

**An exploration of the significance of prior clinical practice on the
transition of DN graduates to the second year of a BN program**

**A thesis submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Education
in the School of Education
Faculty of Education,
Flinders University of South Australia**

Jessica Stewart

Student Number: 2143954

RN, BN, PG Dip Nursing Practice

January 2018

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Jessica Stewart

22 January 2018

Abstract

The aim of this research is to explore the significance of Enrolled Nurses (ENs) working experience on the university transition of Diploma of Nursing (DN) graduates entering a baccalaureate-nursing program, having received substantial advanced standing. The study seeks to generate new understandings that will have the potential to influence educational processes and guide the development of strategies to support the transition of DN graduates entering Registered Nurses (RN) studies.

There are two different levels of nurses in Australia: ENs, who have undertaken a DN, or equivalent, through Vocational Education and Training (VET), and RNs, who have undertaken a Bachelor of Nursing, or equivalent, in a university setting. ENs and RNs are clearly demarcated professionals, who work in similar settings but under a different scope of practice. DN graduates frequently undergo conversion to RN studies and are often offered significant advanced standing in BN programs at Australian universities. While there is evidence to suggest that these students frequently find the transition from EN to BN undergraduate student difficult, few studies have been found that explore the impact of prior EN experience on the individual's transition to BN studies.

This study adopted an interpretive inquiry approach. Data was generated through the use of Rich Picture (RP) interviews, conducted with six DN-BN students who were recruited during their second semester of university study. The interviews were transcribed and thematically analysed using Lizzio's (2006) Five Senses of Success (FSS) model as an organisational structure with consideration of relevant theories of learning. The experiences, metacognitive characteristics, motivational characteristics and connections of participants, with and without EN experience, were then compared and analysed.

The comparison of the educational transition experiences and learner characteristics of DN-BN students indicated that EN working experience has no impact on the learners' perceived ability to meet the academic requirements of the BN program, with both groups expressing low academic self-efficacy. EN working experience was also found to have no impact on the learners' ability to regulate their knowledge or their motivational goals. Participants who had EN work, however, believed their experience enabled them to apply theoretical knowledge in practice and assisted them to develop the skills required to balance university, work and life requirements. While EN experience was associated with an increased sense of interdisciplinary connection it appeared to contribute to a sense of separation from peers.

Many DN-BN students are motivated, metacognitive learners who find the transition from DN graduate to BN undergraduate student difficult. DN-BN students often struggle to cope with the increased academic demands of BN studies, particularly when entering the BN program in the second year. The participants of the study highlighted the importance of positive, supportive social peer relationships. It is evident that targeted transitional support from universities and VET providers should focus on supporting the development of academic skills and promotion of the formation of peer relationships in this cohort.

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to many people who have supported and encouraged me in the investigation reported in this thesis.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Professor Janice Orrell, whose guidance and support helped me overcome the obstacles I faced while undertaking this research.

I would like to thank my fellow staff members for their support and understanding during this process, specifically Karen, Alicia and Lyn.

I want to send my appreciation to the DN-BN students who participated in this study, without your participation this research would not have been possible.

Finally, I want to thank my family. In particular I want to thank my husband, Jamie for his support and understanding when I have been distracted, and my mother, Jenny, for being a stickler for grammar and for being an amazing sounding board.

Contents

Declaration.....	iii
Abstract.....	v
Acknowledgments	vii
Contents	ix
Tables	xi
Chapter 1 - Introduction	1
The Problem Being Addressed.....	1
Approach to the Study	2
Significance of the Study.....	2
Structure of the Thesis.....	3
Chapter 2 – Literature Review	4
Background/Context	4
Educational Differences.....	5
The Choice to Pursue Undergraduate Nursing Studies.....	6
General Transition to University	7
VET Transition to University.....	7
EN Transition to Undergraduate Nursing Student.....	8
Learning Success at University	9
Chapter 3 - Methodology.....	12
Context of the Research.....	12
Research Design and Methodology.....	13
Recruitment Process	13
Participants and Sampling	14
Research Methods	16
Data Analysis and Reporting	18
Ethical Considerations.....	18
Chapter Four - Findings.....	20
Section 1 - Six Narratives of Transition into RN Studies	20
Lisa’s Story	21
Jayne’s Story	25
Bianca’s Story	30
Zara’s Story	34
Miku’s Story.....	39
Ana’s Story.....	44
Section 2 – Emerging Themes and Comparison of the Cases	48
Theme 1 – Metacognitive Characteristics.....	48
Awareness of Requirements and Cognitive Processing.....	49
Application of Knowledge	51
Regulation of Knowledge.....	52
Metacognitive Characteristics Overview	55
Theme 2 - Motivational Characteristics.....	55

Beliefs in Academic Capability.....	56
Beliefs in Vocational Capability	58
Confidence in Managing University Demands	59
Goal Orientation and Sense of Purpose.....	61
Motivational Characteristics Overview.....	64
Theme 3 - Connections.....	64
Connection to Peers, Friends and Family Members	64
Connection to Interdisciplinary Team.....	67
Connections Overview	67
Conclusions Drawn	68
Chapter 5 – Discussion	70
Advantages of EN Working Experience on University Transition.....	71
Application of Theory in Practice	71
Vocational Confidence.....	72
Inter-Disciplinary Connections	72
Ability to Manage University Demands.....	73
Disadvantages of EN Working Experience of University Transition.....	74
Reduced Strong Peer Connections	74
DN Graduates’ Experience of Transition to University	74
Struggle to Meet Academic Requirements.....	74
Motivation to Study.....	75
Recognition of Academic Culture.....	76
Cognitive Awareness and Learning Regulation.....	76
Chapter 6 - Recommendations, Limitations and Conclusion	78
Recommendations	78
Limitations	79
Conclusion.....	80
Appendix A: Letter of Introduction.....	82
Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet	84
Appendix C: Consent Form	87
Appendix D: Rich Picture Session Guide for Facilitators.....	89
Appendix E: Participants’ Rich Pictures.....	91
E.1 Lisa’s Rich Picture.....	91
E.2 Jayne’s Rich Picture.....	91
E.3 Bianca’s Rich Picture	92
E.4 Zara’s Rich Picture	92
E.5 Miku’s Rich Picture.....	93
E.6 Ana’s Rich Picture.....	93
References.....	94

Tables

Table I: Participant Demographics.....	15
Table II: Summary of Participants' Clinical Experience.....	21
Table III: Factors Influencing Transition.....	48
Table IV: Accessed Resources Identified by Participants.....	54

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The thesis explores the educational transition experiences of students who enter a Bachelor of Nursing (BN) in the second year of the degree, having received recognition of prior learning for the satisfactory completion of a Diploma of Nursing (DN) or equivalent. These students may come from a range of backgrounds, with different levels of educational and clinical working experience, but often have no experience of learning in a university setting. While there is evidence to suggest that Enrolled Nurses (ENs) find the transition from EN to BN undergraduate student difficult (Ralph, Birks, Chapman, Muldoon & McPherson, 2013) and report feeling unprepared (Hylton, 2005), overwhelmed and lost (Hutchinson, Mitchell & St John, 2011), little research has been found that explores the impact of the presence or absence of EN experience on the university transition of these students.

The Problem Being Addressed

Accredited DN programs qualify graduates to apply to register and, therefore, apply for employment as an EN. While not all DN graduates wish to undertake further nursing studies, many graduates of DN programs seek to undertake baccalaureate level programs that will mean they qualify to register as a Registered Nurse (RN). In Australia many universities provide the equivalent of one year of advanced standing to DN graduates entering baccalaureate-nursing programs, regardless of grades or EN status.

Current research has explored the reasons ENs choose to convert to RNs (Kenny & Duckett, 2005), the ENs process of adaptation to a BN program (Hutchinson, et al., 2011; Hylton, 2005; Rapley, Nathan & Davidson, 2006), the impact of a bridging program on student confidence levels when entering a BN conversion course (Boelen & Kenny, 2009) and the lived experience of ENs making the transition from undergraduate student nurse to RN (Paech, 2002). While literature indicates that many of these learners struggle with the university transition (Hutchinson et al., 2011), educators believe that EN courses provide an excellent preparation for

students entering into the second year of a BN program (Jacob, McKenna & D'Amore, 2014) and that their prior working experience as an EN has provided them with a strong foundation for the RN role (Kenny & Duckett, 2005). Interestingly, few studies have been found that investigate the impact of prior learning factors on the transitional experience of these individuals and there has been little focus on the precise effect EN working experience, or lack thereof, has on an individual's transition to BN student.

Approach to the Study

The proposed research will use a qualitative research design to explore the educational experiences of DN graduates who entered a BN program having received the equivalent of one year of advanced standing, with the express intention of contrasting the experiences and learner characteristics of those with and those without clinical experience working as an EN. The exploration will be conducted through an examination of the factors that students report as having impacted their transition to the BN program. It will take particulate note of the nature of the influence of EN working experience and will compare the experiences and learning characteristics of participants with and without EN working experience.

Significance of the Study

This study aims to generate new understandings that will have the potential to influence the development and change of the educational processes supporting EN's transition into Higher Education (HE) from the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. The findings of this study will provide insights for educators and education enabling support service providers regarding factors that impact on the transition of students entering higher education, in particular the impact of clinical practice as an EN where it occurs and its absence where it has not. This information will assist in the development of targeted infrastructure to support learners as they transition from DN (or equivalent) graduate to BN undergraduate student.

Structure of the Thesis

This first chapter has offered an introduction to this thesis, briefly describing and outlining the problem being addressed. The approach and significance of the study has also been outlined.

The second chapter will present a review of the literature. This review will include literature relating to general university transition and the reasons ENs choose to undertake further studies. It will then explore literature relating to the transition of ENs entering RN studies in Australian and New Zealand. The chapter introduces educational theories relating to the characteristics of successful learners, particularly theories relating to motivation and cognition. Lizzio's (2006) Five Senses of Success model, the tool that will be used for data organisation, is also introduced.

The third chapter discusses the methodology used for this study, including the context for the research, the research design, recruitment, sampling methods and ethical considerations. Data collection and analysis methods and personal assumptions of the researcher are also outlined.

In chapter four the study findings are discussed. Findings are firstly presented in Case Study form and are categorised into themes relating to Lizzio (2006) FSS categories. A reflective summary is provided at the end of each case study that considers the learner's characteristics in relation to relevant educational theories of student success. Findings are then outlined in more detail and themes and subthemes that emerged from the analysis of the data are presented and considered.

The fifth chapter presents the key findings of the research and discusses these in relation to the existing body of literature. Recommendations, implications for further research, the study's limitations and a conclusion are then presented in chapter six.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter will provide a background to the research. Current literature relating to the educational differences between EN and RN courses will be examined before research relating to general and VET transition to university is outlined. Literature relating to the transition of ENs entering university level nursing programs will then be summarised.

Background/Context

In Australia there are two different levels of nurses: Enrolled Nurses (ENs) and Registered Nurses (RNs). ENs and RNs often work together in similar clinical settings but have clearly demarcated professional roles (Ralph et al., 2013). EN and RNs operate under separate specific standards for practice (NMBA, 2017), have different clinical roles and undertake different levels of educational preparation (Jacob, et al., 2014).

Educational preparation for registration as an EN in Australia involves undertaking an accredited Diploma of Nursing (DN) course. This 18-24month, full-time, Vocational Education and Training (VET) course follows a national training package (NTP) and is offered by a large number of accredited Technical and Further Education (TAFE) centres and private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). It should be noted that this course is a relatively recent EN registration requirement. Prior to June 2014, EN students could choose to undertake certificate IV or diploma level studies (ANMF, 2014) and prior to the 1990s all EN and RN education was hospital based.

Once an individual has successfully completed a DN, and met the mandatory requirements, they are eligible to apply to register as an EN with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) (NMBA, 2017; AHPRA, 2016). Once an individual is registered as an EN, whatever their educational background, they can apply for employment in a range of health care settings across Australia (Department of Health, 2014; Ralph et al., 2013).

Many ENs choose to continue their studies and apply to enrol in an accredited Bachelor of Nursing (BN) program. A BN is normally a 3-year, full time degree that is undertaken in a university setting (Jacob et al., 2014). Students who successfully complete an accredited nursing undergraduate program are eligible to register with the NMBA as a RN, provided the mandatory registration requirements are met (NMBA, 2017).

In Australia, significant advanced standing/recognition of prior learning (RPL) is offered by universities, and other HE centres, to students who have successfully undertaken DN studies and apply to enrol in an accredited BN program. Although university entry requirements vary, many universities across Australia grant the equivalent of one year of advanced standing/RPL to these individuals, regardless of registration status, prior clinical working experience or course grades. The provision of this significant credit means that there are now a large number of students who enter undergraduate BN programs in the equivalent of the second-year of the three-year university degree. While entry to the second year in itself may provide students with significant challenges, this study focuses on the impact of the presence or absence of EN clinical experience on the transition of these students.

The following literature review will discuss the perceived differences between EN and RN education and highlight the factors that may contribute to EN students' decision to undertake further studies. The transitional experience of EN students who enter baccalaureate-nursing programs after receiving significant advanced standing for previous studies is then examined and current gaps in the literature highlighted.

Educational Differences

A recent study by Jacob, McKenna and D'Amore (2014) highlighted many of the perceived key similarities and differences in the educational preparation of ENs and RNs. In Australia, ENs are now predominately educated at RTOs and RNs in a university setting. Jacob et al (2014) suggested that the EN cohort requires more learning assistance when compared to RN undergraduate students and indicated that students who are undertaking EN studies are often

perceived to enter post secondary education with lower academic achievement levels than students who follow traditional RN undergraduate entry pathways. It was suggested that comparable skills are taught in both the EN and RN course, and that EN courses provide a strong foundation for undergraduate nursing study (Jacob et al., 2014).

EN programs are considered to have less self-directed learning, less academic writing and research and less focus on developing critical thinking skills than RN courses (Jacob et al., 2014). These differences in educational preparation between EN and RN programs may contribute to the difficulties many of these students experience when entering baccalaureate nursing programs.

The Choice to Pursue Undergraduate Nursing Studies

The number of students enrolled in EN courses increased by 38% from 2009-2012 (Department of Health, 2014). Many universities offer all DN graduates, regardless of the institution where they obtained their qualifications, the equivalent of one year of advanced standing/RPL in RN programs, and others universities offer direct entry to students who have successfully undertaken a DN program through certain providers. Many DN graduates who have completed EN programs wish to continue their nursing education and apply to enrol in these undergraduate-nursing programs.

Anecdotally, there is a view that individuals who have not received the required Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score for traditional entry for a university-based nursing program may consider the DN-BN pathway as an alternative university entry option. Literature suggests that ENs choose to undertake further studies because they feel disillusioned with the EN role and because there is a lack of career opportunity for ENs (Kenny & Duckett (2005) or because there are more opportunities and a better future for RNs (Paech, 2002). These factors may contribute to the number of ENs who apply to undertake university level nursing studies.

General Transition to University

Students experience transition as they move from the VET level of education to university and begin to understand their role as a higher education student. Transition into higher education is considered an overlapping and co-existing sequence of student identity formation (Bridges, 2003) that is multi-faceted, with academic, social and personal transitional processes (Wylie, 2005). During transition students experience changes to their personal identity as they move from one state of mind to another (Mauder, Cunliffe, Galvn, Mjali & Rogers, 2013). Transition to university is often recognised as an ongoing process, but the importance of supporting a learner's initial transition during their first year experience (FYE) at university is well documented (Nelson, Smith & Clarke, 2012). Kift, Nelson and Clarke (2010) recommend that institutions develop practices that foster the transition of FYE students to universities.

VET Transition to University

Students who enter university from VET programs are often granted advanced standing/RPL for the completion of VET courses. This advanced standing can result in students facing difficulties when entering university programs (Millman, 2014). Difficulties include that they are often being expected to perform academically at the equivalent standard of a second year university student and are required to utilise unfamiliar information technology (Millman, 2014). These learners are also faced with different pedagogical and learning approaches (Gabb & Glaisher, 2006; Northall, Ramjan, Everett & Salamonson, 2016), are often confused about the basis of the award of advanced standing and do not feel that their previous experiences, skills and knowledge are recognised by the university (O'Shea, Lysaght & Tanner, 2012).

Although research has highlighted the need to support VET-university students, there is currently little research found that identifies the best approach for supporting this transition (Millman, 2014; Northall et al., 2016). Many universities do not offer specific transition support to students entering university programs via a VET pathway, including the DN-BN pathway. It is suggested that this lack of sufficient transitional support offered to DN graduates entering

baccalaureate-nursing studies may contribute to the challenges and anxiety during EN-to-BN transition that is demonstrated literature.

EN Transition to Undergraduate Nursing Student

Many EN students, who have received significant advanced standing for prior learning and enter baccalaureate-nursing programs, experience high levels of anxiety and feel unprepared for higher education (Hylton, 2005). While EN-to-BN students may initially think they know everything they need to (Rapley et al., 2006), these students often lack of awareness of course requirements and as a result may feel unprepared, isolated and confused when they begin undergraduate studies alongside those who have already been in the course for a year (Hutchinson et al., 2011). Research suggests that, like many VET-University students, these feelings may be compounded by a lack of computer literacy, lack of academic writing ability (Hylton, 2005; Rapley et al., 2006; Wall, Featherson & Brown, 2016) and lack of knowledge about university culture and where to turn to for support (Hutchinson et al., 2011).

Hutchinson et al. (2011) undertook an interpretivist study that explored the EN experience of transition to the second year of a BN program. Data was collected using semi-structured focus group interviews. Lizzio's (2006) FSS model was used as a framework for data analysis. This study found that students struggled to maintain a dual identify (between EN and student RN), felt undervalued in clinical placement despite their clinical experience as ENs, and felt overwhelmed and inadequate in academia. While the proposed research has similarities to this study, there are also significant differences as the participants in the Hutchinson et al. (2011) study had a minimum of 18 months working experience as an EN and the impact of EN clinical experience on the student's transition was not the focus of the research.

