clinical skills in the lab. Students expressed that this learning technique was beneficial for them to be able to actively troubleshoot if there was an unexpected problem during clinical or practical skill testing.

Peer Tutoring Pastoral Support

Peer tutoring pastoral support connections were clearly expressed during interviews. The content of the relationship with the peer tutors was on a different level with a less in-depth

discussion about serious mental health or anxiety concerns. Relationships centered more on

relating techniques of how to cope with the overwhelming feelings and relating clinical

experiences. Emily expressed that the connection with the peer tutors was present because of the

professional integration component and that "because they had something in common." She felt

that this sharing of experiences helped to decrease her anxiety about testing and the nursing

program as a whole, "Because it's really relief for my anxiety before the test" to have advice

from the peer tutors. Creation of a connection between the peer tutor and tutee helped to develop

a deeper pastoral relationship where more sharing could occur. Dorothy felt that the connection

was present because of the sense that she "wasn't alone in the void" and had an interprofessional

connection with the peer tutors. The sense that others had experienced the same feelings upon

entering the nursing program was comforting to students. This was particularly evident with

first-semester students in the interviews. Dorothy stated, "…that definitely was very helpful, so

I'd know I wasn't the only one struggling, or, you know. Yeah, so you're kind of working

together and stuff like that." Emily described how peer tutors were able to help relate to the

feelings of anxiety and that this helped to decrease her anxiety. The feeling of connectedness

through sharing a similar experience was noted as being an appealing aspect of peer tutoring that

was not an initial expectation of the tutees. Dorothy noted that it was helpful for her "…so I'd

know I wasn't the only one struggling." There was a clear pattern of development of pastoral

relationships within the peer tutoring environment with multiple students interviewed.

Rose and Sam did express that they felt as though the connection was purely related to

the academic content. When asked if she felt she built a social relationship, Rose stated, "I don't

think I was trying to. I think they were busy, and I was just grateful that they were there." Sam

felt that while he developed a strong pastoral relationship with the professional tutor, he lacked one with the peer tutors. He described how he often found that the peer tutors were not helpful and there more for socializing than helping with content. While this student felt he was able to open up about private issues with the professional tutor, the development of the relationship with the peer tutors never happened. There is a potential that he felt comfortable expressing more controversial mental health issues with a professional that he felt would maintain his privacy, rather than a peer who may judge him based on these issues.

Peer Tutoring Mentorship

Participants described how they felt that meaningful relationships were formed between tutor and tutee during the tutoring relationship. Descriptions of pastoral support provided appeared to bridge into a mentor/mentee relationship. Tutees found that peer tutors would use their own experience and apply it directly to student practice. Sam described how "Because some of them went through this program too, so they knew exactly what I was going through, and they applied it in the practice."

Students described instances where the mentorship helped them develop relationships with students in their own semester, leading to the creation of study groups that further supported the student. June describes how she started attending peer tutoring. "…and I start, now have a good solid study group" of students in her cohort. Students also described the relationships they developed with the peer tutors and how the mentorship helped to ease anxiety. William described that he felt he tutors helped him when he became overwhelmed and that having another peer who was in the nursing program to talk with was helpful. Having someone to help guide them through the program and check in with if there was an issue was felt to be beneficial.

The fact that the peer tutors had been through the program and experienced what these students were feeling seemed to validate their ability to be tutors or mentors. Rose commented that she appreciated "…working with people with experience," who could then give her insight into how to perform practical skills in a similar way that the instructors had taught in class. William made a similar remark that "It's definitely more helpful having a student who's been through it and can kind of point out the areas that you need to focus on." Allison commented that she found it helpful for the peer tutors to view her practice through the lens of an instructor, providing critique from that perspective. Peer tutors can view through this perspective because they have had the experience, and tutees view this as a benefit. The benefit of having a student who can view tutee practice through this lens is likely increased because the tutees often do not know what they will be tested on for practical skills, and they peer tutor may be able to give insight into the testing.

Mentorship involved the chance for tutees to see instances where tutors did not have the answers to their questions. The breadth of ever-changing knowledge in nursing makes it challenging to have all the answers. Peer tutors were not often as adept at finding resources to answer tutee questions. Dorothy stated that her experience with peer tutoring included helping her to find a resource within the textbook. Rose found that the peer tutors would defer to instructors rather than helping her to find alternative resources. Mentorship involving resource identification is an essential aspect of nursing because of the ever-evolving and extensive information that exists. Teaching how to properly find and access the resources rather than deferring to course instructors would be a better practice for the tutors to utilize.

Boundaries

The literature on tutoring discussed potential boundary issues that can occur within the tutor tutee relationship. The tutee participants in this study identified none of those issues. Tutors were not interviewed, and so their perspective is not included in the data. When asked about boundaries with tutors' students responded that they felt as though they remained professional. Sam felt that "Yeah, it was still a professional" relationship that he had with the tutor even if he was able to share personal information. June's response about boundary concerns was that "With my teachers, yes I did. 'Cause I always go to them. But, with the tutor, not that much." Allison felt that there were no boundary issues with the peer tutoring she attended, stating, "I think they don't even know who the students are. At least, that's how I feel." Tutees were able to describe how they felt that there was relationship development beyond academics with many of the tutors. None felt that these relationships had boundary issues, as described in the literature.

Barriers

Students were able to describe several barriers related to tutoring experiences. Many stated that time, space, and knowledge of the services were some of the most prominent barriers. Other barriers included tutor availability within the space and time limitations. Often if just one tutor was available and multiple students present, it was difficult for the students to get their questions answered or feel like they could even approach the tutor to ask a question.

Time

Multiple students commented on how they felt that time was a barrier to attending tutoring services. Students described how a lack of various times and hours when tutoring was

available as the biggest issue. June stated that "Yeah, I think a lot of what we see is a lot of the

timing kind of, for students is a big issue." Emily felt similar that "…time conflicts sometimes"

were a barrier for students being able to attend tutoring. William expressed the desire for more

hours, "My only suggestion would be more hours, but other than that, I feel like they're fulfilling

the need.". Allison noted that "They're only there like specific times. So, if they're regularly

there, I probably would go more." Rose commented that she would like tutoring to be offered,

"More hours, but I do understand that they're professors and teachers, so they have class and

clinical time, so I know that can be hard, but more hours would be nice."

Since the tutoring services offered are on a volunteer basis, much of the hours are

variable, making it difficult for students to predict when tutors will be present. Students

commented that they would like more available hours for tutoring, providing them with multiple

consistent options to attend. Dorothy described how:

> Some of the timings they would come downstairs, wouldn't work for me. Sometimes,
>
> maybe I'm in class, or maybe I'm doing something else. And then, they're not there. Or,
>
> maybe they're just be there for like an hour, and they would have to go because some are
>
> students, doing third and fourth semester. So, they also had other things to do. So, I
>
> think more like time

Other times students would come down during the scheduled time for peer tutoring only to find

that the tutors were not present. Dorothy expressed how "That was actually the biggest

challenge for me. Yeah, sometimes I would go downstairs, maybe they were not there." Allison

stated that she felt, "If they're regularly there, I probably would go more." The college attempted

to post schedules online with the tutoring hours, but some students noted that these were difficult

to find on the resource page. June stated that "I don't know where to go. When to go. Where to find the hours." Rose noted that in addition to an increase in the number of hours, increased notification of availability would be helpful. She stated:

> It would be nice. It would be wonderful. It would be nice to have somebody. I don't want them to just sit there and waste and not do anything, but it would be nice to be able to go in and say, "Here's a list of times I have available," and you come in and sign in and you could come in, and I'd look and see if you're ready and I could go.

