SOS: SignpOSt - Support & advice needs of Nursing Students; focus group perspectives in developing an online, interactive support tool

Conference or Workshop Item

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SOS: SignpOST
Support & advice needs of Nursing Students; focus group perspectives in developing an online, interactive support tool

‘the right information, at the right time, in the right place’

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Introduction - Impact of Attrition

“a longitudinal process of interactions between the individual and the academic and social systems of the college during which a person’s experiences in those systems…continually modify his goals and institutional commitments in ways which lead to persistence and/or to varying forms of dropout” (Tinto, 1975)

- Student nurse attrition is challenging for higher education institutions within the United Kingdom but also elsewhere in the world (Ascend Learning, 2012)
- The cost of attrition to the UK taxpayer is estimated to be £99 million (Waters, 2008)
- a 5 year American study estimated a cost of $3 billion for students who drop out of academic programmes (Schneider & Yin, 2011)
- Systematic and integrated support mechanisms can help to improve attrition
- Student advice and support should be responsive, accessible, interactive and high quality

(RCN, 2008; Ascend Learning, 2012; Jeffreys, 2012; Watts & Gordon, 2012)
Introduction & rationale – Reasons for leaving

- Financial issues
- Programme commitments
- Placement experience
- Tutor support
- Childcare difficulties
- Doubts over nursing as a career
- Being in paid employment in addition to the programme
Project aims and objectives

Aim
To improve the level of and accessibility of support, information and advice to nursing and allied healthcare students within University of Derby.
Enable students to access:

‘the right information, at the right time, in the right place’

Objectives

1. **Explore** the current sources of and support needs of nursing and allied healthcare students
2. **Analyse** qualitative data to identify overarching themes and sub-topics
3. **Develop** an online, interactive support tool
4. **Evaluate** the impact of the pilot support tool
Phase 1 – Explore

- 3 student focus groups
  - n=14
  - Student nurses [adult & mental health field], radiography, occupational therapy

- One academic focus group
  - n=8
  - Personal tutors, module leads, programme leads, year of study leads
Phase 2 - Analyse

- Inductive thematic analysis
- Identified that information and support needs typically sat within the following themes
  - Financial
  - Personal
  - Programme
  - Study Skills
- Other interesting ideas
  - The role of informal Facebook groups
  - The roles and responsibilities of different staff groups
Phase 3 - Develop

Signpost Tool

This is the Signpost support and advice tool for students.

Please click on your programme title to begin

https://ehssignpost.derby.ac.uk/
Phase 4 – Pilot Evaluation

- Piloted with 46 students to date

- Number of ‘clicks’ to find an answer
  - Mean 2.28
  - Minimum 1.40, maximum 3.40
  - s.d. 0.43

- Time taken to locate information
  - Mean 1.27 minutes
  - Minimum 0.20, maximum 3.60
  - s.d. 0.79
Phase 4 – Evaluation continued

Would you recommend the tool to a peer?
- 93.2% agree or strongly agree

Was the tool easy to use?
- 100% agree or strongly agree

Will this improve support to students?
- 97.7% agree or strongly agree
  - 2.3% were unsure
Questions?

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Key References

Ascend Learning, LLC (2012) Student attrition: consequences, contributing factors and remedies, ATI Nursing Education, ATI USA


Royal College of Nursing (2008) An RCN study into the challenges facing today’s nursing students in the UK, RCN, London UK