Wall et al. (2016) undertook an interpretive descriptive study that aimed to understand the EN transition experience as they made the conversion to RN, having received advanced standing. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews. This study found that these students felt different to other BN students, that they struggled to balance personal, professional

and university requirements and that they struggled with academic requirements. While this study also has similarities to the proposed research, there are significant differences as all seven participants had EN working experience.

Kenny and Duckett's (2006) research found that EN students believe that their clinical-experience as an EN provides a strong foundation for a BN program but little systematic research has been found that explores the impact of prior learning experiences on the transition of DN graduates. Rapley, Davidson, Nathan and Dhaliwal (2008) undertook a quantitative study that sought to determine the relationships between prior education, length of experience as EN and geographical location of the student course completion. Data from existing study records was analysed using descriptive statistics, chi-square analysis and a Mann-Whitney test. This study found no significant difference between the educational qualifications and/or duration of EN clinical experience and the completion of an undergraduate-nursing program. However, all participants in this research had a minimum of 1-year experience working as an EN.

Little research has been found that explores the experience of DN graduates without EN experience or that compares the impact of the presence or absence of EN working experience on transition to university level nursing programs. There has also been little discussion on how the presence or absence of EN experience contributes to the development of successful learner characteristics.

Learning Success at University

There are a number of educational theories that discuss and highlight characteristics of successful learners. Educational theorists suggest that successful learners have cognitive knowledge and participate in cognitive regulation (Bruning, Schraw & Norby, 2011). Students who have cognitive knowledge use strategies to deliberately organise new input and correlate and assimilate information with prior knowledge (Cust, 1995) and are able to demonstrate acquired knowledge, through declarative, procedural or conditional behaviour (Bruning et al., 2011). Students who participate in cognitive regulation set goals, use a range of strategies to

meet these goals and will then self-regulate their learning, through monitoring the effectiveness of these activities (Schraw, 1998; Zimmerman, 2002). Cognitive knowledge and cognitive regulation are considered to be the two components of metacognition (Schraw 1998; Sternberg, 1998; Veenman, Bernadette, Hout-Wolters & Afflerbach, 2006). Metacognition is found to be a predictor of student success (Prins, Veenman & Elshout, 2006) and an important factor in academic achievement (Cust, 1995). Metacognitive awareness is associated with motivated, self-regulated learners (Prins, Veenman & Elshout, 2006). Self-regulating behaviour is suggested to contribute to increased self-satisfaction and motivation to improve methods of learning (Zimmerman, 2002), thereby is thought to lead to perception of competence and promote sustained learning motivation (Bruning et al., 2011).

Educational theorists suggest that learner motivation is a factor that must be considered when discussing why some learners thrive and others struggle in the educational setting (Pintrich, 2003). Learner motivation is theorised to rely on a learner's intrinsic interest, goal orientation and self-efficacy (Zimmerman, 2005). Learners who have an interest in topics are more likely motivated and focus attention on learning the topic (Winne, 2010). Learners who have mastery focused goals, goals focused on increasing competence and understanding, are more likely to be more motivated when compared to those who set performance goals, goals that are focused on achieving set outcomes and demonstrating their level of intelligence (Dweck, 1999). Learners who have strong self-efficacy and believe that they have the capacity to successfully implement behaviour to achieve a goal are more likely to be more motivated, engaged and persistent in learning than those who doubt their abilities (Bandura, 1993; Pintrich, 2003; Pintrich, 1999).

The educational theories of motivation and cognition are supported by Lizzio's (2006) Five Senses of Success (FSS) model. This model presents a conceptual summary of ideas and practices that have been shown to contribute to student satisfaction, engagement and persistence when commencing higher education. This study is based on an assumption that if a student has

senses of capability, connectedness, purpose, resourcefulness and academic culture, then they more likely to have increased satisfaction, engagement and persistence when commencing university (Lizzio, 2006).

There is little research found that has explored the factors that impact on the transition of DN graduates entering BN programs having received significant advanced standing. Most current research has selected participants with EN experience, with a minimum of 1-year of working experience, and little research has explored the educational transition experience of DN graduates with no EN working experience. Many universities now offer advanced standing to DN graduates entering BN programs, regardless of EN registration status and experience, but little research that has been found that considers the impact the presence or absence of clinical experience may have on the educational transition of this cohort, particularly in terms of the demonstration of successful learner characteristics such as motivation and cognitive processes.

This thesis will focus on the educational experiences of students entering baccalaureate-nursing programs having successfully completed a DN. In contrast to the majority of previous research, this study will explore the impact of EN working experience on the learners' educational transition. This impact will be considered through the analysis and comparison of the experiences and learner characteristics of six DN graduates, three with and three without experience working as an EN, who entered a BN program in the second year of the degree. The understandings generated by this research have the potential to benefit future students as they provide information to educators on the impact of prior learning factors on this cohorts transition to higher education, particularly the impact of clinical EN experience. The findings from this research can also be used to assist in the development of targeted infrastructure to support these learners.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This research examined the transitional educational experiences of DN (or equivalent) graduates, with and without clinical experience working as an EN, who entered into the second year of an undergraduate-nursing program. The research investigated a central question, namely:

- *Does experience working as an EN impact on transition into the second year of a BN program?*

The proposed research was entered into on the assumption that it is possible that clinical-working experience as an EN will have an impact on a DN graduate's transition to higher education and that those who do not have EN experience will face greater difficulties in making the transition. This research is exploratory as there is limited understanding relating to the impact of prior clinical experience on the transition of the DN-BN students who enter in the second year of a baccalaureate-nursing program. This research aims to generate new understandings that will have the potential to inform on educational processes and the kind of infrastructure and support required to assist DN graduates entering the second year of a BN program. The following section of this chapter outlines details of how the central question was investigated, including the research framework and an overview of methods for data collection and analysis.

Context of the Research

The research was conducted within a single nursing program at a university located in Melbourne, Victoria. The university offers a direct entry pathway, into the equivalent of the second year of a Bachelor of Nursing (BN program), for students who have satisfactorily completed a Diploma of Nursing at a number of associated VET institutions. The university also offers advanced standing to students who have completed their DN at other non-associated VET institutions, but these individuals are required to apply for advanced standing through the usual advanced standing application process. Advanced standing is offered to students who have

successfully undertaken a DN, regardless of their prior educational grades and the presence or absence of clinical-experience working as an Enrolled Nurse (EN).

Research Design and Methodology

This qualitative research aimed to identify and analyse the impact of the presence or absence of EN working experience on a DN graduate's university transition when entering RN studies. This study utilised an interpretive inquiry methodology. This approach focuses on interpreting the meaning people give to their actions (Smith, 2014), learning about the human experience and understanding the process whereby a phenomena is influenced in a social context (Rowlands, 2005). This research is consistent and compatible with the epistemological and ontological assumptions that "the world and reality are interpreted by people in the context of history and social practices" (Rowlands, 2005, p83). This type of research is embedded within a social constructionist approach and interpretivist framework as it focuses on the meaning attributed by participants and explaining the individual's experience of a process (Creswell, 2014). An individual's transition to higher education is a personal experience and interpretation from the data will recognise the social, cultural and historical context of the participant.

Recruitment Process

Recruitment for this research commenced in Semester 2, 2016. All students (n=186) who commenced the DN-to-BN program at the start of 2016 were invited to participate via email and through advertisements/posts on the university's Learning Management System (LMS). The BN Course Coordinator forwarded the Letter of Introduction (see Appendix A) and Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix B) to all eligible students and academics teaching in the relevant units in the second year of BN program also posted the recruitment information and Participant Information Sheet on the online "Announcements" section on the relevant units on the LMS.

The individuals who volunteered were asked to contact the researcher and answer a number of questions relating to their demographics to ensure they met the selection criteria. Participants were purposefully sampled in an effort to include participants with and without experience working as an EN.

Participants and Sampling

All students (n=186) who entered the DN-BN program in 2016 were invited to participate. It should be noted that a significantly higher number of female compared to male students were enrolled in the program. This skewed enrolment is consistent with current nursing registration trends.

Eligible participants were required to meet the following selection criteria:

- Be over the age of 18;
- Have successfully completed a DN (at a board-recognised VET institute);
- Have been granted the equivalent to one-year of advanced standing/recognition of prior learning for the BN program;
- Had either presence or absence of EN working experience; and
- Have successfully undertaken one semester of the BN program. (This time lapse since commencing was to give students sufficient time to reflect on their initial experience of transition to higher education.)

Seven (7) students contacted the researcher and answered the demographic questions. Of these, six (6) met the selection criteria and were invited to attend a one-on-one interview that utilised Rich Picture strategy. All participants were female, three had worked as an EN and three had not, although they had a range of experiences working in caring roles. Participants were from a range of nationalities and backgrounds and were between 21 and 40 years of age (see demographics table below). It is suggested that this skewed recruitment is related to the demographics of the cohort, as generally there are significantly more female than male nursing students.

Table I: Participant Demographics

Country of Birth:	Age Range:	Highest level of previous education:	Worked as an Enrolled Nurse in Australia.	Other health related work experience:
Australia	25-30years	-Certificate III in Health Administration -Certificate IV in Health Administration (2009) -Diploma of Nursing (2015)	Yes – 11 months.	10 and 8 months years experience working in administration in general practice
Australia	21-25 years	- Diploma of Nursing (2014)	Yes - intermittently for 8 months.	Personal Care Attendant in aged care facility and agency 1:1 shifts.
Australia	21-25 years	- Diploma of Nursing (2015)	Yes, 4 months	Pathology phlebotomist
New Zealand	21-25 years	- Diploma of Nursing (2015)	No	11 months experience working as a Personal Care Attendant supporting adults with autism and individuals with spinal cord injuries in their home.
Japan	35-40 years	-Bachelor Degree in Japan -Certificate III in Australia - Diploma of Nursing (2015)	No	Personal Care Attendant at aged care facility for 3 years
Chile	21-25years	- Diploma of Nursing (2015)	No	2 years 5 months at Personal Care Attendant/Carer

Participants have received the equivalent to 1 year of Bachelor of Nursing (BN) course

and commenced the BN in Semester 1, 2016.

Research Methods

Rich Picture Interview

Data for this research was collected through Rich Picture (RP) sessions/one-on-one interviews. RPs are tools which are said to aid communication and promote explanations of reality and are used to collect diagrammatic and descriptive data (Berg, 2015). This data collection method was selected with an aim to engage participants and promote the capture of rich, meaningful data (Cristanch et al., 2015) while promoting exploration of the “bigger picture” (Bell & Morse, 2012, p1). The use of RPs as a data collection method is thought to provide “redigrammatic means of identifying differing world views with the aim of creating shared understanding” (Berg, 2015, p. 67). This approach promotes reflection and analysis from the participant and aimed to increase the researcher’s understanding of the DN graduate’s experience of transition to BN student and explore the perceived impact of prior experiences, particularly the presence or absence of EN clinical practice, on DN-to-BN transition. The researcher conducted each session via a one-to-one interview, with an aim to promote increased depth of discussion and ensure confidentiality.

During the interview, participants were asked to draw a picture of their transitional experience starting in the BN program and the factors that they felt had impacted their transition. In the second part of the session they were asked to explain the elements and features of their drawing. Unstructured questions were posed throughout the second part/discussion component of the interview, in an effort to promote the provision of in-depth detail. The participants’ descriptions and interpretations of their picture were recorded during the discussion component of the session and have been thematically analysed using Lizzio’s (2006) FSS model as an organisational structure and considering relevant educational theories of learning. Pilot testing was used to trial both the data collection and data analysis methods in order to refine the procedures prior to the commencement of the study.

Steps in the data generation process:

1. Prior to each RP session the researcher provided each participant with a copy of the Participant Information sheet and provided written consent (see Appendix B and C).
2. At the start of each RP session the researcher introduced the data collection method and the research topic and provided the participant with verbal and written instructions. Each participant was asked to reflect on his/her experience starting at university and then asked draw a picture of anything they have done in the past that has impacted their learning and study at university, both positively and negatively. A written copy of instructions was left on the table and 15-20minutes was allocated to the drawing phase of the session.
3. The facilitator elected to wear black during the RP session, as this is suggested to encourage participation and reduce participant distractions (Bell & Morse, 2012). The facilitator left the room during the drawing phase of the session to ensure there is no interaction with the participant over this time, as recommended by Bell and Morse (2012).
4. When the participant had completed their drawing, the participant was asked to describe, discuss and explain their RP to the facilitator. This component of the session was largely unstructured, as recommended by Berg (2015). While the participants spoke mostly uninterrupted, the facilitator asked questions at times, in an effort to encourage elaboration that would lead to a deeper understanding of the student's transitional experience and factors that have impacted their transition.
5. After the session each participant was invited to review transcripts of their own data and to provide feedback on the researcher's interpretations of their experiences.
6. Each session was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim and the RPs drawn in each session were retained and photographed. Pseudonyms were used for purpose of data analysis to protect participant identities and ensure privacy and confidentiality.

Data Analysis and Reporting

Data analysis focused on interpreting the meaning the participants gave to their experience of transition to university and considering the impact of the presence or absence of EN working experience on participants' transition to university and learner characteristics. The RP approach was used as it is thought to permit deep, rich analysis of the topic from the participant and requires a researcher to "analyse the analyses" (Bell, Berg & Morse, 2016, p. 137). Data was reported in case study format. Lizzio's (2006) FSS model provided a framework for an organisational structure of analysis and relevant theories of learning and learner characteristics were considered. The experiences and characteristics of participants, with and without EN experience, were then compared and analysed and common themes and differences were identified.

It is important to note that DN students have two significant transitions to make; one is to adjust to university learning environment and the other is to clinical practice as an emerging RN. While both are highly significant, this study will focus on learner adjustment to the university environment. While transition to clinical practice is mentioned as relevant to transition, the experience of DN graduates transitioning to clinical RN students and graduates will not be the focus of this study.

Ethical Considerations

This research was undertaken following gaining permission from the National Head of School at the university and formal ethical approval from the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Ethics Committee. The researcher works at the university and teaches into the BN program. To avoid a conflict of interest, participants were invited to participate by the BN Course Coordinator and via Learning Management System (LMS) forums. Participation in the research was voluntary and participants were informed that their decision to participate or not to participate would not impact their educational grades or course progress. The

researcher was not teaching the participants at the time of data collection, transcription or analysis. Participants were asked to provide informed consent and were given opportunity to view and provide feedback on the transcription of their interview and the analysis.

Pseudonyms were used for data transcription and analysis to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Chapter Four - Findings

This chapter reports the outcomes of the six (6) one-on-one rich picture interviews, in which participants described their transition experience from VET/DN/EN studies to University/BN/RN studies, commencing in the second year of the program. There was a focus on the extent to which prior experiences, particularly EN clinical practice, had contributed to the transition and the development of learner characteristics. The analysis of the interviews is reported using the themes identified in Lizzio's (2006) Five Senses of Success (FSS) as an organisational structure. Lizzio's (2006) FSS model and relevant educational theories of metacognition and motivation were used to analyse the cases before the cases were compared

This chapter is divided into two sections:

- Section one presents each participant's account of their transition in a case study format organised according to Lizzio's (2006) FSS themes. This is followed by a reflective summary at the end of each case study that considers relevant educational theories to analyse and interpret their narrative.
- Section two makes comparisons across the six stories in order to identify more generally what has been learnt.

Section 1 - Six Narratives of Transition into RN Studies

The participant narratives of six DN-graduates who entered a BN program in the second year of the degree will now be presented. Each participant's experience of transition to university, and factors that they identified as having an impact on their transition, will be outlined. Cases will be organised according to Lizzio's (2006) FSS themes and relevant educational theories will be considered in the interpretation of each case.

Table II: Summary of Participants' Clinical Experience

DN-BN Students <u>with</u> EN clinical experience	DN-BN Students <u>without</u> EN clinical experience
<p>1. Lisa:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 months EN experience • 10 year and 8 months experience in health administration. 	<p>1. Zara</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No EN experience • 11 months experience as PCA
<p>2. Jayne</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 months EN experience • Approx. 5 months experience as PCA 	<p>2. Miku</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No EN experience • 3 years experience as PCA
<p>3. Bianca</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 months EN experience • Approx. 1 year experience as phlebotomist 	<p>3. Ana</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No EN experience • 2 years & 5 months experience as PCA

Lisa's Story

Background Information

Lisa is a mature aged Australian student undertaking a Bachelor of Nursing (BN) at a university in Melbourne. Lisa received credit for the equivalent of one (1) year of the BN program after she successfully completed a Diploma of Nursing (DN). Since completing her DN, Lisa had been working part time as an EN and part time as a Medical Receptionist. Prior to registering as an EN, Lisa had successfully undertaken Certificates II and IV in Health Administration and had been working as an administration officer in a General Practice setting for over 10 years. Lisa had 11 months working experience as an EN at the time of interview.

Sense of Capability

Lisa reported that her study and work experiences have helped to prepare her to undertake the BN. She felt that *“that is the way the education system is; you sort of start at the bottom and work your way up”*. Lisa related that the DN provided her with a foundation of nursing knowledge. She explained *“that’s kinda like the foundation and now that I’m doing my degree it’s kinda building on that...And I’ve even noticed that with some of the subjects in second year, and I imagine again next in third year, it’s, you know, developing and building on it again. So I think that’s really helped to have my foundation with my*

diploma". She credited her experience as a medical receptionist and an EN as having helped her to feel that she is capable of juggling all that is required of her at university. She also reported that her experience as an EN means that she can *"really relate, like, what I'm learning about to what I'm doing in the workplace"* and that it also means she has experience that means she is a better, more well-rounded nurse *"I've had good exposure to just personable skills, how to talk to people particularly when they are sick. I mean it's one thing to learn about it in class but it's a totally different thing to do it in practice. And I mean we do get that experience in placement but I find that outside of that, I'm a bit more of a well-rounded nurse so to speak, and that's because of those extra jobs."* While Lisa reported she has *"kinda just learned"* how to study, she described moments when she felt overloaded, stressed, overwhelmed and challenged. She reported a *"fear of the unknown"* and moments of self-doubt; *"Like, am I ever going to be able to do it? What's referencing? What's academic writing? It's almost overwhelming and I still find it quite challenging"*.