An attempt to increase hours by encouraging faculty to use some of their office hours also occurred with limited success. William noted that he "Felt like I was time-restricted on making it to the professional tutor." Peer tutors were self-organized within their honor society to arrange tutoring hours. There were times where peer tutors were not present to assist students when they should have been during posted hours.

Another time component that students identified as a barrier was that they often felt rushed or that they had limited time with the tutors if other students were waiting. This was expressed by students who attended both peer and professional tutoring. With peer tutoring, the lack of availability, as well as a large number of students in the room, was a deterrent. Allison stated that she felt the lack of a consistent presence deterred her from wanting to attend tutoring or ask questions. The students who attended professional tutoring noted that they could feel rushed since there was only one tutor available at a session. June described that she felt that "I have to rush because that person needs her too." Students expressed that they found the barriers of finding time to attend tutoring, and then the feeling of having limited amounts of time to spend with the tutor frustrating.

Space

The nursing resource room is the primary site where most of the professional tutoring occurs at the college. The room itself is relatively small with computer workstations on desks that face the corner and then two tables in the middle of the room able to accommodate four chairs each. The space can get tight if multiple groups attend tutoring. June commented on how it "…is too small of room. And I don't do good with too many people in the same room."

Students also commented on how the lab area for peer tutoring lacked in space. June expressed that "Practicing in the simulation room, it's crowded. And it's hot. … I feel all the students, all first semester wanna be in one room." June also noted that she felt "I get anxiety from too many people in the same room." making it difficult for her to practice. The lack of space and supplies was a challenge for Allison, who stated, "I really wish they had a space where, this is where the peers sit, 'Cause it would be nice to have consistency for sure" that was easily found and accessible.

Physical space was not the only issue students expressed concern over. There was also a concern that the tutors were overwhelmed with the number of students seeking help. Sam commented that with professional tutoring in the resource room, there were times he found it difficult to concentrate.

> I mean, there's a couple of groups that go in there, and they are loud and ... which is not
> bad, because they're doing the peer thing in the corner and then the teacher's there…and
> you're talking, so me and you talking, and you're trying to talk over there. It's hard to
> concentrate

June expressed similar concerns related to the professional tutoring space and the availability of the tutor.

> I feel like too many people talking, and I got distracted. And it's waste of time because I'm not getting enough good ... quality of learning. And same time, everybody's talking. And when they start socializing, I'm like, "Okay, I should go."

Allison commented that "Sometimes the tutor is outnumbered," making it difficult to access them for questions. The lack of space and too many other students led June to "Wait until it get slowed, and I go back." She also described how if she was able to ask questions of the professional tutor, it felt as though she had to rush because of the other students waiting. All of this impacts the full ability of the student to be able to get the services she is seeking because of the limited number of hours that the tutoring is available. William expressed that he didn't feel as though it was a problem to wait for the professional tutor if they were busy, stating, "I felt like I had enough time to wait. I felt like we all got our chance to talk to the tutor. I felt like, no, it wasn't a problem." The concern about a lack of readily available access to the professional tutor during the limited time they are available on campus appears to be a valid concern for a portion of the students who utilize the service.

Knowledge

With the wide variety of tutors available to students, the question of whether tutors were able to provide accurate and satisfactory information to students was presented during the interviews. Overall, the students interviewed felt that the tutors were able to answer their questions adequately and, if not, help them by finding resources. Allison expressed that she generally sought out the tutor so that they could "You want to know that I can walk in and be

like, 'This was a problem I had. Can you help me?'" Some of the students interviewed noted

that they were unable to get the prompt, immediate answer they sought, making the lack of

knowledge that the tutors had a barrier to their learning.

The knowledge barrier was most often noted by students to occur in peer tutoring

sessions. Allison noted that "Sometimes you're like, I wish they would know exactly. But then I

also have to understand that they're just like me." Allison stated that she was frustrated when she

found the tutor present unable to answer her question, and she would have to come back during

another session to ask a different tutor.

> Sometimes, yes, the peers are really great at explaining the stuff. But, if they don't know,
>
> they are like, then I have to come back again because I know for sure that this is not
>
> explanation that I was looking for

Other times students often deferred to their instructor if the peer tutor was unable to help them.

Dorothy expressed that:

> Yeah, honestly, some of them would just tell you they don't know. They'll just be honest
>
> with you and tell you, "Oh, yeah, maybe I don't know. Maybe you should ask the
>
> instructor." Which is good, then them saying they know, and then they give you wrong
>
> information.

Dorothy noted that she found peer tutors "Kind of deferred us to the instructor." Dorothy also

described a similar scenario where "I think at that point, we kinda either asked other students, or

we emailed the instructor directly to get a clarification, or just check online" when peer tutors

were unable to answer questions. Concern related to the ability of the peer tutors to answer tutee

questions with accuracy or find resources for the answers is a barrier that may deter students

from seeking out further tutoring session, due to frustration.

Some students expressed the desire to have instructors who teach in their specific courses

available as tutors. The desire to have the course instructor or adjunct who has knowledge about

the testing process and could provide insight into what would occur during testing was preferred.

Rose expressed that she would like:

> When you have a person who knows what they're doing to have people come and test out,
> practice test it out. So that the first time you know what ... at least for first semester that
> would be really nice to have that, and probably even for second semester just to have
> someone, "Hey, this is the process. This is what we're gonna be doing. Why don't you
> come on in?"

Rose prefers a desire for clear instruction about the test-out process. While peer tutors were

sometimes able to provide further insight into the testing process, the goal of the department is to

have a limited discussion about the specific skill potentially as it can influence what skills they

may focus on with practice.

Access

Students identified three types of difficulty accessing tutoring services. The first was that

they were unaware that certain services were offered. This occurred with two of the students

who were unaware of the professional tutoring offered in the resource room. There appears that

breakdown in the relay of communication that there was the service available occurred. Allison

stated that she "…didn't know about the professional tutoring. Yeah. I mean, I knew instructors

come in. But, I didn't know that there's a specific spot." Allison stated that "I didn't know. I kept

thinking there should be a place like the learning center. Where you can go to learning content. So, I didn't know that." Dorothy commented that she "Didn't know there was professional tutoring upstairs,", relating that during the interview was the first time she had heard about the professional tutoring. She also expressed that "Cause they used to talk about the Delta stuff, and they'll be like, "Oh, they'll be in the lab downstairs." So, I would just assume that's the only tutoring .."

Students are notified of both services at the beginning of the program. However, with the large amount of material that they are told in the first weeks, it seems as though the fact that professional tutoring exists may often get lost in the shuffle. Allison commented that "…so, that and also maybe an email at the beginning of the semester. Saying this is the office. These are the ... This is what we have to offer to you. 'Cause I didn't know that that was there."

The fact that all of the students were able to remember that peer tutoring was available is interesting. There may be more focus on this service since the Alpha Delta Nu students who provide peer tutoring are visiting the first semester students during class, providing clarification on how peer tutoring functions.

The second aspect affecting student access to tutoring involved direct access to the tutor when students were present at tutoring services. June described how "When all of us have the exam the kind of same time, I don't see enough of the tutoring." Allison felt that "Just sometimes the tutor is outnumbered" and that "If there's a number of students at the same time at this one person," it was challenging to ask for help. Emily noted that "I feel sometimes that it, because probably only one tutor would have several students practice at the same time. Probably, it's kind of hard" to access the tutor for questions. Dorothy described a similar

experience that "I kind of had to wait, 'cause maybe you'd find one tutor, and they had a couple

of other students there, and you know, you kind of had to wait your turn." Students could

sometimes feel as though seeking assistance was a barrier for other students waiting to get help

from the tutor.

