

FROM COACH TO COLLEAGUE: ADJUSTING PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES AND ASSISTIDES IN ACCELERATED NURSING PROGRAMS

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Accelerated nursing programs are an innovative approach to training nurses and advanced practice nurses that are growing steadily in number and popularity. Although there is ample evidence to show that these programs have good outcomes, acceptance by both faculty and nurses in the community remains low. This article gives a description of the accelerated nursing student, which provides some insight as to why this student is both a challenge and a joy to mentor. In addition, an overview of pedagogical approaches that may be helpful in teaching this bright group of accelerated nursing students is provided. Accelerated nursing students enrich the nursing profession with the myriad of skills and varied backgrounds they bring to nursing. As professionals, mentors, and educators, we need to not only embrace accelerated students but also be advocates and mentors for them as they assimilate into our profession. (Index words: Accelerated nursing program; Pedagogical approach; Professional formation) *J Prof Nurs* 0:1 2013. © 2013 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

AS HAS BEEN noted in many publications over the past decade, 55% of registered nurses (RNs) will reach retirement age by 2020 while the demand for nurses will increase, thus predicting a shortfall of approximately 260,000 RNs by 2025 (Eurhaus, Auerbach, & Staioder, 2009). In addition to the a0.3the1ot

high expectations for the teaching/learning environment students with an average undergraduate grade point and expect it to be infused with instructional technology average (GPA) of 3.4 on a 4.0 scale, high graduate record and delivered in an efficient, comprehensive manner. examination (GRE) analytical scores, and above average

The purpose of this article is to review the literature on GRE quantitative scores. Accelerated students are young pedagogical approaches specific to accelerated students, with an average age of 27.8 years (range = 25-33), identifying best practices, challenges, and areas in need of making cohorts largely composed of generation X and additional research. Prior to summarizing this literature, millennials or digital natives (Prensky, 2001). The mean brief history of accelerated nursing programs and age of accelerated students over the past 3 years is 29 portrait of the typical accelerated student will be provided, years, and approximately 28% hold post baccalaureate drawing from both the literature and the authors' own degrees in areas such as business, public health, public institutional demographics. Faculty experiences with administration, or the physical sciences.

accelerated students, as reported in the literature, will Most of the students come into the program after also be summarized to motivate a further examination of successfully pursuing careers in areas such as health the unique needs of this growing population of students. education, strategic planning, laboratory science, grant

Accelerated Nursing Degree Characteristics

On their accelerated programs fact sheet, the ACN (2011) depicts the accelerated nursing student as motivated, older and with higher academic expectations than traditional entry-level nursing students. At our own college of nursing, we have certainly found this University's accelerated nursing program. Each brings a characterization to be true. Table 1 provides an overview very different type of experiential and educational of the demographics of Seattle University's accelerated background to his or her embarkment on a career in nursing applicant pool and accepted student cohorts for nursing. Most are truly exceptional.

the academic years 2009 through 2011. A robust and ethnically diverse applicant pool has consistently yielded an extremely bright cohort of accelerated nursing studies. Amy is 31 years old and holds a bachelor of arts degree in medical anthropology with a minor in women's

an extremely bright cohort of accelerated nursing studies. Amy was homeless for a few years and, then,

Table 1. Demographics of Applicant Pool and Accepted Cohorts 2009-2011

	2009	2010	2011
No. of applications received and reviewed	231	312	352
Average GPA of applicants	3.417	3.431	3.419
Average GRE analytical	4.48	4.37	4.38
Average GRE verbal	516	515	517
Average GRE quantitative	595	586	589
Average age	27.4	28	28.3
Age range	20-54	18-55	19-54
Ethnicity			
African American/Black	11	13	13
Asian American	25	42	49
Hispanic/Latino	5	11	17

began her undergraduate studies at age 24 when she could legally fill out her own Free Application for Federal Student Aid papers. She started her undergraduate degree at a community college and, then, transferred to a public university after completing her Associate of Arts degree. She has been financially independent since she was 18 and financed her entire education via grants and scholarships. Amy states that she came to the accelerated nursing program understanding what it means to be vulnerable with the hope of helping other women who have been through similar hardships.

Tim holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's in behavioral neuropsychology. At 39 years old, Tim has held a variety of positions, including research technician, teacher, and massage therapist. His master's thesis title was Dopamine Dynamics Associated With and Resulting From Schedule-Induced Alcohol Self-Administration: Analysis in Mice Lacking the Dopamine Transporter. Tim also participated in a religious mission as a part of his faith journey for 2 years.

At 27 years old, Susan has served 2 years in the Peace Corps in Mozambique and speaks Spanish, Portuguese, French, and some American sign language. She has a

be more demanding of faculty time, particularly one-on-one evaluation of written assignments and examinations.

Both of these articles emphasize that the teaching of accelerated students is not for everyone. Similar to our experience, [Cangelosi and Moss \(2010\)](#) interviewed faculty who were uncomfortable teaching accelerated students. Other faculty held

As several authors have suggested, employing adult learning principles with accelerated students is both helpful and necessary if we are to assist these students to assimilate quickly into the community of nursing is suited to second-degree accelerated students in that it (Rico et al., 2009; Cangelosi & Moss, 2010). However, as noted earlier, accelerated students tend to be high achievers with a proven track record both academically and professionally. In our own program, the application process is competitive with over 300 applicants for 50 slots, yielding a class of exceptionally bright students. Therefore, we feel it is not enough to simply streamline redundant curriculum and insert case studies as needed. Rather, we recommend partnering with students more as a mentor and applying approaches such as Newman's (1989) cognitive apprenticeship model, where teachers:

- € identify the processes of the task and make them visible to students,
- € situate abstract tasks in authentic contexts so that students understand the relevance of the work, and
- € vary the diversity of situations and articulate the common aspects so that students can transfer what they learn (Collins, Brown, & Holum, 1991).

A cognitive apprenticeship approach is a fundamentally different method of teaching in that material is introduced to students in order to provide them with the tools to apply knowledge in strategic ways rather than simply attaining a knowledge base (Stahmeijer, Dohmans, Wolfhagen, & Scherphier, 2009). Students are introduced to material as a means of launching them on an inquiry process. Students are then introduced to increasingly complex problems and encouraged to take control over their own learning.

complex by introducing a second scene, building on the first, with a change in time, patient condition, laboratory results, or procedure.

Perhaps, most importantly, when faculty adopt a coaching role, students feel supported and are pulled into the community of nursing as partners in the learning process, albeit in a novice role, but partners nonetheless. The cognitive apprentice model in general and the use of situated learning in particular also aid in the socialization to the role and the profession. When

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