Sense of Connectedness

Lisa described a feeling of connection with the multi-disciplinary staff and patients whom she interacted with in her roles as EN and Medical Receptionist: *"I think I'm really lucky...like, it's really benefitted me because I've got the opportunity to ask doctors about things, ask nurses about things, ask patients about things."* Lisa also described a sense of community at the university, *"You are not alone. You've got 300 plus other students in the same sorta boat as you. I think that helps."* Interestingly, she reported that she felt different and distant from many students, like she is a lot older and more mature; something she puts down to age and life experience *"I feel like I'm a lot older than a lot of the students. Well, I guess that's a bit of a generalization. I mean there are a lot of mature aged students in the course but I see some of the younger students, you know, be really snappy...And I think maybe just my age and life experience has helped me deal with that a lot better."* Lisa

highlighted that she has sacrificed her connections with friends to undertake the BN, explaining that lot of time she would normally spend socialising with friends she has instead spent at home studying “*The last two weekends I’ve been sitting at home on a Saturday night writing an assignment and I’m like ‘Ugh, this is so not me!’ . This is not what I normally do but that is just the sacrifices that you’ve got to make*”.

Sense of Purpose

Lisa reported that she “*wanted to move up the ladder*” so she moved from medical reception, to undertake the DN and enroll as an EN and she now is undertaking the BN. She explained she is at university to learn about health and nursing and describes a high level of interest in the new knowledge that she is gaining from subjects that she is undertaking, “*I think back to when I first started nursing. I had no idea about anatomy or medications or, you know, even just health and ethics. All that stuff I didn’t know and that’s one thing that I’ve learnt and I see as a positive thing with doing my studies. It’s kinda why we are here.*” Lisa indicated that she believed that, once she completes her studies, she has a “*window of opportunity*” waiting for her and reports that, “*there’s a lot more opportunities for me, as opposed to if I didn’t complete my studies*”. She also outlined a financial incentive. “*With more knowledge you get better jobs and better pay*”. While she described many sacrifices, including reduced socialising, reduced income and the amount of time she needs to spend studying, she explained “*when I am sitting there thinking about ‘Gosh, I could be at work right now, I could be earning money’ I think ‘Hold on. Think of the bigger picture’. I mean, this time in 3-5 years down the track you will be doing less work and earning more pay so just keep going!*”

Sense of Resourcefulness

Lisa described her past experiences as helping her balance and “juggle” her student responsibilities, *“I think, like my two roles are, I’m a medical receptionist and an EN so I’m trying to just juggle that alone I think it’s a big positive because it helps me juggle my studies and assignments and, you know, deadlines and group work and all that sort of thing”*. Lisa reported her main source of information for helping her university as the *“internet. You know, library, everything. I mean that’s really helped. If I’m unsure of anything, it’s probably the first place I go to, is to jump online and try to look it up and learn about it. And I think that’s really helped with...my studies. Definitely.”* As well as Internet resources, she has accessed the Academic Skills and library services offered by the university *“Academic skills have really helped me a lot this year...have been really helpful”*. She reported going to teachers for help when she needs it and also credited her sister, who is a lecturer, for helping and supporting her learn to write and reference academically.

Sense of Academic Culture

Lisa reported that the DN provided her with a foundation of knowledge and that she is now developing and building on this knowledge in the BN. *“The diploma is really quite basic. It’s the foundations of nursing. Um. But yet, the Bachelor has probably given me a lot more knowledge, which I think it’s meant to (laughs)”* and highlighted the differences in the academic skills requirements: *“What’s referencing? What’s academic writing? It’s almost overwhelming and I still find it quite challenging”*.

Reflective Commentary

Lisa reported that she finds the academic requirements of university challenging. She explained that she sometimes doubts her ability to achieve the academic requirements but also indicated that she was confident in her ability to access the resources required to help her

meet requirements. She believes she “*just kinda learned*” how to find resources. She reported that she has accessed a range of resources and supports while studying the BN. Lisa described confidence in her vocational ability, crediting her EN and Medical Receptionist experiences as helping her develop this confidence, and described the application of newly learnt theories in her clinical practice. Lisa noted that her age and life experience had helped her to cope with the stresses of university, explaining that in this way she had an advantage over many students. She reported a strong connection with her inter-disciplinary colleagues and demonstrated an understanding of the culture of university. Lisa explained that she is motivated to complete the BN as she believes this degree will improve employment and financial prospects available to her.

Lisa’s narrative reveals that she has a strong vocational self-efficacy and variable academic self-efficacy. While Lisa expressed doubt relating to her academic ability, she also revealed a metacognitive awareness, describing her ways of accessing resources and sacrificing time in order to achieve at university, and describing her application of newly learnt concepts in clinical practice. Lisa reported an intrinsic interest in the course content, with perceived recognition of the relevance of her university studies to her clinical practice, and described mastery and performance goals, relating to the application of knowledge and the increased employment and financial opportunities. Lisa reported that she believed her EN working experience had assisted her develop skills and apply knowledge in a way that positively impacted her transition to the BN course.

Jayne’s Story

Background Information

Jayne is an Australian student undertaking a Bachelor of Nursing (BN) at a university in Melbourne. Jayne received credit for the equivalent of one (1) year of the BN program after she successfully completed a Diploma of Nursing (DN) at the end of 2014/start of 2015.

Jayne started working as a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) in an aged care facility at the end of 2014. Since receiving her Enrolled Nurse (EN) registration she had been working as an EN at the same facility,. At the time of interview, Jayne had been working as an EN for eight months.

Sense of Capability

Jayne reported that she believes that the DN provided her with a good basis/foundation of knowledge for the BN but reports that she had found *“it quite hard to just settle in”* to university. Jayne explained that she had found the essay writing and referencing particularly difficult, *“I wasn’t used to the whole essay and formatting and I found it quite hard because in the, um, diploma the referencing was different...I didn’t learn anything about that in the diploma so it was all really new to me in transitioning and I found that quite hard”*, although she explains that she is now refining her researching and referencing skills, *“Like in terms of how to research things. I mean I wasn’t used to the databases. I wasn’t really aware of them and the APA referencing....which I found to be challenging but also really good because I’ve found that it’s built my skills in terms of researching. Like at the start, when I was doing the researching subject I was like, ‘this is really silly’ and then, by the end, I was, ‘I understand why I do this’, and it helps me massively with all my other subjects because now I know how to actually research things”*. She described moments of feeling overwhelmed by the content of the BN program *“...just really overwhelming because it’s just like “oh my god”. Like, you’ve just to inhale this information and just put it in your brain and make sure it stays there”*, and described moments when she doubted her ability as a university student. *“Half the time, as a student I think, I don’t know about other people, but I find that I’m like, ‘am I doing the right thing?’. Like ‘Am I, do I know enough? Am I up to standards?’. And then I’m like “No, I’m doing good”. Other days, its like self-doubt and I’m like, “Oh my god, I don’t know enough!” and there is so much information and knowledge I need to know but I don’t.”*

Despite these academic doubts, Jayne explained that her experience working as a PCA and EN has meant that she is more confident in her nursing ability as she has been able to practice nursing skills, particularly communication skills, *“Working in aged care facilities...I’ve really enjoyed being able to practice the skills that I have learnt in my diploma, even just basic communication skills. I find that when I was doing my diploma, you’d go months without doing placement. So you wouldn’t necessarily lose them, you’d kinda, just, I don’t know...I find that you need to continually practice those skills”*. She also highlighted that positive feedback in a recent BN placement had also improved her confidence in her vocational abilities. *“I had really good feedback from my buddy nurse and that has kinda inspired me. I’m like, “Oh, they think I’m good so maybe, you know...(I am).”*

Sense of Connectedness

Jayne identified two fellow DN –BN students with whom she has strong connections. She reported, *“We kinda just became best friends, all us three, so we did our diploma together and what I found really got me through was having them there to support me...I mean, you’re experiencing the same thing as me so “it’s okay. We can do this”*. She explained that one of these friends is now in (the equivalent to) the third year of the BN program and that she and her other friend have entered (the equivalent of) the second year of the BN together. Jayne reported that these friends continue to support each other in the BN program and she indicated that this support that has really helped her transition to the BN *“I’m really lucky because I do have __, who’s also going through the same thing as me, so we could kinda help each other through it. And our friend __ who could explain things to us coz she’s already done the subjects as well so she’d be like “okay, this is what the main thing is about” and we’d be like “oh, okay. That makes sense.””*.

Sense of Purpose

Jayne reported that when she didn't get the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) she needed to enter the BN program she decided to enrol into the DN, as she *"always knew that I wanted to do nursing and I've wanted to do it for a while..."*. Despite enjoying working in Aged Care, Jayne explained, *"it's not where I want to end up. I want to keep going further."* and, after taking a year off, she enrolled into the BN. Jayne demonstrated a high level of interest in a range of nursing environments. She animatedly described each of her DN placements (when she was a student Enrolled Nurse/EN) as *"really, really interesting"*. She described her experience watching an abdominal surgery take place and explained, *"it was just really interesting. I was just amazed by it. And it's kinda made me...it's given me an interest in theatre and the functioning of the body"*. Jayne reported that her experiences on placements have made her want to continue studying. *"My placements – they were really good experience and kind of guided the way that I kinda of viewed nursing and how I've come here, and just the experiences that I got out of those placements, um, made me want to continue studying."* She also explained that, while she is not sure which area she would like to work in, she aims to work at a particular public hospital in Melbourne at the end of her degree. She described a BN placement at this facility and reports that at the placement, *"I had my buddy nurse told me, he said, "You should work here! You are, are good enough to work here. You know your stuff so you should" and I was like "Oh.' You know, 'that's nice" and so it's kinda inspired me...Like – I can work there and that's where I want to go. I want to end up working at __. So I know where I want to go and I'm working toward that goal."* Jayne also described long-term goals of nursing overseas, in Asia and Europe, in the future. *"I eventually want to travel and do nursing in Asia and Europe and experience the way that they do it. Yeah. Compared to here, and to use my knowledge to help over there"*.

Sense of Resourcefulness

Jayne reported that her experience working as a PCA and EN has helped her at university. She explained these experiences have helped her with *“my time management. Kind of juggling things. Um. Because 2-3 years ago I would have never been able to work as much as I do while studying and maintaining my life and still doing all my other stuff. But now I feel like it’s helped me to be able to study while I work and do everything.”* While Jayne was aware of the services and supports the university offers, she explained that she hasn’t really accessed them, instead drawing on the support and assistance of her friends or discussing assessment tasks with the teachers if need be. *“I know that they (the university) do offer services. I haven’t really used them. I find that what has helped me is when the teachers, kind of, they do up the assistance things and they break things down”*.

Sense of Academic Culture

Jayne explained that while the DN has provided her with good foundation knowledge, she felt that what she has learned in the BN is more in depth and theoretical and that she is gaining much more knowledge, *“I found that, from my Diploma, I already had quite a good basis and majority of the subjects that I had already done so I had quite a good foundation knowledge. And then everything else that I was learning was just more in depth and more theoretical component”*. She explained that the learning style is also different in the BN, with a more independent approach, which she likes. Jayne reported that she is *“starting to get used to the way things are run”* at university, particularly the researching, writing and referencing components which were not part of the DN program. While Jayne initially thought that the referencing and researching requirements were *“silly”*, and explained that this is something she initially found difficult, now that she has these skills and knowledge she understands why this is so important. She also reported that asking teachers to help her interpret assessments has helped her to better understand assessment requirements.

Reflective Commentary

Jayne described moments of self-doubt while undertaking the BN, particularly in terms of processing new knowledge and learning and implementing academic requirements, but she reported that as she learns, her confidence in her academic ability is increasing. This indicates increasing academic self-efficacy as well as demonstrating cognitive awareness. Jayne described strong connections with two former DN and reported these friends have helped her meet university requirements. Jayne did not mention connections with BN peers or interdisciplinary workmates. Jayne reported that her EN and PCA experience has helped her cope with and manage university requirements and that her clinical experience (EN, PCA and placements) have helped her practice her skills and increase her confidence in her nursing ability. She identified a range of personal and vocational mastery goals, describing a strong desire to be a nurse and to help people. These findings indicate that Jayne is a highly motivated metacognitive learner. She demonstrated cognitive awareness and regulation, increasing academic self-efficacy and high vocational self-efficacy.

Bianca's Story

Background Information

Bianca is an Australian student undertaking a Bachelor of Nursing (BN) at a university in Melbourne. Bianca received credit for the equivalent of one (1) year of the BN program after she successfully completed a Diploma of Nursing (DN). Upon completing the DN Bianca struggled to find work as an EN but instead started working as a phlebotomist for a large pathology company. At the time of the interview, Bianca had been working as an EN in an aged care facility for nearly four months.

Sense of Capability

Bianca reported that she had struggled in some aspects of her university transition, particularly the academic requirements, *“Well, the biggest thing was the essays so I previously haven’t ever really learnt how to do an academic essay so in the transition that was the hardest thing...it’s hard when you don’t know what you’re doing. And you’re sort of fumbling along”*. She reported that she was surprised at the challenges she had faced, and explained that she had thought, *“I’ve done the Diploma, I know what I’m doing...(but university) it’s more challenging than I thought it would be”*. Bianca indicated a belief that the students who undertook the first year of the BN have an advantage in terms of academic knowledge. *“I think that the students that started in first year are ahead in certain areas. They are more academic than people that started in second year. I think missing the first year, um, was a bit detrimental, so I think that they learnt a lot more in the first year than they realize.”* Despite a lack of confidence in her academic abilities, she described confidence in her clinical knowledge. *“So I know the information but I can’t put it into writing...and like last semester...in one of my subjects I needed 70% on the exam to pass and I got it because I know what I’m doing but I just can’t do it in the essay. So yeah. It’s a bit frustrating.”* Bianca also reported confidence in her nursing skills. *“I think that doing the diploma helped me with clinical skills a lot. I think that I’ve got a bit of a head start than other students”*. She explained that her EN experience has improved her vocational ability. *“I think that it’s just helped me to become a better nurse and be able to do basic nursing”*. She reported that her experience as an EN has helped her to process and apply concepts learnt at university. *“It’s made me able to learn in a subject at uni and then go to work that week and be able to see what I’ve learnt coz it all, even acute things...you can see the illnesses or things happening, and you can see it in them. So yeah, I can just learn it...just putting all my knowledge into practice”*.

Sense of Connectedness

Bianca reported that she has asked other students for help with some academic skills at times but she did not indicate a close sense of connectedness with her peers. She did not mention the staff at the university but highlighted that her work as a phlebotomist had increased her understanding of the roles of the inter-disciplinary team. *“I think that it’s given me a lot of insight about what happens in other areas of healthcare, so not just a nursing base focus”*. Bianca also reported that her experience as an EN has meant that she is better able to liaise with, and learn from, the inter-disciplinary team, something that she explained has helped her with her studies. *“Like I’ve learnt, while I’ve been working, what they are and see different things and be able to liaise with registered nurses and doctors and care staff and learnt how to have a relationship with residents and patients, which I think is really helpful and I think has helped me a lot in my acute placement as well. I’ve been able to see both sides of nursing.”*

Sense of Purpose

Bianca described a sense of interest in the tests she sees being done in the clinical setting as a phlebotomist and reported an interest in learning more about medications and more about exacerbation of acute conditions. Bianca explained that she wanted to use knowledge learnt in the BN to help in her place of work. *“...just learn it and then I have increased my knowledge so I can help them (residents in aged care facility) more”*.

Sense of Resourcefulness

Bianca reported that her experience as an EN has helped her be more organised both at university and in general. *“Um, I think it’s made me more organised...(working as a nurse) made me realize that they have to be organised.”* While Bianca has accessed some of the university resources, she expressed disappointment at the Academic Support services. *“I*

don't think academic skills really helped because I went and saw them last semester and they said that one of my essays was good and I failed it!" Bianca mentioned that she speaks to other students when trying to find out things and says that sometimes she finds it helpful to talk to her mother, who is a midwife, as she has some general nursing knowledge. *"It helps being, having (sic) someone to talk to about things that have been happening and kind of telling her about situations that I've been in and her explaining why, that those things would be happening"*.

Sense of Academic Culture

Bianca reported an awareness of the difference in the approach to learning between the DN and BN, although indicated that she did not necessarily agree with this approach. *"We got tested on sterile wound dressings and anything that we learnt we got tested on but in the bachelor we don't get tested on it unless you do it on placement. If you don't do it then no-one knows if you can do it right or not."* She also recognised the increase in academic requirements and increased depth of theoretical knowledge required. *"I learnt so much in the Diploma but it was only basic knowledge and then coming into the Bachelor you learn a lot more detail about why things are happening....I don't know how to explain it, but I feel like I've learnt a lot more in this past year but I've already had that background knowledge to kind of add onto my knowledge"*.

Reflective Commentary

Bianca reported ongoing low academic self-efficacy, describing doubt in her ability to undertake the academic requirements of the BN. She reported that she had attempted to access resources but did not find that this helped her academic ability, indicating an attempt, but perceived failure, to cognitively regulate her knowledge. Bianca described vocational self-efficacy; reporting her DN and EN clinical experience means that she has confidence in

her clinical skills. She also described a level of cognitive awareness when she reported confidence in her ability to practice and apply newly learnt BN theoretical knowledge. Bianca did not demonstrate a strong sense of connection with her peers or staff at the university, but highlighted the perceived benefits of a connection with the inter-disciplinary team in the clinical setting. Bianca reports she is undertaking the BN to help the residents at her place of work, indicating a mastery goal, but did not discuss any other goals or motivation for undertaking the BN. These findings indicate that Bianca has a level of cognitive awareness but struggles to participate in cognitive regulation. While Bianca has vocational self-efficacy and is motivated to “help people” where she works in aged care, she currently has low academic self-efficacy and lack of clear future goals. These factors may have contributed to a lower level of motivation and confidence in her ability to undertake the BN program. Bianca reported that she believed her phlebotomist and EN working experience had promoted increased interest in nursing theory and had also assisted her application of theoretical concepts however she perceived she was also disadvantaged, compared to BN students who had not undertaken the DN, in terms of academic preparation.