Tutees expressed that if there were many students present at tutoring, they felt as though

they were rushed or concerned about taking up the tutor's time. Rose stated that with peer

tutoring, she felt that "Almost being there was almost a detriment because they felt I was ... I

don't know. I mean, I was taking up space that people had to wait for me." June stated that she

felt that "When I feel like I'm asking a question, there's a person behind me, I have to rush

because that person need her too." June found that some of this rushed feeling was relieved

when multiple tutors were present, "It was helpful because there's two of them. If one got busy

with a student, other can help. Instead of ... you like waiting." Allison stated that she felt that

"You feel cautious like, I don't want to take up all their time. Because everybody has a question.

So, I would want everybody to have their question answered versus taking up all the time."

Emily relayed that "Probably for the lab one they can give us more available tutors sometimes

because no special when the exam coming soon we probably need more help." Several of the

students interviewed had similar concerns regarding the tutoring services schedule, and that there

were challenges with getting help because of tutor access issues.

The final access issue that students discussed was that tutors were not present when they

were scheduled to be available. Rose described her experience with peer tutoring as finding

"That that one wasn't available anymore." She goes on to describe that because it was later in

the semester, "I had already gotten my process so that I felt like I could handle it. I knew what I

was doing at that point." Allison described how "I'd ask more questions. But, the fact that they're not always there ... Is kind of a deterrent." As described above, the timing was a challenge for some students to meet with the tutors, which was compounded even more when they did not arrive at the scheduled times. Rose found that students would arrive "And then, they're not there. Or, maybe they're just be there for like an hour, and they would have to go because some are students, doing third and fourth semester." Dorothy found, "That was actually the biggest challenge for me. Yeah, sometimes I would go downstairs, maybe they were not there." The student expectation was that tutors would be present at the scheduled times to help them with questions they had. Students interviewed describe that frequently that expectation was not met, with a lack of tutors being present a frustrating barrier to their learning.

Impact on Persistence

Overall, students interviewed expressed that they felt as though nursing-specific tutoring services helped them persist within the nursing program. Allison commented that peer tutoring, "I think it helps reinforce ... skill," helping her to persist and succeed in the practical skills portion of the coursework. Emily described how the tutors were able to help her persist because they helped her better understand the reasoning behind the content.

> I think the nursing program it's not just like a yes or no questions. You need more deep
> thinking. So when you have someone with you and talk about it, I think that can make
> you more thinking behind just content.

The academic support portion of tutoring was a valued tool not only in professional tutoring but also in the peer tutoring sessions. Rose expressed how she appreciated the hands-on assistance that peer tutoring was able to give them.

Well, if we didn't have it, I don't know what I'd do because that short little time you have in lab is not really enough to get the hands-on for me anyway. I like to have a lot of hands-on.

All of the tutees attended some sessions of peer tutoring throughout the nursing program and found that having someone watch them perform practical skills and provide critique was a helpful tool.

Students who attended tutoring described how they found support beyond the academic piece of tutoring. Multiple students interviewed expressed how they found that the tutors helped them with organizational skills and feelings of being overwhelmed. Rose commented that tutoring has "Definitely given me the extra help and information to really pull everything together and organize it in a way that I understand it. It just helps me give extra time towards studying." Sam found that tutoring helped his persistence because "It's just talking about life too, because there is life outside of school, believe it or not." Tutoring was used as an outlet to discuss how overwhelmed the tutees were feeling and to seek advice. June described how her family disapproved of her attending nursing school. She expressed how the tutors were able to help her decrease her anxiety and provide the support that she did not otherwise have. Emily found support with the peer tutors, stating, "So they can see that no, they can see it's so anxiety for the first semester, and why go through more practice. So yeah, they gave us advice about things." The guidance they provided "…helped me guide through that." Dorothy expressed a similar feeling that the peer support helped her feel less overwhelmed and persist.

It goes really fast, like it was really fast though. Yeah, all of them, though, they express

their struggle in first semester, and how they worked through it, and stuff like that. First

semester was a lot, though, especially if you're new, like a whole different kind of world.

Students described how the first semester was a challenge that caused them to feel overwhelmed

and anxious. Those feelings were sometimes mitigated by making a connection with either a

peer or professional tutor. Peer tutors were able to empathize with the students while the

professional tutor was able to help students organize and focus.

Students interviewed seemed to struggle with the idea of putting into words how the

tutoring services have helped them persist throughout the program. More of what they talked

about was their experiences and how those experiences affected them. From those experiences,

it appears that both the academic and pastoral support impacted the student's persistence,

although not directly stated. Rose commented that tutoring "…has really helped me greatly, I

would say. I think it's the reason I'm still in the program, so I would say it's very helpful." She

has the view that tutoring had a significant impact on her ability to persist. While the population

of students attending tutoring may be small, in some instances, it can create a perceived

tremendous impact on student success.

Conclusions

What Attracts Students to a Specific Type of Tutoring Services (Peer vs. Professional)?

Students stated that they were attracted more to professional tutoring to help them learn

lecture content and prepare for written exams. For peer tutoring, the desire to attend and the

expectation was that students would get assistance with the hands-on skills needed for clinical

and practical skills exams. Two of the students attended peer tutoring only, due to a lack of

awareness about the professional tutoring services available. These students both stated that they would have attended professional tutoring services had they been aware of them.

Findings from the research demonstrate that overall, students who opted to attend tutoring felt that the tutoring would impact their ability to persist in the nursing program. Internal student motivation to do better in nursing coursework and clinical was a primary reason for students to attend tutoring. Since tutoring is a voluntary activity at the college, participants interviewed all attended tutoring at their free will. Student expectations of tutoring varied but involved the desire for prompt feedback regarding their questions about lecture content and lab performance for skills. Other expectations of attending tutoring were that tutors would be there to guide them through questions they had regarding the content. There was a desire to have the tutor help the student focus on how to prepare for and successfully pass lecture exams.

What Are Students' Experiences with Tutoring Services?

Students who attended professional tutoring described how the tutors were able to help them focus and organize the content to a more manageable amount. There was an appreciation for having someone who was a licensed professional with practice experience providing tutoring services. Some students articulated that they felt more comfortable with a professional who had the experience, rather than a peer who might be more at their level. The professional tutors demonstrated the use of a variety of alternative learning methods that provided tutees with a chance to understand challenging material better.

All of the students interviewed attended some peer tutoring sessions. They expressed that a primary reason for participating in peer tutoring was to have tutors demonstrate a skill, observe the student performing the skill, and provide critique related to that performance. Peer tutors

were generally able to accomplish that expectation and take it a step further, encouraging

practical thinking skills in tutees. Through the use of scenarios, the tutors helped the tutees

develop practical thinking skills that they could use in skills testing and clinical experiences.

Some of the tutees expressed frustration with peer tutors not always being able to answer

questions, provide resources, or give them one-on-one attention. Students farther along in their

coursework found less value in having the peer tutors help since they were at the same

educational step as the tutee.

Peer tutors were able to provide support and develop relationships with tutees that helped

to decrease feelings of anxiety. Students interviewed expressed that they were able to relate to

the peer tutors in a way that helped them cope with the feeling of being overwhelmed with

nursing coursework. The tutor tutee connection provided help with organization and time

management tips. Students describe how they felt that they could be successful in the program

because of their ability to relate to the peer tutors. The relationships between peer tutor and tutee

often endured only within the tutoring environment. Tutees described how they didn't find

enough of a connection with the peer tutors to expand the relationship outside of tutoring

services.

