

# Accelerated Second-Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing Graduates: Experience of the Transition to Professional Practice



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## INTRODUCTION

Accelerated second baccalaureate degree nursing (ASBSN) programs enable non-nurse college graduates to streamline their nursing education and begin professional practice. However, few studies have investigated their transition to practice.

## BACKGROUND

### ASBSN PROGRAMS AND STUDENTS

- Programs are brief (12-18 months) and intense
- Students have a non-nursing baccalaureate degree
- Students are older, motivated, and eager to learn, with previous life experiences
- ASBSN graduates are similar in post-graduation performance to traditional BSN graduates

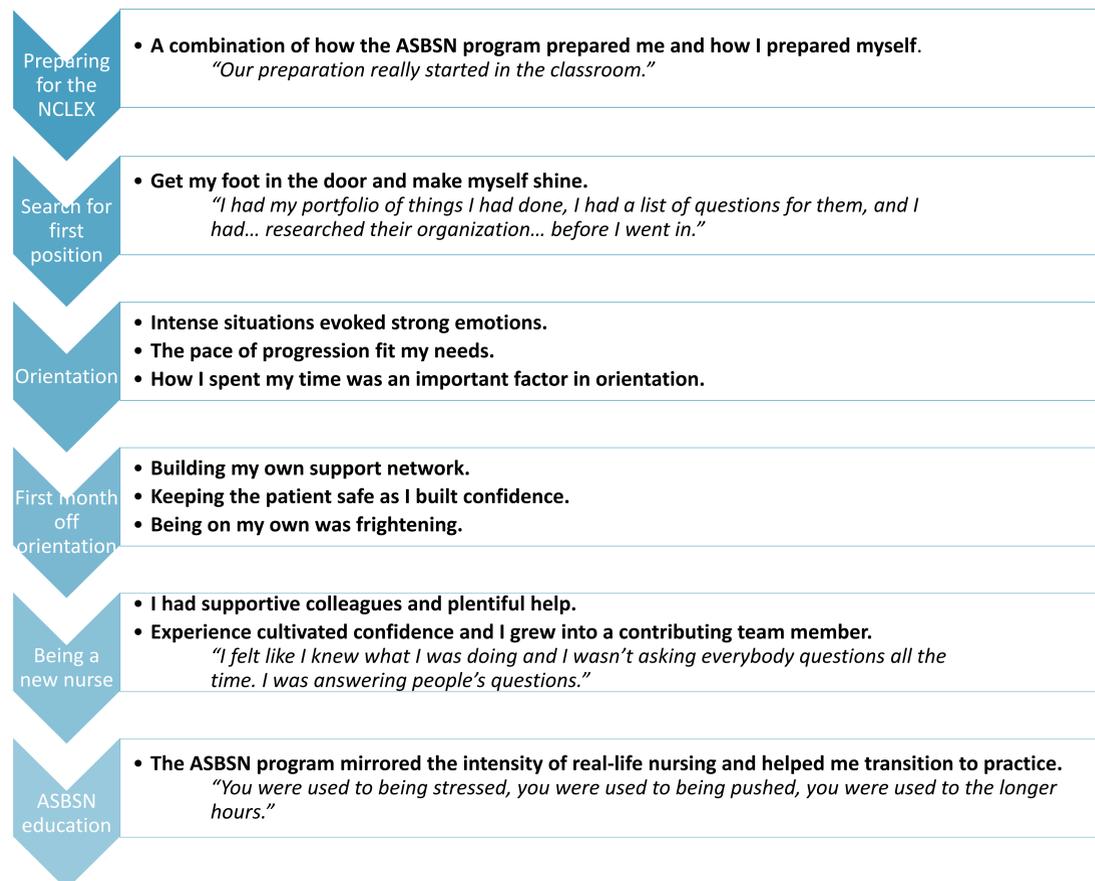
### RESEARCH ON TRANSITION TO PRACTICE

- New nurses often feel overwhelmed and experience stress
- Contributing factors include unfamiliar work culture and the theory-practice gap
- Strategies to ease the transition include extended preceptorships and residency programs

### RESEARCH ON ASBSN TRANSITION TO PRACTICE (CALHOUN, 2010)

- ASBSN graduates experience similar stress as non-ASBSN graduates
- Skepticism regarding the quality of accelerated nursing education may be exhibited by colleagues
- Teamwork, a key aspect of professional practice, was a familiar survival skill developed in school

## RESULTS



## DISCUSSION

Aspects of these ASBSN graduates' transition experience were similar to those of non-ASBSN graduates. They prepared themselves for job interviews and networked to get interviews. Interestingly, none of the graduates mentioned being asked about their first degrees during job interviews.

Similar to BSN graduates from traditional programs, ASBSN graduates reported feeling overwhelmed during the transition to practice. They acknowledged the importance of insightful preceptors to their transition, as did other new nurses. They reported feeling fear during their first month "off" orientation, double-checking their decisions with knowledgeable colleagues to validate their clinical reasoning and maintain patient safety.

Finally, the ASBSN graduates noted that the accelerated BSN program's intensity helped prepare them for the fast pace and long hours of nursing practice.

Potential employers of ASBSN graduates would do well to learn about and capitalize on the graduates' first degrees. Their maturity, knowledge and skill in other fields, and success in accelerated, intense nursing programs give them the potential to move relatively quickly into leadership positions.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REFERENCES

UW-Eau Claire Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and Delta Phi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International. Contributors to the study include Elizabeth Christman, Deidre Rykal, Christine Zimmerman, and CeCelia Zorn. Calhoun, S. K. (2010). Overcoming: a theory of accelerated second-degree baccalaureate graduate nurse transition. (Doctoral Dissertation).

## RESEARCH QUESTION

How do ASBSN graduates describe the experience of transition to practice?

## METHOD

A qualitative design, Interpretive Description, was used.

ASBSN graduates (N = 7) were interviewed within 12 to 15 months following their May 2011 graduation from a single ASBSN program. A semi-structured interview guide based on the Calhoun (2010) study was used.

Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Data were analyzed using methods consistent with Interpretive Description to identify common themes in interviewees' responses.



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