Zara’s Story

Background Information

Zara was born in New Zealand and was undertaking a Bachelor of Nursing (BN) at a university in Melbourne. Zara received credit for the equivalent of one (1) year of the BN program after she successfully completed a Diploma of Nursing (DN) at the end of 2015. Zara left school at 16 years of age to pursue a role in hairdressing. She was employed as a hairdresser for five years, in both Australia and New Zealand, before deciding she wanted a change. Zara began working as part-time waitress and volunteering with clients with Autism once a week. Zara’s volunteering experience meant she became interested in helping others,

so she enrolled in the DN and then the BN course. Zara did not have experience working as an EN at the time of interview.

Sense of Capability

Zara left school at 16 years of age, something that she reported caused her to often query her level of confidence in her learning and academic abilities. She explained that prior to university she had *“never seen an essay before”* and that she had *“no idea”* how to write an essay and how to reference. *“Not really knowing how to do any kind of academic writing at all. Um. No referencing. No essay writing and my maths skills is not terribly that great so that is something I have also had to work on, on top of your normal workload.”* Zara indicated that she felt she has had to put a lot more time into her BN studies than other students. *“I think it’s more, um, I do take a lot longer than other people so I kinda, um, find that I still struggle with that”*. She also explained that she had found the increased depth of information challenging. Zara reported that one of the other difficult things about studying the BN is the constant struggle she has to balance her time between study and work and money and that, at times, she felt overwhelmed and she wanted to quit studying and go back to working full-time. *“This is meant to be a balancing thing that is kinda like weighing up work and money and then uni work, because I do know that I need a bit more time for uni work but then I still need money... Because I sometimes think, you know, it’s too much. I’m trying to balance this, you know, why don’t I just work full time?”* Zara reported that she feels none of her previous experiences have prepared her for the requirements of university and explained that she is constantly *“learning as I go”*.

Sense of Connectedness

Zara credited her sister for supporting her in her transition to the BN, particularly with academic writing. *“My sister’s doing the Bachelor of Psychology so I had that there because*

she was sorta helping me. She taught me how to reference, I mean I'm still not perfect, but she did sit down, when she had the time to sit down, and go through that with me. Um. She's kind of my support." Zara also highlighted the support her dad, who is a Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance (MICA) paramedic, has provided her, both financially and mentally. Zara explained that he is available to answer questions and also gives her confidence in her ability to study because of his belief in her. Zara lives with her partner's parents. She explained that, while this allows her more financial freedom and time to spend studying, she is still adjusting to a perceived lack of independence and increased travel time (they live a number of hours from the university and her workplace). Zara did not mention connections with peers or colleagues.

Sense of Purpose

Zara reported that her interest in nursing began when she started caring for people with autism. *"People with autism are very, very intelligent, just all in their different ways and they just struggle communicating. So I find this very rewarding. See and even now I live in Seymour and I travel 2 hours to work there because I find it rewarding. Not just, coz the pay isn't that great, but just on a whole other level. Just. Does that make sense?"* Zara explained her experience as a carer inspired her to become a nurse; she clarified *"it made me decide that's what I wanted to do. Like, I wanted to help people but in a different way."* She also credited her experience caring for adults with spinal injuries as piquing her interest in nursing. *"They've got catheters and bowel care and things like that and relates back to nursing as well, and so, you know and medications and things like that, so that's, you know, has helped me on my journey to want to be an RN even more"*.

Zara reported that, although she has times when she wants to withdraw from the BN program, she tries to *"keep thinking of the end goal and what I want to do in the long run"*. She explained that her sister helps her remember to focus on this. *"She'll remind me to think*

of the end goal, as this is the end goal (indicated drawing of a dollar sign – see appendix E.4), and yeah, but being able to care for people in a different way than what I do at the moment in my current jobs”, and that her placement experiences and a recent hospital admission also remind her “so when I was in there the nurses and that were really lovely and it just kind of reminded me that that’s where I want to be. But the placement also does that as well.” Zara explained that she decided to continue her nursing studies, after she completed the DN, as she believes further study will lead to increased financial gain and increased job opportunities “so the reason why, instead of just working as an EN that I decided to do the RN was mainly because of the more money in the long run and the more job opportunities that came with that, as opposed to...because you are still in the same setting and you are still caring for the patient in the same way but you are just about to do more, you’re able to earn more money, have more job opportunities as opposed an EN”.

Sense of Resourcefulness

Zara reported that no particular previous experiences helped her in her transition to the BN program. She explained that as she spends time studying at university she was getting better at juggling work, money and study and reported that she was constantly trying to balance financial pressures with academic pressures. *“Probably just the longer I am at uni the better I am at balancing that. There was a time when I was at uni and I was working too much. Um. And then. See I’ve never really worked too much because I’ve had this “living with people thing” that makes it easier but I think at the moment I’m wanting to work more. But I can’t. And I know I can’t until I finish the exams, so this is currently my little tipping scales. Coz I currently can’t work too much coz then my uni work will go downhill and if I do too much uni work, well there’s no such thing as too much uni work, but if you, if I don’t work enough for me to live then that then runs downhill”.* Zara did not identify any university

resources that she had accessed to help her transition to university, although she highlighted that she regularly accesses the support offered by family members.

Sense of Academic Culture

Zara recognised the difference in knowledge requirements in the BN compared to the DN *“at the time I found it (the DN) very hard. Which is kind of funny coz then when I look back I think it looks really easy. Yeah. I found it good. Just found kinda that base knowledge. Like you don’t really know every little detail about something, like asthma. They (in the BN) go through it...without going right down to a cellular level”*. She highlighted the differences in academic writing and referencing requirements at a university level.

Reflective Commentary

Zara reported that she still doubted her ability to undertake the academic requirements of the BN program despite reporting attempts to improve academic ability, indicating low academic self-efficacy but some cognitive awareness. She also demonstrated signs of low self-efficacy in terms of her ability to manage work, life and study requirements although she reports her ability to manage requirements has improved since starting university. Zara did not discuss connections with peers or inter-disciplinary team members, although she reported a strong reliance on family connection. Zara identified an interest in nursing studies that was initiated by her experience working as a carer. She identified a mastery goal to “help people” and a number of performance goals, including a perceived increase in financial and employment opportunities. The findings indicate that Zara is an interested, motivated learner, with both mastery and performance goals. While Zara demonstrated some cognitive awareness and knowledge and attempted to participate in cognitive self-regulation, she continued to demonstrate low academic self-efficacy and a lack of confidence in her abilities. Interestingly, unlike many participants with EN experience, Zara did not express confidence

in her vocational ability and did not discuss the application of learnt theoretical knowledge in practice although she indicated that her caring experience is what interested her in pursuing a nursing career.

Miku's Story

Background Information

Miku is a mature aged, Japanese student currently undertaking a Bachelor of Nursing (BN) at a university in Melbourne. Miku received credit for the equivalent of one (1) year of the BN program after she successfully completed a Diploma of Nursing in 2015. Miku had previously completed a Certificate III course that meant she was able to work as a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) in an Aged Care Facility. Before this Miku lived in Japan, her country of birth, where she successfully completed tertiary level studies. Miku had no experience working as an EN at the time of interview.

Sense of Capability

Miku reported her PCA and DN experiences have helped her undertake the BN. She explained both these experience have helped her improve her English language ability. *“I started to study nursing...the first time I met native speaker, like young native speaker to study together. At that time I didn't stay with them so much...I'm still afraid to interact with them so I always stay with international student (laughs) but I think, um, the lecture and the like studying of assignments, listening, reading, I started...to get a lot of knowledge in English”*. Despite these experiences, Miku explained that she struggled with the academic requirements of the BN. *“What the most I am struggling is the assignment, because in the diploma they didn't require so much things....when I came to Bachelor everything had to be done academically and I had no idea at all. So it give me hard work to get used to and it is still so hard to do research and it takes my time a lot to research to get the reference (sic)”*.

Miku also reported that she did not believe she would not have been able to balance BN study and working as a PCA, and described the significant study effort required when starting the BN. *“I just imaged before I go to the Bachelor that maybe if I keep working I cannot catch up with the classes so I saved money and stopped working....The first semester I really, really focus for study. So this means a lot of worry about studying and reading and assignment and I stay in front of the computer a long time”*. Miku described stress because of finances, study, exams and assignments, *“A lot of things I have to deal with like financial. Study more harder. Exam incoming. So I feel like a little bit over pressured now”* but also explained that she feels as though she is studying, practicing and growing in knowledge and confidence. *“Diploma – I understand I can pass but in here (BN)...I have to understand I have to explain, so I feel like, yeah, this knowledge and practice is getting mine (sic)...so more study and more practice and I get more confident”*. She also described a new way of thinking. *“Maybe you don’t need to the everything the perfect (sic) so if not so important maybe you can just pass?!”* something that she said had helped to reduce her stress and pressure to do everything perfectly.

Sense of Connectedness

Miku explained that her co-workers, where she worked as a PCA, supported her and that they helped her understand what she needed to do to navigate the Australian education system. She reported that she was nervous about starting the BN but was surprised by the large number of mature students in the BN program. *“And Bachelor, I really, really afraid to study with younger generation, but bachelor was amazing like many mature student and they give like um, no. My eye was opened”*. She described connections with a close group of peers but also with the other BN students in general. *“I have a strong, strong connected group but on the other hand many people helping each other. Even thought like a native speaker I was a little, um, difficult to make friends and communicate but in bachelor like in tutorial we make group and even though they native, I started to like to, not friend but help each other*

more than before.” She described a sense of connection and appreciation to Australia for allowing her to study “I really thank the Australian government (laughs). In my country if I study at this, my age, it is ashamed and the government doesn’t encourage to support adults to study and so if you are not rich I think it is very hard to keep studying. But in here government support us, yes people, a lot so without government support I think it’s very hard, for financially and its encouraged.” Although Miku reported strong connections at university and country, she also described the reduced/widening distance in the connection she feels with her family and friends and the guilt she feels because she does not have time or money to write to them or go and see them because of her university commitments. “My friend before I started to study I could meet my friend only we have. I have money but too little to go out with my friend. But it is less meeting with my friend and I don’t have so much time with my friend...before I come to the bachelor I try to go back to my country every year but once studied I don’t have enough money to go back and then enough time because of the placement. So I gave up to go back to my country.”

Sense of Purpose

Miku explained that, while she enjoyed working in aged care, she didn’t want to keep working as a PCA as she felt this would be too difficult physically in the long-term. “I can’t keep doing PCA because of physically. If I getting old I think it’s very hard to keep.” She reported that her PCA experience encouraged her interest in nursing and that her co-workers and the facility residents helped motivate her to study. “They are very encouraging. I think I could get good relationship with resident and the residents remind, not remind me, they say, “oh you will be good nurse. You will be good nurse” and so it was my motivation to study, to keep studying”. Miku described her first experience in a hospital, when she undertook placement as an Enrolled Nurse (EN) student, as what made her realise that she would like more responsibility and that encouraged her interest in nursing academically. “This is a first time I experienced in hospital. So this is placement. Ah, I was so healthy I never been to the

hospital even in my country. But, so this experience was very...it's very first time for me to (see) what is a hospital and what is they doing and I was interested in the hospital setting care but I like nursing home as well but this completely different and I started interested in the nursing, like more academically. Then it helped when I study and go to hospital - it makes sense. The study makes sense in the placement.” Miku described a “strong future vision” of being a nurse and indicated that she believed that she has a bright future as a nurse ahead of her: *“This is my motivation in the future. I can, I will be a nurse so I have a strong future vision and a bright future”*. She also described a sense of vocational purpose. *“I wanted to develop more technical and medical, kind of technically, and I wanted to develop more knowledge as well to work efficiently (as a nurse)”*.

Sense of Resourcefulness

Miku explained that, since commencing the BN, she has struggled with referencing and has to spend a lot of time and hard work researching and sitting in front of the computer. She reported she had accessed university support to help her in her transition to university. She mentioned Academic skills support, lecturers, tutors and friends as offering support that has helped with her BN studies. Miku indicated that without this support she would not have passed her subjects to date. *“I started seeking help. And I can get the very good support from the uni. In the diploma I could do it. I don't need very, a lot of help. Just I need hints or something but in bachelor, without help from academic, lecturer, tutor and friends, without help I cannot, I think I cannot pass the subject... And academic skill is awesome for my English and I didn't learn so much how to write essay so I have study like elemental. So without their support I never know how to write essay. Still I have to more improve but they give me the basics and they support my development.”*

Sense of Academic Culture

Miku reported that there is a different academic culture in the BN when compared to the DN. She explained the BN has more mature aged students and she feels that all of the students work together to support each other, even if they are not friends. She explained that she has learnt more in the BN, in terms of general nursing knowledge and practical skills. Miku mentioned the difference in academic culture between Japan and Australia and explained that the BN students in Australia are asked to describe and demonstrate their opinions, something that Miku reported as finding very difficult as it is a very different approach to her studies in Japan. *“Here, if I have to understand I have to explain so I feel like yeah, this knowledge and practice is getting mine.”* She also highlighted the difference in academic requirements. *“When I came to bachelor everything had to be done academically and I had no idea at all. So it give me hard work to get used to and it is still so hard to do research and it takes my time a lot to research to get the reference”*. Miku credited the Australian Government for the general academic culture in Australia and noted the support of her being able to study at a mature age as *“in my country, if I study at this, my age, it is ashamed (sic)...but in here (Australia) the government support us, yes people...it’s encouraged”*.

Reflective Commentary

Miku showed cognitive awareness and cognitive regulatory ability when she described the process of studying and accessing a range of resources to help her achieve and learn at university. While Miku reported that she found the transition from DN to BN challenging, she described increasing academic self-efficacy and confidence in her English abilities and also described the sense that she had learnt and developed a lot since starting the course, indicating cognitive awareness. Miku reported she had originally had high academic achievement performance goals but that she had reduced to focus to “just passing” to reduce

her stress levels. Miku reported a strong interest in nursing, crediting her PCA and DN experiences for this, and her comments indicate she has academic performance goals and a desire to master the theoretical nursing concepts learnt at university. Miku has accessed a range of personal and university resources to help her meet academic requirements, demonstrating metacognitive processing. Miku indicated a belief that she has a strong, bright nursing future ahead of her and reported strong peer and work colleague connections. These findings indicate that Miku is a highly motivated learner, with performance and mastery goals, who participates in metacognitive processes.

Ana's Story

Background Information

Ana was born in Chile and is undertaking a Bachelor of Nursing (BN) at a university in Melbourne, Australia. Ana received credit for the equivalent of one (1) year of the BN program after she successfully completed an Australian Diploma of Nursing in 2015. Ana completed high school and ballet studies in Chile and has experience working in a hotel. Ana also has over two years of PCA experience but, interestingly, did not mention this experience at the time of interview.

Sense of Capability

Ana indicated that her family, high-school experiences, her work experience in a hotel and the 17 years of experience as a ballerina are the factors that have helped her while studying the BN. Ana explained that her Mum and Dad helped her to learn "*to be organised and not to leave something to the last minute*" and that her dad has always pushed her, believing that she is capable of doing well. "*High DI was the minimum you could get, coz you was capable as other people, coz you have the same like capability in your brain, like, you know?*" She reported that her sister has helped her to develop multiple coping strategies to

aid her with her studies, including stepping away from study when she is stressed. *“She was like ‘calm down – let’s go for a walk’ and she showed me the way”*. Ana explained that she hadn’t found the transition to university very difficult, stating *“everyone told me university is very difficult and ‘you are going to struggle’ but...it just don’t make me feel like crying...It’s made me think ‘oh, I’m competent. That’s why I’m here’*. *If I weren’t, you know, then they wouldn’t let me be here”*. She reported that whenever she is tired or stressed she reminds herself of all the positive things in her life and tries to keep herself positive and focused, she explains, *“I don’t give up because that’s not my way to be, like I don’t have low self-esteem, so I’m like ‘no, no time for that!”*

Sense of Connectedness

Ana reported that she has strong family support, with her family calling regularly and encouraging her to keep studying and keep doing her best. She explained, *“My mum’s calling me, my dad, my sister and my brother ‘Oh, how you doing? How are things doing? You’ve just got one more year!’...so they always encourage me to do well. So they give me good vibes, my husband as well”*. Ana described a strong peer support group, with whom she meets regularly. She reported that they try to work together to help each other and often have study group sessions. Ana clarified that she often leads the study group sessions and tries to answer study questions. She explained, *“I like to help. So this has helped me, not just to help my colleagues but help me in explaining, because if I can explain then I can learn”*.