Both tutoring services were able to provide tutees with information on what areas of

content they should be focusing on to be successful. Students describe feeling overwhelmed by

the amount of content presented in nursing courses and how the tutors helped them to narrow the

focus of what they should be studying. Peer tutors were able to provide insight into how

practical skills exams would be formatted. Tutees described how the description helped to

decrease tutee anxiety about the testing process. Both types of tutoring services employed observation and use of a variety of learning techniques to help with academics.

Tutees described how both types of tutoring utilized storytelling to help convey content. The use of storytelling as a means of helping pull lecture content together was used in professional tutoring. Some of the students felt that the professional tutor could give more valid and realistic storytelling because of their experience. Other tutees found that peer tutors were able to pull from their clinical experience in the preceding semesters to give examples pertinent to the lab skills. Storytelling could sometimes become a bridge into peer tutors, encouraging tutee practical thinking skills. Peer tutors would provide scenarios that allowed tutees to problem solve situations involving hands-on skills. Students expressed that this type of stimulating activity helped them perform better in practical skills examinations and clinical.

Students who attended professional tutoring received fewer hands-on and more lecture focused instruction. Focus on lecture content led to the use of alternative learning methods involving writing and diagrams to help the student better understand concepts. Students described that the tutor was able to provide them with a base for how to write in a way that would help them better understand the concepts and outcomes of the nursing course. Two of the students described how the use of diagrams or photos that helped them to comprehend the content. Professional tutors also used online resources to help provide clarification and instruction. A variety of internet sites were presented, with the primary site being Quizlet, which allowed for the students to practice NCLEX style questions. The use of NCLEX style questioning was a tool that primarily the professional tutor used to help students. Questions were pulled from textbooks, online resources, and case studies provided by the college. Students

found that the variety of tools available helped them understand and focus on concepts of the coursework.

Both peer and professional tutors provided pastoral support. Students describe how they felt that they were able to connect with peer tutors and relate to the feelings of being overwhelmed by the expectations of the program. Those who attended professional tutoring felt that they could confide personal information to the professional tutor without judgment. Tutees who received pastoral support describe how the support helped decrease the amount of anxiety they felt. Some of the students interviewed expressed that they did not develop a pastoral relationship with the tutors; they were simply there to receive academic support.

Some students relayed pastoral support as being in the form of mentorship. Both the professional and peer tutors were able to help guide the students about the nursing program. The mentorship support was an expectation that some students had for tutoring, while others developed the mentorship relationship unexpectedly when their initial focus was on academic support. Several students said it would be beneficial to have a set resource about what the program includes and how to navigate the logistics of nursing.

Tutees felt that professional boundaries were maintained during their experiences with both types of tutoring services. None of the tutees felt as though the peer or professional tutoring services went beyond the normal expectations of tutoring services. Students often found that there were barriers related to attending and having a successful tutoring session. A significant barrier for students attending tutoring was the scheduling of tutoring services. Tutoring services were offered on a limited schedule that often made it difficult for the student to attend tutoring. Space could also be a problem if the rooms were busy or not enough supplies were present for

practice. The limited space could make it difficult to concentrate, and students describe being easily distracted if multiple groups were present.

Students expressed that another barrier was access to the tutor if the lab was busy. Tutees described the challenges when multiple students seeking assistance were present. This led to feeling as though they could not spend as much time with the tutor as they would have wished. Limited access related to students' lack of knowledge about the tutoring services was also an issue. Two students stated that they were unaware of the professional tutoring services available. Even when students were aware of tutoring services, access to the tutors could be complicated by a lack of presence during scheduled tutoring times. Students expressed that there were times when they arrived at scheduled tutoring services and found that there were no tutors present to assist them.

Tutor's lack of knowledge about a content area was also a barrier identified by tutees. The peer tutors often had more issues with this than the professional tutors. Students described how the professional tutors often sought out a resource to help answer questions, where the peer tutors may refer the tutee to their instructor. Students expressed frustration related to the lack of ability to get the academic support they were seeking.

In What Ways do Students Feel that Attending
     Tutoring Services Impacted Their Ability to
     Persist in the Nursing Program?

Interviews with the students revealed an overall impression that their attendance at tutoring services had impacted their ability to persist in the nursing program. Students described how the tutoring helped to reinforce skills and narrow the focus on content to make learning more manageable. Having peer tutors in the lab present to watch and critique student skills

helped to decrease testing anxiety, potentially improving student success. The pastoral support provided helped to decrease student feelings of anxiety and feel less overwhelmed. Peer tutors' ability to relate and empathize with tutees provided support that students felt impacted their persistence.

Theoretical Findings

The findings collected from interviews align well with Jeffreys's (2013) Nursing Universal Retention and Success Model. The impact of peer and professional tutoring as an intervention changed the professional integration dynamic that caused transformation within other areas of the model. The primary changes occurred in academic factors and psychological outcomes. Additionally, students commented that they felt there was a change in academic outcomes. Jeffreys (2015) described that professional integration and environmental factors "greatly influence nursing student retention" (p. 426). All of the students interviewed have been retained in the program as of this writing.

Jeffreys (2013) demonstrates how student affective factors, including motivation and self-efficacy, can affect professional integration and retention. The students interviewed all attended tutoring voluntarily, with many stating that they had a strong sense of internal motivation to do well. This motivation, in combination with many other factors, likely affected the student retention in the students interviewed, similar to what is described in Jeffreys's (2013) model.

Students described in interviews how they felt that the professional integration helped to reduce stress and anxiety. Dorothy commented that she was able to make a connection, she expressed that peer tutors would relate that "'Sometimes I kinda had the same feeling when I was

at that point.' So, you know, you feel like you're not alone in that void." Emily related a similar connection between tutoring and a decrease in anxiety, especially before exams. She related that tutoring was "Really a relief for my anxiety before a test." Multiple students expressed the connection made between tutors and tutees that resulted in psychological stress reduction.

The primary academic factor that students felt was impacted by tutoring was their study skills. Tutoring helped them to focus on pertinent content and feel less overwhelmed about all of the information they were supposed to learn. Allison described how the peer tutors were able to "…better explain it" to her and put the concept in a format that was easier for her to understand. Rose described how for her professional tutoring has "Definitely given me the extra help and information to really pull everything together and organize it in a way that I understand it. It just helps me give extra time towards studying." The organizational piece helps to set students up for success by getting them to focus on what concepts are essential for passing the course.

Some of the students described how they were able to form study groups with friends from class and that these were a helpful tool they used for success in the program. Jeffreys (2013) states that part of the professional integration factors that support student retention include encouragement by friends in class. The program studied is based on a cohort model that allows students to move through the program course with the same group of students. Emily described how she would attend tutoring with other classmates so that they could later study material as a group. She stated that "Once I in the tutor upstairs, for the friends together, and we have a ton of questions" that the group would ask the professional tutor. The support of the other classmates allowed for her to feel supported in the academic arena, and likely in a peer support aspect of being able to relate to similar stressors within the program.