Sense of Purpose

Ana reported that any time she is questioning herself and wanting to give up at university she always remembers why she wants to become a nurse. She explained that she asks herself, *“What is your passion? Why do you wanna do this?...like me. I just wanna do it coz I really wanna do it. Like I just really wanna help people”*. Ana reported that she loves

studying nursing and that she is passionate about her studies. She highlighted that being a nurse is her end goal. *“That’s why I’m here!”*, and explained, *“Maybe one day, when I save a life and they, 20 years after, can be like ‘oh thank you nurse!’ I’m just waiting for that.”* Ana also emphasized that the support of her family means that she keeps thinking, *“I can’t disappoint them, I can’t give up...they gonna be proud of me so I have to do it.”*

Sense of Resourcefulness

Ana credited her experience working in a hotel as helping her to learn to multitask, prioritise and organise her studies. *“I used to work in a hotel and I had to multitask many areas. So. This helped me in the way that, if I can multi-task answering a phone, welcoming guests to a hotel, making coffee, cleaning, go here...it help me not just in the way to study to organise myself. I think that was the most. It teach me how to organise myself.”* She reported her high-school and ballet studies have helped her to be focused and that her experience travelling and seeing other cultures has helped her to learn to respect the way other people live and to better understand her role as an Australian student *“When you travel you understand other cultures and you need to respect.”* Ana indicated that her life experiences have helped her to develop multiple learning strategies and have helped her to enjoy a balanced life, with study, work and social activities, while at university. Ana also reported that she undertook an “Academic Purposes” course with the university before starting the BN and she explained that this course helped her with referencing and how to search for research. *“Before studying here, I did, what is it called? Academic Purposes with __ and I think that helped me with my referencing. And what to search and how to search before that I started. So that was really good. And I think my high-school was really good in the way, like how to present and go show yourself, they were quite strict as well. And I did ballet for 17 years and they were very strict with marks so if you didn’t have good marks – “bye bye”. So I think, it was how I grew as well.”*

Sense of Academic Culture

Ana reported that her experience travelling has helped her to be more humble and better understand the Australian culture. She explained that she likes to work in groups, as she *“likes everyone to be successful”*, and that she used many learning strategies throughout the semester to ensure she is learning the content and does not feel stressed when the exams arrive. *“Everything that I do I have a big calendar on my wall what I put and divide my sections, so if I’ve got an assignment to do I’ve got 200 words to do today, 200 words to do tomorrow. 500 words tomorrow and then I have a social life as well.”* Ana’s learning strategies indicate an awareness of the adult learning expectations of university.

Reflective Commentary

Ana demonstrated a strong sense of self-efficacy, in terms of her academic and personal abilities. Ana is highly motivated. She reports she has a high level of interest in topics, identified a range of performance goals, including achieving at least a distinction in assessments, and identified mastery vocational goals, in terms of using her acquired knowledge to be a nurse and “help people”. Ana described a range of learning activities that she undertakes to regulate her cognition, indicating she is a metacognitive learner. Ana identified a strong sense of connection with family and peers. Ana reported that her life experiences, such as previous study and working in a hotel, helped her develop skills that have assisted her undertake the BN. Interestingly Ana did not discuss her PCA experiences in the interview, nor did she describe increased interest in nursing studies or the application of knowledge relating to these experiences. She also did not describe a connection with inter-disciplinary team members.

Section 2 – Emerging Themes and Comparison of the Cases

The participant narratives generated a rich understanding of the educational transition experiences of six DN-graduates who entered a BN program in the second year of the degree. Participants each described their experience of transition to university and identified factors that they portrayed as having had an impact on their transition. What has been learned from these stories will now be discussed in further detail. Discussion will go beyond Lizzio's (2006) themes to focus primarily on consideration of the impact of the presence or absence of EN experience and to develop a second generation of themes and sub-themes. The following table (Table III) identifies these emergent themes and a more developed discussion of each will follow, supported by further illustrations from the interviews.

TABLE III: Factors Influencing Transition
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theme 1 – Metacognitive Characteristics<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Awareness of Requirements and Cognitive Processing○ Application of Knowledge○ Regulation of Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theme 2 – Motivational Characteristics<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Beliefs in Academic Capability○ Beliefs in Vocational Capability○ Confidence in Juggling Ability○ Goal Orientation and Sense of Purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theme 3 – Connections<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Peer and Personal Connections○ Interdisciplinary Team Connections

Theme 1 – Metacognitive Characteristics

Educational theorists suggest that students who have cognitive awareness and knowledge use strategies to deliberately organise new input and correlate and assimilate information with prior knowledge (Cust, 1995). Cognitive learners are able to demonstrate acquired knowledge, through declarative, procedural or conditional behaviour (Bruning et al., 2011). Students who participate in cognitive regulation set goals, use a range of strategies, skills and resources to meet these goals and will then self-regulate their learning, through monitoring the effectiveness of these activities (Schraw, 1998; Zimmerman, 2002).

Cognitive knowledge and cognitive regulation are considered to be the two components of metacognition (Mayer, 1998). Participants in this study demonstrated a variety of metacognitive qualities, with some demonstrating high levels of cognitive awareness and cognitive regulation and others describing variable levels of confidence in their ability to participate in cognitive regulation.

Awareness of Requirements and Cognitive Processing

Participants in this study, with and without EN experience, demonstrated their awareness of the increased requirements of the BN when compared to the DN. A number reported an awareness of cognitive processing, describing “building on” previous knowledge and “assessing” and evaluating their ability to achieve requirements at university.

With EN experience:

- Lisa – *The diploma is really quite basic. Its the foundations of nursing. Um. But yet, the Bachelor has probably given me a lot more knowledge. Which I think it's meant to (laughs)...(The Diploma) that's kinda like the foundation and now that I'm doing my degree it's kinda building on that...And I've even noticed that with some of the subjects in second year and I imagine again next in third year its, you know, developing and building on it again. So I think that's really helped to have my foundation with my diploma.*
- Jayne – *Half the time, as a student I think, I don't know about other people, but I find that I'm like “am I doing the right thing?” Like “Am I, do I know enough? Am I up to standards?” And then I'm like “No, I'm doing good” other days its like self-doubt and I'm like “oh my god, I don't know enough” and there is so much information and knowledge I need to know but I don't... I learnt so much in the Diploma but it was only basic knowledge and then coming into the Bachelor you learn a lot more detail about why things are*

happening...I don't know how to explain it, but I feel like I've learnt a lot more in this past year but I've already had that background knowledge to kind of add onto my knowledge... I found that, from my Diploma, I already had quite a good basis and majority of the subjects that I had already done so I had quite a good foundation knowledge. And then everything else that I was learning was just more in depth and more theoretical component...(I'm) starting to get used to the way things are run.

- Bianca – *I learnt so much in the Diploma but it was only basic knowledge and then coming into the Bachelor you learn a lot more detail about why things are happening...I don't know how to explain it, but I feel like I've learnt a lot more in this past year but I've already had that background knowledge to kind of add onto my knowledge.*

Without EN experience:

- Zara – *At the time I found it (the DN) very hard. Which is kind of funny coz then when I look back I think it looks really easy. Yeah. I found it good. Just found kinda that base knowledge. Like you don't really know every little detail about something, like asthma. They (in the BN) go through it...without going right down to a cellular level.*
- Miku – *Diploma – I understand I can pass but in here (BN)...I have to understand I have to explain, so I feel like, yeah, this knowledge and practice is getting mine (sic)...so more study and more practice and I get more confident.*
- Ana - *Everyone told me university is very difficult and “you are going to struggle” but...it just don't make me feel like crying...It's made me think “oh, I'm competent. That's why I'm here”. If I weren't, you know, then they wouldn't let me be here.*

These findings indicate that most DN-BN students are very aware of the difference between the DN and BN courses with the majority of participants, with and without EN experience, reporting “building on” their knowledge. This description of cognitive processing indicates an academic awareness suggested that most of these participants, regardless of whether they have had experience of practicing as an EN, have a well-developed cognitive awareness. Many of comments also related to their academic efficacy and abilities but this will be discussed further in a later section.

Application of Knowledge

Participants with EN experience reported that their working experiences helped them to practise skills learnt in the DN and apply newly learnt university concepts. This behaviour indicates cognitive knowledge through behavioral application. Only one of the three participants without EN experience reported that they were confident that they were able to apply their theoretical knowledge once they were in practice, on a DN placement. It is important to note that application of theory in practice is generally considered a key part of nursing education (Idrees, 2014).

With EN experience:

- Lisa - *I've had good exposure to just personable skills, how to talk to people particularly when they are sick. I mean it's one thing to learn about it in class but it's a totally different thing to do it in practice... I can really relate, like, what I'm learning about to what I'm doing in the workplace.*
- Jayne - *Working in aged care facilities...I've really enjoyed being able to practice the skills that I have learnt in my diploma, even just basic communication skills. I find that when I was doing my diploma, you'd go months without doing placement. So you wouldn't necessarily lose them, you'd kinda, just, I don't know, I find that you need to continually practice those skills.*

- Bianca - *I think that doing the diploma helped me with clinical skills a lot. I think that I've got a bit of a head start than other students...I think that its (the EN experience) just helped me to become a better nurse and be able to do basic nursing.... It's made me able to learn in a subject at uni and then go to work that week and be able to see what I've learnt coz it all, even acute things...you can see the illnesses or things happening, and you can see it in them. So yeah, I can just learn it...just putting all my knowledge into practice.*

Without EN Experience:

- Miku - *This is a first time I experienced in hospital. So this is (Diploma) placement. Ah, I was so healthy I never been to the hospital even in my country. But, so this experience was very its very first time for me to (see) what is a hospital and what is they doing and I was interested in the hospital setting care but I like nursing home as well but this completely different and I started interested in the nursing, like more academically. Then it helped when I study and go to hospital - it makes sense. The study makes sense in the placement.*

All participants in this study with EN experience reported applying and demonstrating knowledge while in the clinical setting, demonstrating application of cognitive knowledge through declaration and procedural application. This finding highlights that EN experience provides DN-BN students with increased opportunities to practice skills and theoretical concepts not available to students not working in a clinical setting, and promotes cognitive awareness and processing.

Regulation of Knowledge

Many participants reported accessing a range of personal and university resources to assist them meet university requirements. This accessing of resources indicates participation in cognitive regulation.

With EN experience:

- Lisa – (If I want to find out something I use the) *internet. You know, library, everything. I mean that's really helped. If I'm unsure of anything it's probably the first place I go to, is to jump online and try to look it up and learn about it. And I think that's really helped with...my studies. Definitely...Academic skills have really helped me a lot this year...have been really helpful*".
- Jayne - *I know that they (the university) do offer services. I haven't really used them. I find that what has helped me is when the teachers, kind of, they do up the assistance things and they break things down...I'm really lucky because I do have __, who's also going through the same thing as me, so we could kinda help each other through it. And our friend __ who could explain things to us coz she's already done the subjects as well so she'd be like "Okay, this is what the main thing is about", and we'd be like "Oh, okay. That makes sense."*
- Bianca - *I don't think Academic Skills really helped because I went and saw them last semester and they said that one of my essays was good and I failed it!...it helps being, having someone (mother) to talk to about things that have been happening and kind of telling her about situations that I've been in and her explaining why, that those things would be happening.*

Without EN experience:

- Zara - *My sister's doing the Bachelor of Psychology so I had that there because she was sorta helping me. She taught me how to reference, I mean I'm still not perfect, but she did sit down, when she had the time to sit down, and go through that with me. Um. She's kind my support.*
- Miku - *I started seeking help. And I can get the very good support from the uni. In the diploma I could do it. I don't need very, a lot of help. Just I need hints or*

something but in Bachelor, without help from academic, lecturer, tutor and friends, without help I cannot, I think I cannot pass the subject... And Academic Skills is awesome for my English and I didn't learn so much how to write essay so I have study like elemental. So without their support I never know how to write essay. Still I have to more improve but they give me the basics and they support my development.

- *Ana - Before studying here, I did, what is it called? Academic Purposes with ___ and I think that helped me with my referencing. And what to search and how to search before that I started. So that was really good.*

TABLE IV – Accessed Resources Identified by Participants

Participants With EN experience	University Resources	Personal Resources	Other Resources
Lisa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic skills services • Library service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Support – sister 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet • Inter-disciplinary team members
Jayne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academics/Lecturers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Support - DN graduate friends 	
Bianca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic skills services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Support – mother 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-disciplinary team members
Participants Without EN experience	University Resources	Personal Resources	Other Resources
Zara	(None accessed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family support – sister, father and partner's parents 	
Miku	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic skills • Academics/Lecturers • Tutors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Support – BN peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet
Ana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic preparation class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Support – BN peers 	

Although each participant identified a range of resources they had accessed over the previous semester (see quotes and table above), not all students found resources beneficial. A number of participants also described changed behaviour, with time allocated to study, in

order to meet university requirements. These behaviours indicate participation in cognitive regulation. Interestingly, although most participants indicated these behaviours had been successful, Bianca and Zara did not report increased confidence in their abilities. It must be noted that Bianca was not happy with the university resources she accessed and Zara had not accessed any university resources. This may indicate a lack of awareness of available resources or may demonstrate a lack of cognitive regulatory ability. These findings do not demonstrate any correlation between presence/absence of EN working experience, the number of resources accessed or the participants' ability to participate in cognitive regulation.

Metacognitive Characteristics Overview

Participants all reported a level of cognitive awareness and cognitive regulation; learners' described "assessing" and evaluating their ability to achieve requirements at university and describing resources and strategies they had used to help them meet and achieve learning goals. It should be noted that, in contrast to participants without EN experience, the participants with EN experience all reported applying and demonstrating knowledge while in the clinical setting. These findings indicate that most participants in this research have metacognitive abilities, although some do not have confidence to persist in achieving goals through cognitive regulation.

Theme 2 - Motivational Characteristics

Learner self-efficacy and motivation plays a role in a learner's metacognitive ability, with a learner's belief in their ability to meet set goals impacting their ability to regulate their learning (Mayer, 1998). Schunk (1991) explains that an individual's self-efficacy relates to their judgments of his or her capabilities to perform actions. One's self-efficacy is theorised to relate to the individual's motivation (Schunk, 1991) and is suggested to impact their level of effort and persistence; those with low self-efficacy for achieving a task may avoid it and

those who believe in their capability work harder, persist longer and participate more readily (Bandura, 1993).

Educational theories also suggest that learners who are interested in concepts and set learning goals are more likely to be motivated and committed to learning (Bruning et al., 2011). Learners who are interested in topics are more motivated and focus attention on learning the topic (Winne, 2010) and students who set goals are more likely to work to achieve them, which may then increase self-efficacy and increase motivation (Schunk, 1991). Goal setting is considered to be an important cognitive process of motivation (Bandura, 1993). Mastery goals, such as goals to understand material, are suggested to be more positively related to engagement than performance goals, such as goals to achieve grades or status (Bruning et al., 2011) although Dweck (1999) highlighted that a combination of both types of goals is possible and can be beneficial. These theories can also be related to Lizzio (2006) FSS model which suggests that university students with clear purposes are more likely to be more committed and persistent to study.

Participants demonstrated variable senses of capability and self-efficacy relating to their academic, vocational and general “juggling” abilities. While some participants set academic performance goals and/or are undertaking RN studies for the perceived increased financial and employment benefits, many DN-BN students have a strong desire to “help others” and are undertaking RN studies for this purpose.

Beliefs in Academic Capability

This study found that most participants, with and without EN working experience, doubted their ability to achieve the academic writing, referencing and researching requirements when starting university.

With EN experience:

- Lisa: *Like, am I ever going to be able to do it? What's referencing? What's academic writing? It's almost overwhelming and I still find it quite challenging.*
- Jayne: *I wasn't used to the whole essay and formatting and I found it quite hard because in the, um, diploma the referencing was different.... Like at the start, when I was doing the researching subject I was like "this is really silly" and then by the end I was "I understand why I do this" and it helps me massively with all my other subjects because now I know how to actually research things.*
- Bianca: *Well the biggest thing was the essays, so I previously haven't ever really learnt how to do an academic essay so in the transition that was the hardest thing...so I know the information but I can't put into writing. And like last semester...in one of my subjects I needed 70% on the exam to pass and I got it because I know what I'm doing but I just can't do it in the essay. So yeah. It's a bit frustrating.*

Without EN experience:

- Zara: *Not really knowing how to do any kind of academic writing at all. Um. No referencing. No essay writing and my maths skills is not terribly that great so that is something I have also had to work on, on top of your normal workload.*
- Miku: *What the most I am struggling is the assignment, because in the diploma they didn't require so much things...when I came to Bachelor everything had to be done academically and I had no idea at all. So it give me hard work to get used to and it is still so hard to do research and it takes my time a lot to research to get the reference (sic).*

- Ana: *Before studying here, I did, what is it called? Academic Purposes with ___ and I think that helped me with my referencing. And what to search and how to search before that I started. So that was really good. And I think my high-school was really good in the way, like how to present and go show yourself, they were quite strict as well. And I did ballet for 17 years and they were very strict with marks so if you didn't have good marks – “bye bye”. So I think, it was how I grew as well.*

While a number of students described that what they had learnt in the past and what they had learnt over the year had helped them gain the skills and knowledge required to achieve academic requirements, others described an ongoing struggle and continued to doubt their ability to achieve academic requirements, despite previous experiences and the two full semesters studying at university. While some learners reported past experiences had helped their confidence in academic abilities, DN studies and EN working experience was not reported to assist in the development of academic ability and academic self-efficacy. These findings indicate that DN graduates, with and without EN experience, struggle with the academic requirements of baccalaureate studies at university.

Beliefs in Vocational Capability

This study found that participants with EN working experience had increased confidence in their vocational ability to be a nurse, when compared to participants without EN experience.

With EN experience:

- Lisa - *I've had good exposure to just personable skills, how to talk to people particularly when they are sick. I mean it's one thing to learn about it in class but it's a totally different thing to do it in practice. And I mean we do get that*

experience in placement but I find that outside of that, I'm a bit more of a well-rounded nurse, so to speak, and that's because of those extra jobs...

- *Jayne - Working in aged care facilities...I've really enjoyed being able to practice the skills that I have learnt in my diploma, even just basic communication skills. I find that when I was doing my diploma, you'd go months without doing placement. So you wouldn't necessarily lose them, you'd kinda, just, I don't know, I find that you need to continually practice those skills.*
- *Bianca - I think that doing the diploma helped me with clinical skills a lot. I think that I've got a bit of a head start than other students...I think that it's (EN experience) just helped me to become a better nurse and be able to do basic nursing.*

Participants with EN working experience reported that they have confidence in their clinical skills and nursing ability. It should be noted that the three participants without EN experience did not suggest that they believed their lack of EN experience hindered their BN transition or would have improved their BN transition. This finding indicates that DN graduates with EN experience believe that their working experience has helped them in their transition to RN studies at university and suggests that DN graduates with EN experience have higher vocational self-efficacy than DN graduates without EN experience.