The peer tutoring option gives students who otherwise may not make a connection with classmates a chance to relate to other students who have gone through the program. Jeffreys (2013) states that having a "lack of class friends will adversely affect retention through social isolation, dissatisfaction, stress, low-self efficacy, and decreased motivation" (p.134). The significance of these classroom friendships was noted to be more critical for students who are part of underrepresented groups (Jeffreys, 2013). June, Allison, Emily, and Dorothy were English as a secondary language speaker, with June discussing how she found learning nursing content more difficult related to this language barrier. All four of these students migrated to the United States as adults with their families.

Summary

The interviews with students who attended tutoring provided insight into their experiences with tutoring that they felt were beneficial and expressed barriers that they felt impacted tutoring. The experience of tutoring was somewhat different for each tutee. Many factors may have impacted the differences. Just as each person has different experiences during their educational journey, these students had a variety of tutoring encounters that shaped their thoughts. I attempted to stay true to Colaizzi's (1978) analysis method and present themes that anyone who has attended nursing-specific tutoring could identify and relate to.

Students' life experiences outside of tutoring are varied, and as Jeffreys (2012) describes in her model impact progress within an undergraduate nursing program. Student support outside of tutoring varied. Some students expressed high levels of family support where family members took an active role in providing academic support at home with studying. Other students expressed a complete lack of support and approval at home related to their academic

pursuits. Changes to staff and provisions of tutoring also impact the students from semester to semester. Tutoring services have differed slightly from semester to semester. These changes may have impacted student experiences.

Student description of tutoring within the nursing department revealed a variety of similar experiences that many of the students shared. Other times students experienced something different or felt differently about their own experience. I attempted to develop themes from the data that represent common student experiences. Further discussion and implications for the findings are presented in chapter five.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of nontraditional student perspectives regarding tutoring and the impact that tutoring had on their educational experience to increase retention. The literature shows that multiple factors affect student retention in undergraduate nursing programs. There is also evidence related to a variety of experiences, both positive and negative, in student tutoring programs. Jeffreys's (2012) model of nursing undergraduate retention and success provides guidance for factors affecting student success in undergraduate, including associate degree, nursing programs. I used the model as a framework for the study to guide research and conclusions.

Research for the study was conducted using a qualitative method to examine student experiences with nursing-specific tutoring. The study was completed at a mid-sized community college in the Midwest with associate degree registered nursing students. Students who attended at least three sessions of tutoring, either professional or peer, were interviewed regarding their experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven students who attended tutoring. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) method of analysis. I developed themes described in chapter four based on an in-depth analysis of the interviews. Chapter five will consist of: a) discussion and interpretation of the findings, b limitations, c) implications for theory, d) implications for practice, e) implications for research, and f) summary of the chapter.

Discussion and Interpretation

Students interviewed expressed that they experienced both pastoral and academic benefits by attending tutoring services. All seven of the students interviewed met the criteria for being a

nontraditional student. The sample of students interviewed provided a good cross-section of the

population enrolled in the associate degree program. Three of the students were not native to the

United States, two were male, three had children, and four were married. Three of the students

interviewed had prior educational degrees. The others had a break between their high school and

college education. All of the students were employed within healthcare in some fashion, most

working on an as-needed or on-call basis. The interviews did not question student finances or

prior educational experiences concerning admission criteria. June discussed how she was part of

the TRiO program at the college and had received support services through them for her general

education requirements.

Students articulated professional integration with the tutors was something that they

found beneficial. Not all of the students felt that they had integration on a pastoral level, but all

described integration on an academic level that involved different forms of storytelling. Jeffreys

(2013) describes how professional integration occurs with "through formal and informal faculty

interactions, peer interactions, and extracurricular activities" (p.125). None of the students

described having extracurricular interactions with either the peer or professional tutors. Three of

the students, June, Emily, and Sam, described how they were able to have informal interactions

with faculty tutors that helped them relieve stress and express feelings of anxiety. Many of the

students interviewed described that they were also able to have interactions with the peer tutors

that helped them feel less overwhelmed about the program in general. The professional tutoring

interactions are described as being more intimate in relating to concerns for mental health issues.

Being able to provide an outlet for students to make connections with peers or

professionals beyond the classroom setting with their instructors appears to have a positive

impact on student's ability to feel as though they could persist in the nursing program. Nursing

coursework is generally quite robust and rigorous, making it challenging to maintain outside

relationships due to time constraints. The loss of these outside connections to provide support

may impact student persistence. There may also be the feeling that those outside the program

might not "really understand what they are going through" (Blowers, 1998, p. 56). Many of the

tutees stated that they felt overwhelmed by the nursing coursework. They also stated that

meeting with the tutors helped them to organize and focus, in turn helping them to succeed.

None of the tutees interviewed were concerned about any boundary issues between either

of the tutoring groups. While they felt that they were able to convey their concerns and receive

support, there appears to be no relationship beyond discussion in the tutoring space. Whether the

institution of such firm boundaries was in itself a detriment with the peer tutoring group is a

question. The formation of greater bonds outside of the lab where peer tutoring occurred may

have an impact on student persistence because of the increased professional integration.

Tutees interviewed were all self-motivated to attend tutoring services. Most students

attended tutoring services because they wanted to do well in nursing coursework the first time

taking the classes. Sam expressed that he performed poorly in the first semester and that he was

told that in order for him to successfully pass further nursing courses, he would need to perform

better. William described how he had a history of difficulty learning content, so he preemptively

sought out tutoring as a way to succeed in the coursework. Self-efficacy and motivation may be

necessary for getting students to "buy-in" to tutoring as a means of support. It is uncertain if the

results of the study would be similar if students were required to attend tutoring instead of

participating voluntarily.

The relationships between the peer tutors and the tutees were generally described as being supportive within the tutoring environment. None of the students felt as though they made lasting connections with the peer tutors outside the tutoring environment. In general, tutees did feel as though they were able to ask questions and make connections with the peer tutors. Sam felt that peer tutoring was not as beneficial to him because the tutors were at the same level as him since they were in the same classes as him. The other six students who attended peer tutoring made comments about how they felt that peer tutoring decreased their anxiety level and had a positive impact on learning, similar to Brannagan et al. (2013).

Peer tutors were able to model behavior that encapsulated "real world" scenarios from experiences they had in their own clinical experience. This technique appears to be similar to the one that Owens and Walden (2001) describe they encountered during the investigation of peer tutoring experiences. Several of the tutees commented that the peer tutor's ability to bring "real world" and practical thinking scenarios into skills practice was beneficial for them to learn the skill. Tutees also felt that this type of learning helped them to perform better on practical skills exams because it prepared them for a variety of situations that may occur. Peer tutors were also able to help tutees prepare by giving them information about what the exams would be like, decreasing anxiety of the unknown.

Students relayed that they sometimes experienced similar effects with professional tutoring and the ability of the tutor to provide "real world" descriptions related to the content in the exam. Sam commented that he preferred the examples that the professional tutors provided because of their previous work experience as licensed personnel. This comment is similar to the

findings of Brannagan et al. (2013), where tutees felt less anxiety when an instructor gave feedback and assistance.

Tutees commented that sometimes the professional tutor had more specialized background in certain types of content. Other times they had less experience and may need to find resources to provide clarification of a concept. Overall, students felt that the professional tutors did an acceptable job of answering questions and explaining content. June, Emily, William, and Rose described how they were able to come to professional tutoring in groups and that because they were seeking clarification of the same concepts attending as a group was helpful. Tutees also commented that if there were other students there asking questions that this could make getting assistance from the tutor challenging or may be distracting to the tutee.