Confidence in Managing University Demands

The findings from this study indicate that learners' past experiences help the develop confidence in their ability to manage work/life/study requirements.

With EN experience:

- *Lisa - And I think maybe just my age and life experience has helped me deal with that (university requirements) a lot better...I think, like my two roles*

are, I'm a medical receptionist and an EN so I'm trying to just juggle that alone I think it's a big positive because it helps me juggle my studies and assignments and, you know, deadlines and group work and all that sort of thing.

- *Jayne - (PCA and EN experience have helped) my time management. Kind of juggling things. Um. Because 2-3 years ago I would have never been able to work as much as I do while studying and maintaining my life and still doing all my other stuff. But now I feel like it's helped me to be able to study while I work and do everything.*
- *Bianca - Um I think it's made me more organised being...(working as a nurse) made me realize that they have to be organised.*

Without EN experience

- *Zara - Probably just the longer I am at uni the better I am at balancing that. There was a time when I was at uni and I was working too much. Um. And then. See I've never really worked too much because I've had this "living with people thing" that makes it easier but I think at the moment I'm wanting to work more. But I can't. And I know I can't until I finish the exams, so this is currently my little tipping scales. Coz I currently can't work too much coz then my uni work will go downhill and if I do too much uni work, well there's no such thing as too much uni work, but if you, if I don't work enough for me to live then that then runs downhill.*
- *Miku - A lot of things I have to deal with like financial. Study more harder. Exam incoming. So I feel like a little bit over pressured now.*
- *Ana - everyone told me university is very difficult and "you are going to struggle" but...it just don't make me feel like crying...It's made me think*

“oh, I’m competent. That’s why I’m here”. If I weren’t, you know, then they wouldn’t let me be here....I don’t give up because that’s not my way to be, like I don’t have low self-esteem, so I’m like “no, no time for that!...I used to work in a hotel and I had to multitask many areas. So. This helped me in the way that, if I can multi-task answering a phone, welcoming guests to a hotel, making coffee, cleaning, go here...it help me not just in the way to study to organise myself. I think that was the most. It teach me how to organise myself.

Some participants highlighted that their past experiences, particularly EN working experience, had helped them develop the ability to be organised and manage university requirements. Others reported that some their two semesters of university had increased their confidence in their ability to achieve requirements and others described an awareness of the importance of balancing and managing academic demands but indicated that they still doubted their ability to achieve this balance. These findings suggest that EN working experience can help DN-BN students recognise the need to deliberately manage university, study and life requirements and can increase learner’s confidence in their ability to balance requirements. Other factors, such as university experience and previous work and study experiences can also learners help develop confidence in their juggling and balancing abilities. These characteristics demonstrate an awareness of academic requirements, demonstrate student self-efficacy and also indicate an awareness of cognitive processing.

Goal Orientation and Sense of Purpose

A number of participants, with and without EN experience, indicate that they are undertaking RN studies because they want to “help people”. Other participants described a desire for increased financial or employment opportunities and some described both.

With EN experience:

Lisa - *That is the way the education system is, you sort of start at the bottom and work your way up...there's a lot more opportunities for me, as opposed to if I didn't complete my studies...with more knowledge you get better jobs and better pay... when I am sitting there thinking about "gosh, I could be at work right now, I could be earning money" I think "hold on. Think of the bigger picture". I mean, this time in 3-5 years down the track you will be doing less work and earning more pay so just keep going!*

Jayne: *I always knew that I wanted to do nursing and I've wanted to do it for a while...(then) the experiences that I got out of those (DN) placements, um, made me want to continue studying... (then, on a recent BN placement) I had my buddy nurse told me, he said, "You should work here! You are, are good enough to work here. You know your stuff so you should" and I was like "oh." You know, "that's nice" and so it's kinda inspired me". "kind of inspired me. Like – I can work there and that's where I want to go. I want to end up working at ___. So I know where I want to go and I'm working toward that goal...*

Bianca – *(I) just learn it and then I have increased my knowledge so I can help them (the residents in aged care facility) more.*

Without EN experience:

Zara – *So when I was in there (admitted to hospital), the nurses and that were really lovely and it just kind of reminded me that that's where I want to be. But the placement also does that as well...I keep thinking of the end goal and what I want to do in the long run...as this is the end goal (indicated drawing of a dollar sign – see Appendix E.4), and yeah, but being able to care for people in a different way than what I do at the moment in my current jobs... So the reason why, instead of just working as an EN that I decided to do the RN was mainly because of the more money in the long run and the more job opportunities that came*

with that, as opposed to...because you are still in the same setting and you are still caring for the patient in the same way but you are just about to do more, you're able to earn more money, have more job opportunities as opposed an EN.

Miku –Ah, I was so healthy I never been to the hospital even in my country. But, so this experience (DN placement) was very its very first time for me to (see) what is a hospital and what is they doing and I was interested in the hospital setting care but I like nursing home as well but this completely different and I started interested in the nursing, like more academically... I can't keep doing PCA because of physically. If I getting old I think it's very hard to keep... I wanted to develop more technical and medical kind of technically and I wanted to develop more knowledge as well to work efficiently (as a nurse)...This is my motivation in the future. I can, I will, be a nurse so I have a strong future vision and a bright future... Maybe you don't need to the everything the perfect (sic) so if not so important maybe you can just pass?!

Ana – (I ask myself) what is your passion? Why do you wanna do this?...like me. I just wanna do it coz I really wanna do it. Like I just really wanna help people...maybe one day when I save a life and they, 20 years after, can be like "oh thank you nurse!" I'm just waiting for that...(Dad always told me) high DI was the minimum you could get, coz you was capable as other people, coz you have the same like capability in your brain, like, you know?

Most of the participants reported that they are undertaking RN studies because they wish to "help people". While other reasons for studying included the desire to "climb the ladder", the desire to have less physical work and the perceived increased employment and financial opportunities for RNs versus ENs, a desire to "help people" was generally reported to be the final goal. This motivational goal is considered to be a mastery goal, which is a desire to improve one's competence and is therefore considered to indicate participant intrinsic motivation (Bruning et al., 2011). These findings indicate that many DN graduates,

with and without EN experience, have a strong sense of purpose and often are driven by the intrinsic, mastery related motivational goal of “helping people”.

Motivational Characteristics Overview

Most participants in this study reported low confidence in regard to academic matters. Although some described that this was now improving with practice and experience, a general lack of self-efficacy in this domain was clearly demonstrated. In contrast, participants with EN experience reported high levels of confidence in their vocational capacity. Most participants recognised the importance of work/life/study balance and reported that previous experiences, particularly EN experience, had assisted in the development of this skills. Participants reported a range of goals, most of which focused on long-term outcomes, with many learners describing a mastery-focused goal of “helping people”. These findings indicate that most participants are motivated but often lack confidence in their ability to achieve university requirements.

Theme 3 - Connections

Lizzio (2006) suggested that students with strong connections are often more successful learners, happier people and more effective colleagues. Lizzio (2006) also highlighted that quality relationships with university peers and staff are positively correlated with student university success. Interestingly the link between personal connections and learning motivation is not always highlighted in educational theories. However, all participants described their connections as playing an important part in their motivation and/or persistence in their RN studies.

Connection to Peers, Friends and Family Members

All participants discussed the relevance and importance of personal connections in helping their studies. A number of students with EN experience described a sense of being “different” to other BN students and reported connections with peers from the DN course

(who were now enrolled in the BN). In contrast, participants without EN experience did not discuss feelings of being “different”. Two of these participants described strong connections with BN peers and highlighted the importance of this peer connection in supporting their transition and educational experience. Participants with and without EN experience described the changing connections with friends and family members.

With EN experience:

Lisa – *You are not alone. You’ve got 300 plus other students in the same sorta boat as you. I think that helps...(but) I feel like I’m a lot older than a lot of the students. Well, I guess that’s a bit of a generalization. I mean there are a lot of mature aged students in the course but I see some of the younger students, you know, be really snappy...And I think maybe just my age and life experience has helped me deal with that a lot better.*

Jayne – *We kinda just became best friends, all us three, so we did our diploma together and what I found really got me through was having them there to support me...I mean, you’re experiencing the same thing as me so “it’s okay. We can do this...I’m really lucky because I do have __, who’s also going through the same thing as me, so we could kinda help each other through it. And our friend __ who could explain things to us coz she’s already done the subjects as well so she’d be like “okay, this is what the main thing is about” and we’d be like “oh, okay. That makes sense.*

Bianca – did not mention a specific connection with peers but did mention that she discusses concepts with her mother (a midwife) at times.

Without EN experience:

Zara – *My sister’s doing the Bachelor of Psychology so I had that there because she was sorta helping me. She taught me how to reference, I mean I’m still not perfect, but she*

did sit down, when she had the time to sit down, and go through that with me. Um. She's kind my support. (Zara also mentioned that she discussed concepts with her father (a paramedic)).

Miku – I have a strong, strong connected group but on the other hand many people helping each other. Even though like a native speaker I was a little, um, difficult to make friends and communicate but in bachelor like in tutorial we make group and even though they native, I started to like to, not friend but help each other more than before... My friend before I started to study I could meet my friend only we have. I have money a little but too to go out with my friend. But it is less meeting with my friend and I don't have so much time with my friend... before I come to the bachelor I try to go back to my country every year but once studied I don't have enough money to go back and then enough time because of the placement. So I gave up to go back to my country.

Ana - I like to help. So this (peer study group) has helped me, not just to help my colleagues but help me in explaining, because if I can explain then I can learn... My mum's calling me, my dad, my sister and my brother "Oh, how you doing? How are things doing? You've just got one more year!" ...so they always encourage me to do well. So they give me good vibes, my husband as well

These findings indicate that DN graduates believe that their connections with peers, friends and family members do influence their transition to university, with those with strong BN peer relationships describing that this relationship supported their university transition experience. Interestingly, those with EN experience appear to have increased difficulty developing working relationships with BN peers who are not DN graduates when compared to those without EN working experience. The reason behind this is not clear but may be because of a sense of being "different", a lack of time to be involved in university activities because of working responsibilities or a reliance on already formed connections.

Connection to Interdisciplinary Team

A number of the participants in this study highlighted that their relationship with their interdisciplinary colleagues had helped motivate them in their transition to university.

Participants highlighted their exposure to these team-members, while working in roles in the health care system, had assisted them in terms of support and motivation.

With EN experience:

- Lisa - *I think I'm really lucky...like, it's really benefitted me because I've got the opportunity to ask doctors about things, ask nurses about things, ask patients about things.*
- Bianca - *Like I've learnt, while I've been working, what they (different tests) are and see different things and be able to liaise with registered nurses and doctors and care staff.*

Without EN experience:

- Miku - *They (PCA colleagues and residents) are very encouraging. I think I could get good relationship with resident and the residents remind, not remind me, they say "oh you will be good nurse. You will be good nurse" and so it was my motivation to study, to keep studying.*

These findings highlight that experience in the health care setting can result in increased sense of interdisciplinary connection and that this connection may play a role in supporting the motivation and interest of DN-BN students.

Connections Overview

DN-BN students reported that their connections with peers, friends, family members and work colleagues do influence their transition to university and those with strong BN connections highlighted the benefits of these connections. Those with EN experience appear

to have increased difficulty developing working relationships with BN peers who are not DN graduates when compared to those without EN working experience. The reason behind this is not clear but may be related to a lack of time to be involved in university activities because of working responsibilities or a reliance on already formed connections. In contrast, experience in the health care setting appears to result in increased sense of interdisciplinary connection, a connection that may play a role in supporting the motivation and interest of EN-BN students.

Conclusions Drawn

Comparison of the educational transition experiences of DN-graduates with and without EN clinical experience led the researcher to the following conclusions:

No differences

1. **Low Self Efficacy:** DN-BN students, with and without EN experience, often struggle to meet the academic requirements of university and describe low academic self-efficacy, despite accessing a range of resources and reporting that they are “building on” knowledge acquired from DN studies.
2. **Learning Regulation:** DN-BN students, with and without EN experience recognise the increase in university requirements and access a range of resources to try to meet this requirements.
3. **Achievement Motivation:** DN-BN students, with and without EN experience, often enter RN studies because they believe they will have are increased opportunities, they have strong interest in nursing topics or they want to “help people”.
4. **Reliance on Prior Interpersonal Connections:** DN-BN students, with and without EN experience, believe that their inter-personal connections influenced their transition to university in terms of providing support and motivation. Those with strong peer connections highlighted the positive impact of this relationship on their educational experiences.

Differences

1. **EN Experience Separates Students from Peers.** DN-BN students with EN experience may have increased difficulty developing working relationships with BN peers, when compared to those without EN working experience.

2. EN Experience Increases Interdisciplinary Connections: DN-BN students with EN working experience have an increased sense of interdisciplinary connection, when compared to those without working EN experience.
3. EN Experience Enabled Application of Theoretical Knowledge to Practice: DN-BN students with EN working experience have increased opportunity to practice and apply learnt concepts and increased vocational self-efficacy, when compared to DN-BN students without EN working experience.
4. EN Experience Assists in the Development of the Ability to Balance Life, Work, Study: While DN-BN students, with and without EN experience, recognise the need to manage university, work and life requirements, previous experiences, particularly EN experience, can assist in the development of this skill.

In conclusion, experience in the clinical setting as an EN affords little difference to the DN to BN transition to university studies in terms of cognitive awareness and regulation, academic self-efficacy and study motivation. EN experience can encourage application of theoretical knowledge and promote an ability to balance work/life/study requirements and development of motivational connections with inter-disciplinary team members but can contribute to increased sense of distance between BN peers, a social relationship that was reported to be key in supporting educational transition. These conclusions will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

This chapter will explore the findings of this research, will discuss the impact of EN working experience on the transition of DN graduates entering the second year of a BN program and will seek to the answer the research questions - *Does experience working as an EN impact on transition into the second year of a BN program?* The key findings will be examined in relation to current literature.

The findings of this study suggest that DN graduates often struggle with transition and adjustment to RN studies in a university learning environment. This study has focused on exploring the impact of the presence and absence of EN working experience on university transition. Analysis and comparison of the participants' experiences leads the researcher to suggest that EN working experience does impact on some aspects of DN graduate transition to a BN program, both positively and negatively.

Working as an EN may have a positive impact on DN students to BN studies in the following ways. It may:

1. Provide learners with opportunities to demonstrate knowledge, through application of new theoretical concepts they learn at university in the clinical setting;
2. Contribute to vocational self-efficacy, potentially increasing confidence and motivation at university;
3. Promote a sense of connection to inter-disciplinary team members, providing support and motivational and a more holistic view of health care; and
4. Enhance student's capacity to balance study, work and life.

Working as an EN may also have a negative impact on some DN students to BN studies. It may lead to increased difficulty in forming of strong peer connections with none-DN graduate students.

The study findings suggest that EN working experience may have no impact on DN graduates’:

1. Perceived ability to meet BN academic requirements;
2. Motivation and reason for undertaking RN studies;
3. Ability to recognise and identify key differences between university and VET level studies; and
4. Ability to “build on” knowledge acquired in DN studies and access of supportive resources to assist in meeting university requirements.

These outcomes, and the potential implication on DN graduate university transition, will now be explored in relation to current literature.

Advantages of EN Working Experience on University Transition

Application of Theory in Practice

EN participants highlighted that working in the clinical setting means that they, as learners, can demonstrate and apply theoretical concepts learnt at university. Rapley et al.’s (2006) research supported this finding. While it is considered that RN students are given opportunity to demonstrate and apply knowledge during clinical placement hours (NMBA, 2017), the ability to apply theory to practice is one of the biggest challenges of a nurse (Idrees, 2014) and facilitation of students’ knowledge integration into effective clinical practice is one of the difficulties faced by nursing educators worldwide (Chan, Chan & Liu, 2012).

When a learner applies and demonstrates knowledge in practice, they are demonstrating their ability to cognitively process and apply knowledge. This behaviour is demonstrating an awareness of cognitive knowledge, a key characteristic of a successful learner (Bruning et al., 2011). This finding suggests that EN-BN students have increased opportunity to develop this skill - an ability that may assist in the processing of information learnt at university and may therefore assist in university transition.

Vocational Confidence

The findings of this study indicate that EN experience promotes increased vocational confidence in DN-BN students. EN participants in this study expressed the belief that their EN experience would mean that they would be “better” nurses in the future. Wall et al. (2016) also reported that EN experience leads to self-confidence in nursing ability.

The direct impact of this vocational self-efficacy on university transition is difficult to ascertain. Schunk (1991) explains that an individual’s self-efficacy relates to the individual’s judgments of his or her capabilities to perform actions and that one’s self-efficacy is theorised to relate to an individual’s motivation. One’s self-efficacy is suggested to impact an individual’s level of effort and persistence; with low self-efficacy for achieving a task may avoid it and those who believe in their capability working harder, persisting longer and participating readily (Bandura, 1993). It could be suggested that this high vocational self-efficacy may contribute to increased general confidence, increased motivation and persistence but this study was not able to assess this, as it was not longitudinal research. Interestingly, Rapley et al. (2008) found that there was no correlation between the length of EN experience and course persistence and completion but it must be highlighted that this study did not include participants with no EN experience.

Inter-Disciplinary Connections

The findings of this study indicate the DN graduates who are working as EN’s have a strong sense of connection with the inter-disciplinary team in their workplace and that these students believe this connection has benefitted them when starting at university. Learners reported that their learning was supported by this connection, that it increased their motivation to study and that it provided them with a more holistic view of healthcare.

The importance of the relationship between BN students and inter-disciplinary team members is only reported in limited literature. Rapley et al. (2006) highlighted that EN-BNs

benefit from support from colleagues, employers, peers and family members but Lizzio (2006) focused on the importance of connections with university peers and staff. This study highlights that EN experience can promote the development of a connection with external stakeholders, which can then support and positively impact their transition to university.

Ability to Manage University Demands

The findings of this study indicate that EN working experience assists learners to develop the ability to manage academic demands and balance the requirements of university. While other experiences may assist learners to develop these skills, all three participants with EN experienced expressed the opinion that their EN working experience had helped them develop these abilities.

Lizzio (2006) highlighted that the ability to balance work, life and study requirements is a key ability of successful university students. Lizzio (2006) suggested that this ability helps students to manage university requirements and contributes to the development of a student's sense of resourcefulness, satisfaction and engagement. This indicates that successful management of university requirements may link to increased student self-efficacy and could relate to increased motivation and persistence.

While EN students in this study suggested their working experience had helped them develop the ability to manage their studies, Hutchinson et al (2011) and Wall et al. (2016) suggested that EN-BN students find working in an EN role and balancing study and personal lives difficult and that these students often struggled to maintain effective work/life balance. It should be noted that participants in this study did not express that it was not an ongoing challenge to balance requirements. These findings do not suggest that DN graduates do not experience difficulty when balancing requirements, merely that DN graduates believe their EN working experiences have helped prepare them to cope with these struggles.

Disadvantages of EN Working Experience of University Transition

Reduced Strong Peer Connections

The findings of this study highlight the perceived importance of positive BN peer relationships, with a number of DN graduates, without EN experience, describing strong peer connections. The findings of this study also indicate that DN graduates with EN working experience may struggle to develop strong relationships with BN peers, particularly those without DN experience.

Connections and strong working relationships with university peers are thought to promote more successful, happier students (Lizzio, 2006). The fact that EN-BN students often feel isolated and struggle to connect with university peers is a finding supported by Hutchinson et al. (2011) and Wall et al. (2016). Hutchinson et al. (2011) found the EN-BN students often feel isolated from students who studied together in first year and may instead seek to foster relationships with other EN-BN students and Wall et al. (2016) found that EN students often feel different and stereotyped. O'Shea et al. (2012) explored the experience of VET graduates entering university and this study also found that VET students entering university often feel different and often stick together instead of forming relationships with other students. These findings highlight the importance of peer relationships and the need for further investigation into what can be done to support the transition of DN-BN graduates and promote the formation of positive university peer connections.

DN Graduates' Experience of Transition to University

Struggle to Meet Academic Requirements

The findings of this study highlight that DN graduates, with and without EN experience, often struggle to meet university academic requirements, particularly researching, writing and referencing. This study found that EN experience does not increase a learner's academic confidence or sense of academic ability.

Literature does highlight that VET students entering higher degrees do often struggle to meet the academic requirements of university (Millman, 2014). VET studies are often competency based and do not always require references or focus on academic writing (Gabb & Glaisher, 2006). Literature highlights that this is a recognised struggle for students entering university having received advanced standing (Northall et al., 2016), in particular EN-BN students (Rapley et al., 2006; Hutchinson et al., 2011; Wall et al., 2016). This finding highlights the need for further investigation into what can be done to promote the development of these required academic skills in transitioning DN-BN students

Motivation to Study

The findings of this study highlight that DN graduates often enter BN programs because they have a desire to “help people”. DN-BN students may also desire to achieve academically and may be undertaking studies because of perceived increased financial and employment opportunities. These findings indicate the DN-BN students, with and without EN experience, are often motivated by intrinsic, mastery goals and performance, achievement goals.

Literature highlights that many EN students undertake RN studies because of perceived increased opportunities (Paech 2002; Kenny and Duckett, 2005; Wall et al., 2016) but little previous research has discussed participants’ intrinsic motivation. A student’s sense of purpose is considered key in their university success (Lizzio, 2006) and mastery focused achievement goals are associated with higher engagement, improved performance and resilience (Bruning et al., 2011). This finding highlights that DN graduates entering RN studies are often motivated by a range of goals, both mastery and performance, but the implications of participant goals on successful university transition is difficult to ascertain.

Recognition of Academic Culture

The findings of this study highlight that DN graduates, with and without EN experience, recognise the core and ethical value differences, in terms of academic requirements and learning culture, at university compared to previous diploma/VET studies. Participants highlighted the high-level theoretical knowledge that must be learnt in the BN, the difference in academic requirements, the more independent approach to learning taken and the high level of critical understanding that is expected, when compared to the DN. This difference is supported by literature, with Jacob et al. (2014) highlighting that nursing educators are aware of the difference in academic expectations, Hutchinson et al. (2011) discussing the process of EN-BN students in conciliating to new standards and Rapley et al. (2006), also identifying the need for these students to adjust to higher education and achieve academically.

The recognition of these differences indicate that participants, with and without EN experience, have a high level of cultural and knowledge awareness when starting university. It should be noted, however that this study was undertaken at the end of Semester 2, 2016 and learners had been at university for almost two semesters and that participants in the study did not discuss how and when they became aware of the differences.

Cognitive Awareness and Learning Regulation

The findings of this study highlight that DN graduates entering BN studies, with and without EN experience, recognise that they are “building on” previous knowledge, indicating strong cognitive awareness. Participants also reported modifying their behaviour and accessing a range of resources, including personal, technological and university resources, in an effort to meet academic requirements, indicating an attempt to participate in regulatory behaviours.

Educational theories highlight that successful learners with cognitive awareness use strategies such as assimilation of information with prior knowledge (Cust, 1995) and use a range

of tactics and resources to help them meet learning requirements (Bruning et al., 2011). While little research has specifically examined the cognitive processing and regulatory of DN graduates, Rapley et al. (2006) reported that EN-RN students undertake a range of strategies to assist them succeed at university and Hutchinson et al. (2011) described the processes of benchmarking performance and employing trial and error strategies that EN students utilise when commencing university.

While participants in this research described cognitive awareness and indicated they participate in learning regulation, it must be noted that the perceived success of this learning regulation was variable, with some learners describing ongoing difficulty in meeting university requirements. This finding highlights the need for further investigation into what specific supports would better facilitate the transition of DN-BN students, particularly in terms of appropriate resources and promotion of the development of regulatory ability.

Chapter 6 - Recommendations, Limitations and Conclusion

This final chapter will review what has been learned from this study and will provide recommendations for universities and VET providers to consider in their efforts to support those DN graduates who have been granted advanced standing in their entry to baccalaureate nursing studies. It will also outline the limitations of the study and will offer recommendations for further research.

This study set out to examine the impact of EN working experience on the university transition of DN graduates entering a BN program. The study found that, to a large extent, there was little difference in the transitional experience of those who had experience as an ENs and those who had not. Some differences were noted and most were of a positive nature, although there was some indication that those who were already practicing ENs may experience increased difficulty establishing peer relationships with their BN cohort. The research did identify that there are significant matters that BN programs could attend to that would assist all DN students' transition from VET education to university education. These matters will now be identified and recommendations made.

Recommendations

This study demonstrated that these VET graduates found the transition from DN studies to BN studies at university difficult, regardless of their previous background and experience. The research particularly identified that DN-BN students are often ill equipped for the increased academic demands of BN studies. It also highlighted the importance of social connections as a means of support for this cohort. In light of these findings, it is recommended that:

1. VET providers offer an increased focus on the development of academic skills in DN courses. Higher expectations and support in academic writing, referencing and researching requirements within DN programs could assist in reducing the academic struggle that these learners experience when transitioning to university.

2. Universities introduce mandatory DN-BN bridging/orientation programs that focus on providing instruction on academic writing, referencing and research and promoting social integration of BN and DN-BN students. These programs could present learners with the opportunities to undertake formative assessment within supported academic workshops, thus supporting the development of cognitive regulatory ability, and could introduce a range of guided teamwork activities, such as team assessments and quizzes, thus promoting social connections.
3. Universities introduce mandatory mentoring programs, where meetings are scheduled between BN and DN-BN students during the first semester of the DN graduate's baccalaureate studies, in an effort to support the development of positive peer relationships and improve the educational experiences of learners.
4. Universities provide resources and professional learning for academic staff in regard to the transitional difficulties faced by DN-BN students.
5. Universities design curricular that integrate teaching practices which promote the development of academic skills and social integration of DN-BN learners. Activities could include the provision of example academic papers and the integration of increased teamwork class activities.

This study did not seek to identify which resources would be most effective in supporting this cohort's university transition or the impact of EN experience on the learner's transition to BN undergraduate student in the clinical setting. It is recommended that future studies be undertaken to examine the impact of targeted interventions on the university transitional experience of DN-BN students, particularly their academic ability and BN peer connections, and the impact of EN experience on DN-BN students' clinical learning experiences.

Limitations

This research was limited, as a small, purposefully selected sample of six (6) students participated in the study. The research was further limited in the following ways. Firstly, transition in higher education is recognised to be an ongoing process (Mauder et al., 2013) and this research provides a mere "snapshot" of the participants' transitional experience. Secondly, the results of the study are likely to have been influenced by the time of year, the lack of placement opportunities and the nature of the academic requirements at the time of the RP interview. Thirdly, the study methods meant that there was a relatively brief interaction with each participant and it is unlikely that all domains of transition were explored in this time. Fourthly, in anticipation of potential limitation in the researcher's interpretation of the participant's experience, and thus the accuracy in

the interpretation of data, participants were invited to review transcripts and thematic analysis for accuracy. Finally, while the findings from this study cannot be generalised, they may be applicable to students with similar characteristics and have generated new understandings that have the potential to influence educational processes and assist in the development of specific programs to support these students.

Conclusion

The primary focus of this research was to gain understanding of the impact of the presence, or absence, of EN work experience in a DN graduate's transition to a BN program. Before undertaking this study, it was expected that EN experience could provide some significant advantages to learners transitioning from DN graduate to BN undergraduate student. The findings of this study indicated that EN working experience does have some minor positive impacts on university transition, with ENs reporting their clinical experience provided them with increased opportunities to apply learnt concepts, assisted them to develop the ability to manage university, study and life requirements and promoted relationships with interdisciplinary team members. The findings also indicated the EN experience may potentially hinder the formation of BN peer relationships. However, the impact of EN clinical experience on university transition was not evident and EN working experience was not associated with increased learner metacognitive abilities or a substantial variation in motivational goals, all factors that are important in the early, more academically focused stage of the BN program. These findings do not preclude that prior EN working experience may well impact on the capacity of a DN-BN student to engage in clinical learning. The relationship between EN clinical experience and DN-BN's capacity to engage in clinical learning would, therefore, be an appropriate focus of further research.

Although this study found that EN experience had negligible impact on the transition experience of DN graduates entering RN studies, it did support the findings of previous studies that suggested that EN-BN students often find the transition to university difficult. This research

highlighted that DN-BN students often particularly struggle with the academic requirements of university and emphasised the benefits of strong BN peer relationships in supporting the educational experiences of these learners. These findings support the need for VET providers and universities to provide targeted transitional support programs, such as bridging and mentoring programs, which promote the development of these skills and relationships. The impact of these programs would also be an appropriate focus for further study.

Appendix A: Letter of Introduction



Professor Janice Orrell
School of Education
Flinders University,
Bedford Park, SA 5042
GPO Box 2100
Adelaide SA 5001
Tel: 08 08 8201 2378
jancie.orrell@flinders.edu.au
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

Date

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Student,

This letter is to introduce Jessica Stewart, a Master of Education student in the School of Education at Flinders University.

Jessica is undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis or other publications on the subject of the educational experiences of Diploma of Nursing graduates, with and without clinical experience working as an Enrolled Nurse, entering to the second year of a Bachelor of Nursing program.

This research intends to build on understanding about the educational experiences of students entering baccalaureate-nursing programs having successfully completed a DN (or equivalent) and explore the prior-learning factors that impact student transition to university.

Jessica would like to invite you to assist with this project by agreeing to be involved by answering a number of selection questions relating to your previous experience. If you are selected you will be invited to participate in a one-on-one interview. No more than 60-90 minutes would be required.

Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and none of the participants will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis, report or other publications. You are, of course, entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time or to decline to answer particular questions.

Since Jessica intends to make a tape recording of the interview, she will seek your consent, on the attached form, to record the interview, to use the recording or a transcription in preparing the thesis, report or other publications, on condition that your name or identity is not revealed, and to make the recording available to other researchers on the same conditions. It may be necessary to make the recording available to secretarial assistants for transcription, in which case you may be assured that such persons will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement which outlines the requirement that your name or identity not be revealed and that the confidentiality of the material is respected and maintained.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above or by telephone on (08 8201 2378), or e-mail (jancie.orrell@flinders.edu.au)

inspiring
achievement
achievement



Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above or by telephone on (08 8201 2378), or e-mail (jancie.orrell@flinders.edu.au)

Thank you for your consideration of this request,

Yours sincerely

Professor Janice Orrell

Higher Education, School of Education
Flinders University, Bedford Park, SA 5042

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project number INSERT PROJECT No. here following approval – Conditional number 7390). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet



Professor Janice Orrell
School of Education
Flinders University,
Bedford Park, SA 5042
GPO Box 2100
Adelaide SA 5001
Tel: 08 8201 2378
jancie.orrell@flinders.edu.au
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

INFORMATION SHEET

- **Title: A critical examination of the significance of prior clinical practice on the transition of DN graduates to the second year of a BN program.**

Researchers:

Ms Jessica Stewart
School of Education Department
Flinders University
Ph: 03 9953 3833

Supervisor:

Professor Janice Orrell
School of Education Department
Flinders University
Ph: 08 8201 2378

Description of the study:

This study is part of the project entitled '**A critical examination of the significance of prior clinical practice on the transition of DN graduates to the second year of a BN program**'.

This project will investigate the transition of Diploma of Nursing (DN) students when they enter in the second year of the Bachelor of Nursing (BN) program. This project is supported by Flinders University School of Education department and Australian Catholic University, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine department.

Purpose of the study:

This project aims to:

- Build on understanding about the educational experiences of students entering baccalaureate-nursing programs having successfully completed a DN (or equivalent); and

- Explore the prior-learning factors that impact student transition to university, in particular the impact of clinical practice where it has occurred and its absence where it has not.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be invited to answer a number of selection questions relating to your past experience. If you are selected you will be invited to attend a one-on-one interview. During this interview the researcher will ask you to draw a representational drawing of the factors that have impacted your experience starting at university. It is expected that this will take approximately 15 minutes. You will then be asked to describe what you have drawn in detail and explain how the things you have drawn are relevant to your experience starting at university. The interviewer may also ask you some questions about your drawing and how your previous experience has impacted your experience at university. It is expected that this part of the interview will take approximately 45 minutes. The interview will take 60-90 minutes and will be recorded using a digital voice recorder. Once recorded, the interview will be transcribed (typed-up) and stored as a computer file and will only be destroyed if the transcript is checked by the participant. You will be invited to review the transcript to ensure it is accurate. The researcher will retain the picture you draw. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

The sharing of your experiences may assist inform educators and facilities on prior learning factors that impact the transition of students entering higher education. It may also result in the improvement of the planning and delivery of programs to support learners as they transition from DN (or equivalent) graduate to BN undergraduate student.

It must be noted that your educational grades and course progress will not be impacted by your participation in this project.

Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?

You may be identifiable through your email to the researcher but your information remain confidential. Your confidentiality and anonymity will be assured through the allocation of pseudonyms. Pseudonyms will be used for purpose of data analysis and to protect your identity. Once the recording from the Rich Picture Session has been typed-up and saved as a file, the voice file will then be destroyed. Any identifying information will be removed and the typed-up file stored on a password-protected computer that only the coordinator (Ms Jessica Stewart) will have access to. Your comments will not be linked directly to you.

Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?

The researcher anticipates few risks from your involvement in this study; however given the nature of the project some participants could experience emotional discomfort. If any emotional discomfort is experienced please contact Counselling.Melbourne@acu.edu.au for support / counselling that

may be accessed free of charge by all participants. If you have any concerns regarding anticipated or actual risks or discomforts, please raise them with the researcher.

How do I agree to participate?

Participation is voluntary. You may answer 'no comment' or refuse to answer any questions and you are free to withdraw from the research at any time without effect or consequences. If you agree to participate please return a signed copy of the attached consent form to Jessica Stewart at stew0294@uni.flinders.edu.au.

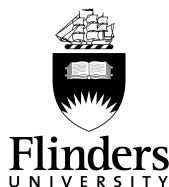
How will I receive feedback?

On project completion outcomes of the project will be given to all participants via email.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project number INSERT PROJECT No. here following approval – Conditional approval number 7390). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

Appendix C: Consent Form



CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH (by Rich Picture Session)

A critical examination of the significance of prior clinical practice on the transition of DN graduates to the second year of a BN program.

I

being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate as requested in the for the research project on

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I agree to audio recording of my information and participation.
4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form

for future reference.

5. I understand that:
 - I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
 - I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions.
 - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, I will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.
 - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on my progress in my course of study, or results gained.
 - I may ask that the recording be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage.
6. I have had the opportunity to discuss taking part in this research with a family member or friend.

Participant's signature.....Date.....

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher's name.....

Researcher's signature.....Date.....

NB: Two signed copies should be obtained. The copy retained by the researcher may then be used for authorisation of Items 8 and 9, as appropriate.

8. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read a transcript of my participation and agree to its use by the researcher as explained.

Participant's signature.....Date.....

9. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read the researcher's report and agree to the publication of my information as reported.

Participant's signature.....Date.....

Appendix D: Rich Picture Session Guide for Facilitators

General Rich Picture (RP) Session Overview

Each face-to-face session will start with an introduction, explanation and provision of instructions (see below). Each participant will be allocated 15-20 minutes for drawing. Once the participant has completed their drawing they will be asked to describe, discuss and explain their drawing. While this discussion component of the session will be largely unstructured, the facilitator may ask a number of questions to prompt a deeper level of understanding and analysis.

RP Session Facilitator Guide

****The following is to be used as a guide only****

General Introduction – Verbal Script:

“Hi. Thank you for volunteering to participate in this research and for being here today. As you may know, my name is Jessica Stewart and I am interested in learning about your experience starting at university. I am particularly interested in learning about your transition from a Diploma of Nursing graduate to a Bachelor of Nursing student and the influence of your previous experiences on your transition.

This session will be comprised of two parts; the first part where you draw a picture and the second part where you explain the picture to me. This approach is known as a “Rich Picture” approach and it aims to promote deeper reflection and help me better understand your experiences.”