Students did not report a feeling of mismatched learning styles, as Dobinson-Harrington (2006) described. The students interviewed generally reported the opposite regarding learning from the professional tutor. Students report that they were offered multiple ways to learn a concept, which they felt improved their ability to learn. These alternative learning techniques provided students with a better understanding of the content that was beyond what the course faculty were able to provide them.

Time balance issues with attending tutoring and access to the tutors were expressed throughout the student interviews. Coakley (1999) found that tutees would sometimes "feel like a burden to start with," making it difficult for them to feel as though they were able to ask all of the questions they would like (p. 764). Part of the reason why deeper relationships may not have been developed is because of this feeling of being burdensome to the tutors. Those tutees who

spent more time with the tutors may have felt they developed a more meaningful relationship that helped them to persist.

Students interviewed were overall satisfied with the tutoring services they received. There is an apparent lack of publicity or notification related to the professional tutoring services, as two of the students interviewed were not aware of these services. Students felt that they gained both academic and pastoral support from the tutors. Tutees describe how both tutoring services used alternative learning methods to support them, differing between peer and professional tutoring. Most of the students felt they were able to make a personal connection with the tutors. This connection allowed for them to express concerns, make a connection, and feel as though they were being supported. Tutoring was able to provide professional integration via several routes, potentially increasing persistence and, ultimately, retention.

Tutees articulated barriers related to tutoring that may impede or alter student's ability to persist in the program. Students interviewed noted barriers related to their ability to find time to attend tutoring due to the limited amount of time that services were offered. Another barrier identified was having enough space within the tutoring centers as well as having the ability to effectively access the tutor so that they could have their questions answered. The final barrier identified was a tutor's level of knowledge related to the subject matter. This barrier appears to be more of an issue in peer tutoring than professional, as stated by the tutees. Students interviewed expressed that they benefitted from tutoring, even with the identified barriers.

Limitations

Limitations for the study include that there was difficulty obtaining a large enough sample population to reach data saturation. I encountered difficulty getting enough tutee

students who met the criteria to respond to email contact. Students who met the criteria were

contacted multiple times before responding to the researcher. During the time that the research

occurred, the number of professional tutors supplied by an outside agency was decreased. This

may have impacted the access that first semester students interviewed had to the professional

tutoring services. Changes to the placement of the tutoring calendar online during the semester

when the research occurred may have impacted students' ability to find resources.

Implication for Theory

Findings collected from interviews demonstrate alignment with multiple aspects of

Jeffreys's (2013) Nursing Universal Retention and Success Model. Students described how

components of the peer and professional tutoring attendance decreased their feelings of stress

and anxiety. The impact of decreased anxiety may play a role in the decision to persist in

nursing programs, as demonstrated by Jeffreys (2013).

The impact of peer and professional tutoring as an intervention changed the professional

integration dynamic that caused transformation within other areas of the model. The

professional integration impact on psychological and academic outcomes is present throughout

the student experiences. Description of how students felt positive interaction with peers based

on nursing content and integration is present within the student experiences.

Participants interviewed commented that they felt an improvement in academic outcomes

occurred because of tutoring. The evidence from this study appears to validate the idea that

professional integration influenced student psychological outcomes and academic factors,

potentially affecting their decision to continue in the nursing program. Mentorship and pastoral

relationships were a part of student experience impacting psychological and academic aspects, which aligns with Jeffreys's (2013) model.

Student affective factors, including motivation and self-efficacy, were described by participants as impacting the decision to attend tutoring. The question of how student self-efficacy and motivation to attend tutoring play a role in their involvement in professional integration and eventual retention remains unanswered. Further research into how self-efficacy and motivation impact the decision to attend tutoring is warranted. Student experiences demonstrate that motivation plays a factor in the decision to attend services, as is demonstrated in Jeffreys's (2013) model.

Participants expressed that they felt professional integration, such as encouragement by friends in class, provided them with support. The support of the other classmates from within the cohort provides an opportunity for relationship development. These relationships provide the peer support aspect of being able to relate to similar stressors within the program, and in the academic arena. The benefit of being able to relate to someone with a common academic goal was a theme that presented itself throughout the interviews and aligned with Jeffreys's (2013) model as part of professional integration.

The theoretical framework that Jeffreys (2013) proposes is applicable in some respects to undergraduate associate degree nursing program tutoring, as described above. Jeffreys describes several complex factors that affect nursing student retention. The research above demonstrates that tutoring has a positive impact on persistence related to some of the components involved in Jeffreys's model. Students who persist in the program improve overall retention rates, making tutoring a worthwhile investment for the program.

Implications for Practice

Students identified several implications for practice in the interviews. One of the items identified by students was "I would say having a set schedule," providing consistency and reliability that tutoring services would be available. An increase in the number of hours was an improvement that multiple students would like to see. Several students interviewed repeated similar feelings about their frustration with the lack of hours offered for both professional and peer tutoring.

Multiple students made statements that they would like to see improvements similar to the one above where there was increased availability of the tutors to be able to answer drop-in questions. Allison expressed that she would like to have services that fit more closely around her class schedule so that she did not have to come into the college on another day for tutoring. She stated that:

> They might have a slot where, me going at that time is gonna break up my whole day. You know? But, if I know I'm in school today, and I can just walk in, and they're right there, then it's perfect.

Allison goes on to state that "And when you have a question, even if they have specific hours and you go there, and they're not there, that's fine. But, if I can walk there and go check if somebody's there to ask them a question." Other students felt that they would like more availability for group tutoring specific to their semester course.

Having the availability of a scheduled tutor was a desire for some of the students. Other students felt that it would be helpful to have increased drop-in services where they could go to have questions answered in a timely manner. Discussion about scheduled tutoring services

where students can sign up for a specific slotted time may help to decrease some of the instances

of miscommunication and increase satisfaction with access to the tutors. A potential option for

students who are unable to attend tutoring on campus during scheduled times is

videoconferencing. Recent use of videoconferencing for skills content has been attempted with

limited success at other institutions. Theoretical content is likely easier to present and assist with

over videoconferencing or electronic meeting formats. These alternative formats may provide

less opportunity for pastoral support and mentorship connections.

Students articulated that they feel it would be helpful to have an option for group study or

tutoring that relates to the course they are taking. Rose expressed that "It would be nice to have

study groups that were set where they were led by someone who could steer you in the right

directions." Tutoring could offer an option for course-specific assistance that targeted a group of

students taking the course, turning the tutoring into more of a group study session. This could

provide an opportunity for students to delve into the content they might otherwise not based on

cohort questioning. With this technique, the academic content may be fulfilled, but the pastoral

support may be decreased because of the larger group setting. However, the students may seek

more pastoral support from classmates who also attend group tutoring, providing additional

support, and potentially increasing persistence.

Sam made a similar comment about group tutoring as an option, but one that would be

led by the course instructor. He expressed that **"**If they're teaching the content, sometimes it's

nice to have your teacher sit there for an hour, and then you can all have a group come together

and talk about what questions or concerns you may have." This idea is similar to the group

tutoring idea Rose expressed. The concern that faculty have articulated during several staff

meetings regarding faculty-led tutoring is that as leaders of the session, there would be some

level of "teaching to the test," which they want to avoid. They feel that having the instructor

who writes the exam guiding a study session would then lead to unintentional tutoring towards

the material that is on the exam. An alternative to this could be having the adjunct or other

course co-coordinator lead the tutoring sessions to prevent bias toward specific content.