Rich Picture Instructions – Verbal Script and Written Instructions:

“I would like you to consider anything you have done in the past that has either helped you or hindered your time studying at university. Think about all your past experiences; these may be previous study experience, or experience in the clinical environment, work experience or any other experiences. I would like you to draw these things and consider how these experiences have affected you at university.

I ask you to be as honest as you can in your drawing, use as little text as possible and provide as many components as you can think of. Your picture can be as big or as small as you would like. There is no wrong or right picture and you can draw whatever you want.

I have allocated 15-20 minutes for you to draw - but you can draw for a shorter time or a longer time if you wish. After you finish drawing I am going to ask you to describe and explain what you have drawn to me.

Do you have any questions before you start?”

Unstructured Discussion – Guiding comments:

Once the participant has completed their drawing the facilitator will ask the student to talk about their drawing, explain what it looks like and what it represents. This

part of the session will be largely unstructured but the facilitator may ask questions to clarify details and facilitate more detailed information relating to the drawing.

Debrief/Reflection:

Once the participant has explained their drawing the facilitator will then ask them to reflect on the experience of participating in this project and provide any feedback/further comments.

Conclusion:

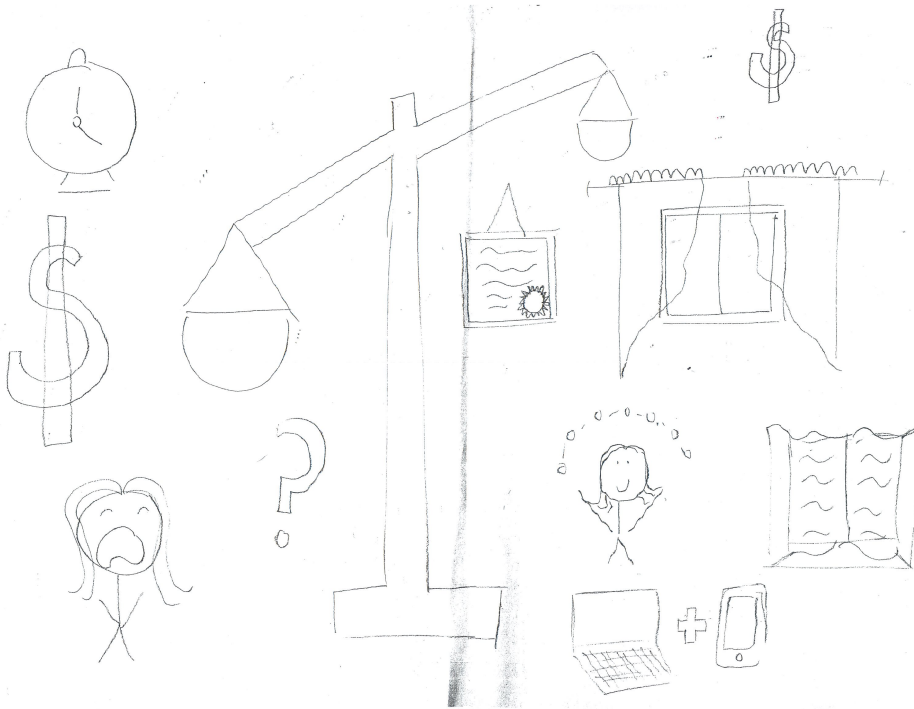
“Thank you for participating in this research. I would like to invite you to review the transcript from this session and provide feedback on the analysis of the discussion to ensure that I have accurately understood and interpreted your statements. Would this be something you might be interested in?”

If this is something you are interested in I will contact you via email once the analysis is complete to offer you this opportunity to provide feedback and further comments.

If you have any questions relating to this research, have anything to add or wish to withdraw from the study then please let me know. Thank you again for volunteering to participate.”

Appendix E: Participants' Rich Pictures

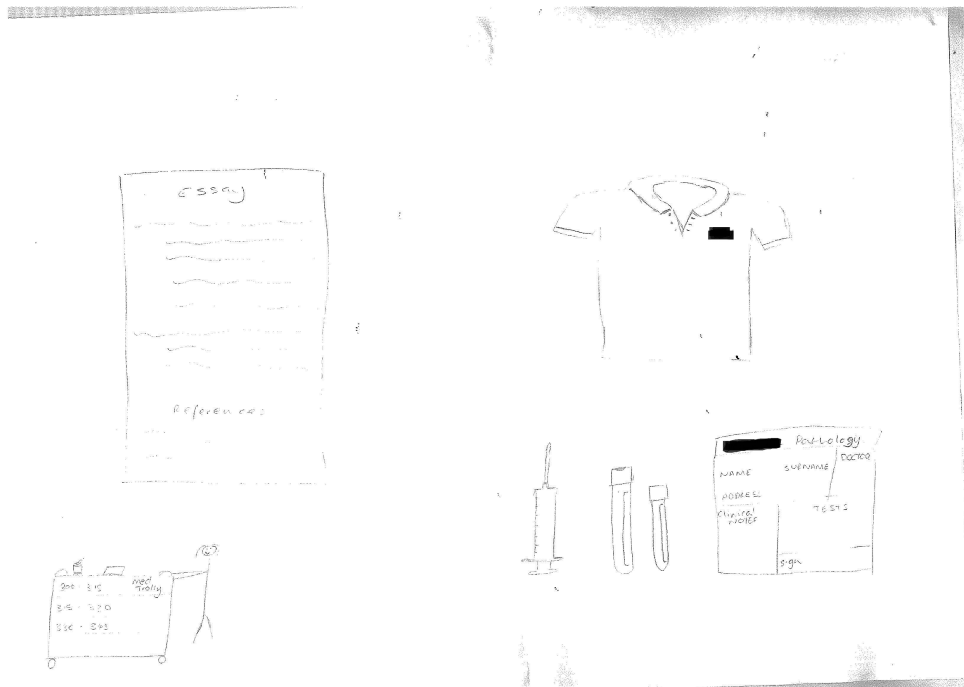
E.1 Lisa's Rich Picture



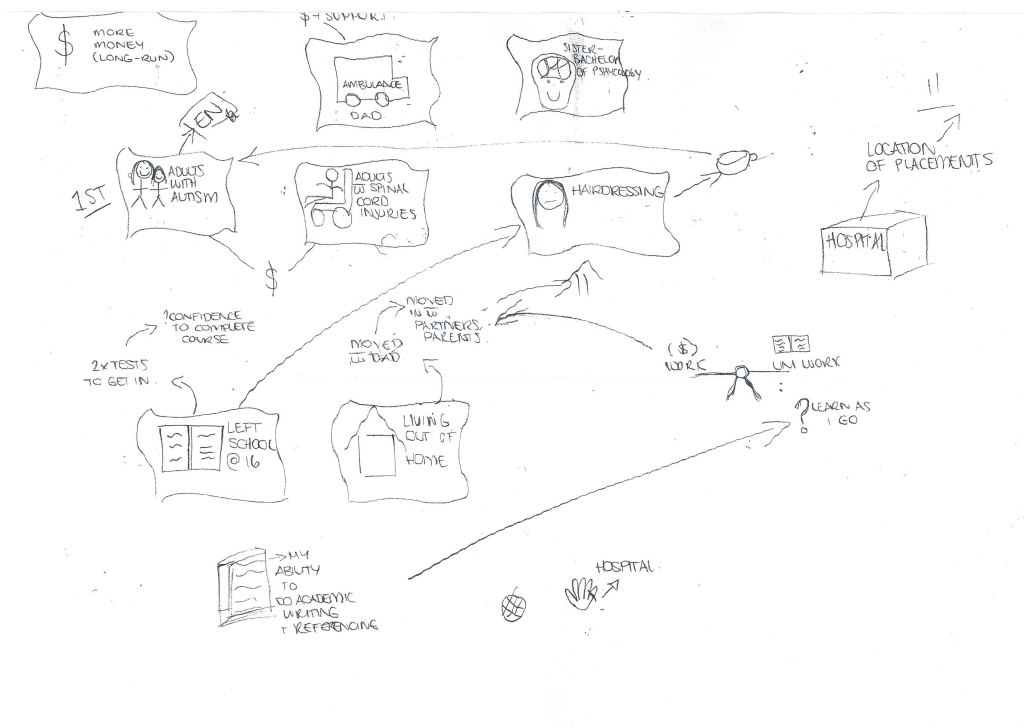
E.2 Jayne's Rich Picture



E.3 Bianca's Rich Picture



E.4 Zara's Rich Picture



E.5 Miku's Rich Picture



E.6 Ana's Rich Picture



References

- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF). (2014). *Nursing practice Standards for nurses in general practice*. Retrieved from http://www.anmf.org.au/documents/National_Practice_Standards_for_Nurses_in_General_Practice.pdf
- Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). (2016). *Registration Requirements*. Retrieved from <http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Registration-Process/Registration-Requirements.aspx>
- Bell, S., Berg T., & Morse S. (2016). Rich Pictures: Sustainable development and stakeholders – the benefits of content analysis. *Sustainable development*, 24, 136-148. doi:10.1002/sd.1614
- Bell, S. & Morse, S. (2012). *How people use Rich Pictures to help them think and act*. Retrieved from <http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/745796/1/How%20people%20use%20rich%20pictures%20to%20help%20them%20think%20and%20act%20~%20SPAR.pdf>
- Berg, T. (2015). Rich Picture: The Role of the Facilitator. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 28(1), 67-77. doi: 10.1007/s11213-014-9318-z
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, 28 (2), 117-148. Retrieved from <http://homepages.se.edu/cvonbergen/files/2013/01/Perceived-Self-Efficacy-in-Cognitive-Development-and-Functioning.pdf>

- Boelen, M & Kenny, A. (2009). Supporting enrolled nurse conversion – The impact of a compulsory bridging program. *Nurse Education Today*, 29, 533-537. doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2008.11.015
- Bridges, W. (2003). *Managing transitions* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing Co.
- Bruning, R. H., Schraw, G. J., & Norby, M. M. (2011). *Cognitive Psychology and Instruction* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Chan, E. A., Chan, K. and Liu, Y. W. J. (2012), A triadic interplay between academics, practitioners and students in the nursing theory and practice dialectic. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 68: 1038–1049. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.2011.05808.x
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Educational research: planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Australia.
- Cust, J. (1995). Recent cognitive perspectives on learning — implications for nurse education. *Nurse Education Today*, 15(4), 280-290. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0260-6917\(95\)80131-6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0260-6917(95)80131-6)
- Department of Health. (2014). *Australia's Future Health Workforce – Nurses Overview Report*. Retrieved from [https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/34AA7E6FDB8C16AACA257D9500112F25/\\$File/AFHW%20-%20Nurses%20overview%20report.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/34AA7E6FDB8C16AACA257D9500112F25/$File/AFHW%20-%20Nurses%20overview%20report.pdf)
- Dweck, C. S. (1999). Achievement goals: looking smart versus learning in C. S. Dweck, *Self-theories: their role in motivation, personality and development* (pp. 15-19). Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

- Gabb, R. and Glaisher, S. (2006) Models of cross-sectoral curricula: TAFE and HE. Victoria University. Retrieved from <http://tls.vu.edu.au/PEC/reports.htm>.
- Hutchinson, L., Mitchell, C. & St John, W. (2011). The transition experience of Enrolled Nurses to Bachelor of Nursing at an Australian university. *Contemporary Nurse*, 31(1-2), 191-200. doi: 10.5172/conu.2011.38.1-2.191.
- Hylton, J. (2005). Relearning how to learn: Enrolled nurse transition to degree at a New Zealand rural satellite campus. *Nurse Education Today*. 25(7), 519-526. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2005.05.010>
- Idrees, S. (2014). Clinical application of nursing theory into practice. *I-Manager's Journal on Nursing*, 4(1), 23-27. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy2.acu.edu.au/docview/1672096714?accountid=8194>
- Jacob, E. R., McKenna, L. & D'Amore, A. (2014). Comparisons of the educational preparation of registered and enrolled nurses in Australia: The educators' perspectives. *Nurse Education Practice*, 14(6), 648-653. doi: 10.1016/j.nepr.2014.07.005.
- Kenny, A. J. & Duckett, S. (2005). An online study of enrolled nurse conversion. *Journal Advanced Nursing*, 49(4), 423-431. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03306.x
- Kift, S., Nelson K. & Clarke, J. (2010). Transition pedagogy: A third generation approach to FYE – A case study of policy and practice for the higher education sector. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 1(1), 1-20. Retrieved from <https://sydney.edu.au/education-portfolio/ei/projects/transition/Transition%20Pedagogy.pdf>

- Lizzio, A. (2006). *Designing an orientation and transition strategy for commencing students: A conceptual summary of research and practice*. Retrieved from https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/51875/Alfs-5-Senors-Paper-FYE-Project,-2006.pdf.
- Mauder, R., Cunliffe, M., Galvin, J., Mjali S., & Rogers, J. (2013). Listening to student voices: student researchers exploring undergraduate experiences of university transition. *International Journal of Higher Education and Educational Planning*, 66(2), 139-152.
- Mayer, R. E (1998). Cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational aspects of problem solving. *Instructional Science*, 26 (1-2), 49-63.
- Millman, Theresa. (2013). Abridged too far? Credit transfer: Examining the transition process from TAFE to University. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 53(2), 326-335. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.asn.au/c143/Publications+About+AJAL.aspx>
- Nelson, K., Smith, J., & Clarke, J. (2012). Enhancing the transition of commencing students into university: An institution-wide approach. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 31(2), 185-199.
- Northall, Ramjan, Everett, & Salamonson. (2016). Retention and academic performance of undergraduate nursing students with advanced standing: A mixed-methods study. *Nurse Education Today*, 39, 26-31. Doi 10.1016/j.nedt.2016.01.010
- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA). (2017). Standards for practice. Retrieved from <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Professional-standards.aspx>.

- O'Shea, S., Lysaght P. & Tanner K. (2012) Stepping into higher education from the vocational education sector in Australia: student perceptions and experiences, *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 64:3, 261-277, DOI: 10.1080/13636820.2012.691532
- Paech, (2002). Making the transition from enrolled to registered nurse. *Collegian: The Australian Journal of Nursing Practice, Scholarship & Research*, 9(3), 35-40. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1322-7696\(08\)60423-0](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1322-7696(08)60423-0)
- Pintrich, P. R. (1999). Understanding interference and inhibition processes from a motivational and self-regulated learning perspective: Comments on dempster and corkill. *Educational Psychology Review*, 11(2), 105-115. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy1.acu.edu.au/10.1023/A:1022020308002>
- Pintrich, P. R. (2003). A Motivational Science Perspective on the Role of Student Motivation in Learning and Teaching Contexts. *Journal Of Educational Psychology*, 95(4), 667-686. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.95.4.667
- Prins, F. J., Veenman, M. V. J., & Elshout, J. J. (2006). The impact of intellectual ability and metacognition on learning: New support for the threshold of problematicity theory. *Learning and Instruction*, 16(4), 374-387. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2006.07.008>
- Ralph, N., Birks, M., Chapman, Y., Muldoon, N., & McPherson, C. (2013). From EN to BN to RN: an exploration and analysis of the literature. *Contemporary Nurse*, 43(2),225-236. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5172/conu.2012.2649>

- Rapley, P.A., Nathan, P. & Davidson, L. (2006). EN to RN: The transition experience pre- and post-graduation. *Rural and Remote Health*, 6(1), 363. Retrieved from http://www.rrh.org.au/publishedarticles/article_print_363.pdf.
- Rapley, P. A. Davidson, L., Nathan P., & Dhaliwal S. S. (2008). Enrolled nurse to registered nurse: Is there a link between initial educational preparation and course completion? *Nurse Education Today*. 28(1), 115-119. doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2007.03.006
- Rowlands, B. H. (2005). Grounded in Practice: Using Interpretive Research to Build Theory. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methodology*, 3(1). 81-92. Retrieved from <http://www.ejbrm.com/issue/download.html?idArticle=152>
- Schraw, G. (1998). Promoting general metacognitive awareness. *Instructional Science*, 26(1-2), 113-125. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1003044231033>
- Schunk, D. H. (1991). Self-efficacy and academic motivation. *Educational Psychologist*, 26, 207-231. Retrieved from http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/D_Schunk_Self_1991.pdf
- Smith, J. (2014). Interpretive Inquiry. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. doi: <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.flinders.edu.au/10.4135/9781412963909.n233>
- Sternberg, R. J. (1998). Metacognition, abilities, and developing expertise: What makes an expert student? *Instructional Science*, 26(1-2), 127-140. doi: 10.1023/A:1003096215103
- Veenman, M. V. J., Bernadette, H. A. M., Hout-Wolters, V., & Afflerbach, P. (2006). Metacognition and learning: conceptual and methodological considerations. *Metacognition and Learning*, 1, 3-14. doi: 10.1007/s11409-006-6893-0

Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: an overview. *Theory into practice*, 41(2), 64+.

Zimmerman, B. J. (2005). General theories and models of self-regulation. In Boekaerts, M., Pintrich, P. R. & Zeidner, M. (Eds.), *Handbook of Self-Regulation* (pg. 11-300). Burlington, MA: Elsevier Academic Press. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.ezproxy.flinders.edu.au/lib/flinders/reader.action?docID=886238>

Wall, Peter, Fetherston, Catherine, & Browne, Caroline. (2016). *Experiences of Nursing Students in a Bachelor of Nursing Program as They Transition from Enrolled Nurse to Registered Nurse* (Unpublished master's dissertation). Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia. Retrieved from <http://researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/id/eprint/30987/>

Winne, P. H. (1999). Motivation and teaching. In H. C. Waxman & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *Effective teaching: current research* (pp. 295-314). Berkeley, CA.

Wylie, J. R. (2005). Improving student persistence outcomes in higher education: a theoretical model for an institution-wide retention plan. *Australian Association for Research in Education 2005 conference papers*. Retrieved from <http://www.aare.edu.au/05pap/wyl05438.pdf>