Concerns for creating testing bias involve not only lecture exam content but practical

skills testing material. The problem with having course instructors tutor is that students are often

not informed of the specific skill that they will be performing on a practical skills exam. This is

to ensure they practice only all the skills they need to know for clinical experience. For this

reason, testing material is generally kept confidential until the time students enter the lab space

for testing. Having an instructor come in and provide information on specific testing material

could create bias problems. Peer tutors are often an excellent resource to be able to provide

insight into what the testing experience is like without knowing what will be on that practical

skills exam.

Having more peer tutors available for assistance to answer questions and prepare students

was a concern brought forth during the interviews. Often times, as practical skills exams are

approaching, the lab becomes busier with students practicing, and tutors can become

overwhelmed with answering questions. Sarah, who only attended peer tutoring, articulated that

she would improve services by "Getting more tutors" to help with observing, critiquing, and

answering questions in the lab.

The development of a program that provides better availability for the students to attend

both peer and professional tutoring appears to be a need. Better organization of the Alpha Delta

Nu peer tutoring during peak times around practical skills testing would be helpful. When looking ahead at the schedule to increase the number of professional tutoring hours around peak testing times, it is essential to consider mid-terms and finals. Knowledge of when tutee load is at its greatest is essential for decision making about when tutoring should be scheduled. Potential exists for creating scheduling during those peak times to limit the number of students interacting with the tutors at a single time. This option could help relieve some of the access issues but may have a negative impact on the times that are offered to the nontraditional students in the program.

Offering group tutoring sessions may provide the opportunity for students who aren't comfortable attending individual sessions the chance to get assistance. The practical nursing department offered a similar service, supplemental instruction, at one point with moderate success. Many students participated voluntarily and anecdotally relayed that they felt it helped them do better in the course. Attendance at the supplemental instruction sessions was mandatory for those students not achieving 78% in the course. It is not known if those who attended mandatory tutoring were impacted in the same manner as those who voluntarily participated. Other times individual course instructors have offered group study sessions before tests. These appear to be better attended than individual tutoring, likely because of their proximity to theory exams.

Hiring additional professional tutors to staff hours so that regular, set hours can be offered should be considered. Difficulty with funding a professional tutor for nursing may be a challenge. Data should be kept on how many students are using the service and if there is a change in the students' academic performance. A short-term solution may be seeking out graduate nursing education school programs and determining if participating in professional

tutoring would constitute as clinical hours. This could be a cost-free option that allows for the graduate student to practice teaching while the undergraduate student benefits from tutoring. The graduate student will have had experience both as a licensed nurse and curriculum in education. The use of a graduate student would also eliminate concerns of "teaching to the test" and bias as they would not have access to the testing materials. There may be difficulty finding nursing education graduate students each semester to fill a position, meaning that consistency could be an issue.

Students expressed a concern related to the limited amount of space where the tutoring occurs. Space was an issue in student experiences both in the lab and the resource room. Students stated that both spaces could become crowded, making it difficult to find resources and providing an additional distraction that made learning challenging. Creating peer access to the nursing resource space upstairs where the professional tutor is located as an option may increase the number of students who seek peer tutoring for assistance with theory content. The desire for more space, as well as having a consistent place to meet the peer tutors where she could drop in for questions, was conveyed in the interview.

Allison and Dorothy were unaware of the professional tutoring services offered. Awareness needs to be increased as a way to improve student attendance and program persistence. Students who attended both services described the challenges of finding a schedule of when tutoring was offered. Suggestions were made to have a schedule in more than one place for students to view. June commented that having the schedule posted "…maybe like on the door" to the resource room and the lab would be helpful for her to look and see when tutoring is scheduled. Similarly, Allison expressed that she would find it helpful if the department didn't

"Put it just as a just resource site." She went on to describe how she found it challenging to navigate and find the calendar on the nursing resource site.

Space and awareness of services are an ongoing issue at the institution where the study occurred. As programs have expanded the increase in the student body size along with the increase in courses offered has greatly impacted the amount of time the lab is open for practice. Continual tracking of room use and student dissatisfaction may assist with helping the administration understand the need for more space. The addition of the resource room upstairs for professional tutoring has been helpful because it consistently offers a place where tutoring is scheduled, other than a classroom.

Rose discussed how she would like to see additional self-learning tools supplied by the nursing department for when tutoring is not available. She commented that having other lab resources, "…or a D2L where you had a videotape of the skill," would be helpful for when she was practicing skills alone in the nursing lab. Video references created by faculty demonstrating skills may be a useful learning tool for those that are unable to attend tutoring. Some instructors have already used this learning tool. Some students then view the video while in the lab practicing helping guide them through the skill. The students who use this could miss out on the interaction and critique of a peer tutor observing them performing the skill. While a useful reference, the videos combined with peer tutoring may be a better fit to increase student retention of material and practical thinking ability.

The creation and institution of a mentorship program is a beneficial tool for students who are open to the option. Mentorship of first-semester students with a third-semester student in good standing may provide some of the same peer and pastoral support benefits described by

tutees. The challenge in completing this task is finding enough willing mentors in good standing who could work with first semester students. Potential groupings of one mentor with multiple mentees may accommodate this and provide additional relationship development between mentees.

Implications for Research

Topics for further research related to tutoring in nursing and persistence should continue to be explored. Understanding of how peer support and mentorship impact persistence within a nontraditional undergraduate nursing program would help develop plans for retention improvement. The research presented above shows that students felt that having a connection with the tutors gave them a decreased sense of anxiety about the nursing program. Continuing to provide the support that decreases student anxiety and makes them feel less overwhelmed with the nursing program may, in turn, improve persistence and retention rates.

Exploration of tutoring impact on NCLEX test scoring may be investigated. Determining if tutoring has an impact not only on program retention but on the success of first-time pass rates of NCLEX may be relevant to a program. Part of maintaining ACEN accreditation is a demonstration that nursing licensure pass rates based on NCLEX testing are "80% for all first-time test takers during the same 12-month period" (ACEN, 2017, p. 6). Demonstration of how tutoring may impact those first-time test taker scores could have an impact on program accreditation for institutions that are struggling to reach the 80% mark.

Research into whether students in high-risk categories would have greater success when provided with regular mentoring from either a peer or professional should continue to be explored. High-risk students may include those with English as an additional language,

expressed lack of home support, students entering the program directly from a high school setting, or those with low scores in the science general education courses. Partnering those students with more senior nursing students in good standing to provide mentorship may increase persistence. Creating a connection with other male students may be especially important with some of the gender bias present in nursing.

The exploration into program satisfaction and connection by comparing the experiences of those who did or did not attend tutoring is an area for further research. Student development may be impacted by the greater professional interactions that occur within tutoring. Do students who attend tutoring experience greater program satisfaction, less stress, and reduced anxiety than those who do not attend tutoring? Based on the results of this study, the increase in professional integration and interaction impacted the students beyond the academic experience. Students who do not attend tutoring may be potentially lacking that interaction and could have decreased satisfaction and success in their nursing program.

Longitudinal tracking of student retention based on attendance at a tutoring program could be followed as a means to understand if tutoring is a successful venture within the program. The challenge is the variable of student motivation since the tutoring is voluntary. If students are already motivated to attend tutoring as an anticipatory measure for success, would those students have persisted in the first place? A large number of variables makes tracking success in voluntary tutoring programs a challenge.

An investigation into mandatory tutoring effects should be explored to determine if this type of tutoring is as effective as voluntary tutoring. Determination of how self-efficacy and motivation affect students is vital in determining what services to offer in the program. If

students are required to attend tutoring, will there be a similar effect on their academic

outcomes? Experiences related to pastoral support and mentorship should also be examined to

determine if students who attend mandatory tutoring receive similar support.

Summary

The findings in the study indicate that students who attended voluntary tutoring services,

either peer or professional, felt that these services helped them to persist in the nursing program.

These results reinforce Jeffreys's (2013) Nursing Universal Retention and Success Model

concerning multiple factors impacting nursing student retention. Students interviewed expressed

that professional integration in tutoring affected their study skills, academic outcomes, and

psychological outcomes, as described in Jeffreys's (2013) model. Jeffreys (2015) describes

student retention as a dynamic and multidimensional phenomenon where professional integration

can significantly influence student persistence.

Recognition of the multidimensional aspects related to retention is necessary to create

targeted interventions to address persistence. Practice changes to timing and availability of

tutoring services, as well as more space, should be addressed. Having an adequate number of

tutors present to service all of the students' present is necessary to help eliminate some of the

feelings of being rushed or burdensome. Tutor knowledge on resources to help answer questions

that may arise to provide direction for tutees is a concern that should be navigated.

Ongoing research into how great of an impact tutoring makes in academic success should

be continued. The variety of techniques available to support students needs to be further

examined to determine what is the most beneficial. Some caution should be taken regarding

limiting services as each student is different and has different needs to be successful. Jeffreys

(2015) states that there is a need to remember that retention is dynamic and multidimensional. We must not only focus on services geared toward the majority. It is essential to address ways in which we can also help the minority.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions Tutoring Subgroups

a) Demographic question including: a) age, b) family status, c) work status, d) previous educational degree, e) current semester in the nursing program, and f) gender.

b) Explain what motivated you to attend peer or professional tutoring services through the nursing department?

c) What were your expectations of the tutoring services? Were the tutors able to meet those expectations?

d) What learning items or techniques that the tutors used worked best for your learning?

e) Why did you choose to attend this type of tutoring?

f) What benefits do you felt you gained from attending tutoring? Academic or other.

g) Describe any barriers that you encountered during the tutoring process, or that deterred you from using the tutoring services.

h) In what ways to you think the tutoring process could be improved upon?

i) In what ways do you feel that attending tutoring has impacted your ability to persist in the nursing program?

j) What suggestions do you have for improving the tutoring process you attended?

Appendix B

**Recruitment Email for Research Study:
ADN student experience with tutoring**

Dear Student,

As part of my dissertation research to complete my doctorate degree I am examining Associate Degree Nursing student experiences with peer and professional tutoring. I am seeking current RCTC nursing students who are at least 18 years old and have attended 3-5 tutoring sessions to participate in a qualitative research study. Your email was identified because you have attended at least 3 tutoring sessions with either peer or professional tutoring. Participation in the study is voluntary and will not affect your academic standing. Only the email sender has knowledge that you have been contacted to participate in this research. Confidentiality regarding any information you give the principal investigator regarding the study will be maintained and all published documents will be de-identified. The purpose of this study is to examine student experiences with nursing specific tutoring administered by either peer or professional tutors.

Participation in this study involves:
- A time commitment of approximately 1 hour for a semi-structured interview
- Review of transcribed interview to ensure accuracy of statements

For more information about this study, please contact the principal investigator, Onalee Finseth, by phone at 507-884-9951 or email at Onalee.finseth@rctc.edu.

Thank you,

Onalee Finseth, MSN, RN, PHN, CHSE
Principal Investigator

Study Title: Associate degree nursing student experiences with peer and professional tutoring

Appendix C

Student Experiences of Tutoring in an Associate Degree Nursing Education Program
Consent to Participate

You are invited to participate in a research study about your student experience with tutoring in an associate degree nursing program. You have been chosen because you have previously participated in tutoring services while attending coursework in the associate degree nursing program at Rochester Community and Technical College.

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in an individual semi-structured interview with the primary investigator that will last approximately an hour. If needed you may be contact the researcher later for clarification of statements.

Anticipated benefits of the research include the researcher developing a greater understanding of student experience with tutoring in the nursing department and the impact on persistence. Students may receive the benefit of developing a greater understanding of their own ability to persist in nursing education. The reflective process may also impact student ability to understand how tutoring impacted their learning. Larger programmatic and institutional benefit may include a better understanding of student tutoring experience along with suggestions for targeted improvement of tutoring process.

There are no anticipated risks involved with the research study. Participants will not be placed in a situation that would impact their academic progress. Participants who present sensitive material or psychological stress that requires additional services beyond what the researcher can provide will be referred to those services during the interview process. The researcher will not contact the participant regarding these issues after the interview process. Faculty will not have access to data key, audio, or data set. Faculty will only have access to the final published dissertation work with de-identified data.

Data collected will remain confidential. Data will be reported and presented in aggregate (group) form or with no more than two descriptors presented together. Interview data responses will be kept strictly confidential, your name will not be disclosed nor will identified direct quotes be used. During the interview you may refuse to answer any questions.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with St. Cloud State University, Rochester Community and Technical College, or the researcher. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Interviews will be audio recorded for the purposes of data collection. This form asks for your consent to use media for and from this study. We would like you to indicate how we can use your media. On the tables below is a list of media types that we will use. Please initial where you consent for that type of use of your media. We will not use your media in any way you have not initialed.

Audio; no video	
Consent Granted	Type of Release
	Used by research team to record and analyze data

Transcription of audio	
Consent Granted	Type of Release
	Used by research team to record and analyze data

I have read the above carefully and give my consent only for those items in which I initialed.

If you have questions about this research study, you may contact Onalee R. Finseth at Onalee.finseth@rctc.edu or 507-884-9951 and Dr. Steven McCullar at slmccullar@stcloudstate.edu. Results of the study can be requested from the researcher. De-identified published data will be *published at the St. Cloud State University Repository*. The researcher may use data from the study potentially in future publications and presentations.

Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age, you have read the information provided above, and you have consent to participate.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

St. Cloud State University
Institutional Review Board
Approval date: 10-10-2018
Expiration date: 10-9-2019

Appendix D

ST. CLOUD STATE
UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION FOR LIFE.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

720 4th Avenue South AS 210, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498

Name: Onalee Finseth

Email: orlinseth@stcloudstate.edu

IRB PROTOCOL DETERMINATION:
Expedited Review-1

Project Title: Student Experiences of Tutoring in an Associate Degree Nursing Education Program

Advisor Steven McCullar

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol to conduct research involving human subjects. Your project has been: **APPROVED**

Please note the following important information concerning IRB projects:
- The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of participants in this project. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (ex. research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.).

- For expedited or full board review, the principal investigator must submit a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated on this letter to report conclusion of the research or request an extension.

-Exempt review only requires the submission of a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter if an extension of time is needed.

- Approved consent forms display the official IRB stamp which documents approval and expiration dates. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates.

- The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (ex. research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.). The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time.

If we can be of further assistance, feel free to contact the IRB at 320-308-4932 or email ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu and please reference the SCSU IRB number when corresponding.

IRB Chair:

Dr. Benjamin Witts
Associate Professor- Applied Behavior Analysis
Department of Community Psychology,Counseling, and Family Therapy

IRB Institutional Official:

Dr. Latha Ramakrishnan
Interim Associate Provost for Research
Dean of Graduate Studies

OFFICE USE ONLY

SCSU IRB# 1839 - 2356	Type: Expedited Review-1	Today's Date: 10/16/2018
1st Year Approval Date: 10/10/2018	2nd Year Approval Date:	3rd Year Approval Date:
1st Year Expiration Date: 10/9/2019	2nd Year Expiration Date:	3rd Year Expiration Date: