

**TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING REPORT ON
STRATEGIES UTILIZED BY TEXAS NURSING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
TO IMPROVE CANDIDATES' PERFORMANCE ON THE NCLEX EXAMINATION**

SUMMARY:

This report provides information about strategies implemented during a two year period by vocational and professional nursing educational programs to improve NCLEX examination pass rates. Board staff reviewed self-study reports prepared by 16 VN and 8 RN nursing educational programs that experienced a lower than 80% pass rate on the 2005 and 2006 NCLEX examination.

Strategies were classified under items identified as “contributing factors” in the education guideline provided for programs writing a self-study report. A total of 178 individual strategies were proposed by the programs (See Table A). The highest frequency of individual program strategies was reported in the areas of (1) Faculty (24.72% of responses) and (2) Policies (23.60% of responses). Programs identified needs for faculty orientation, development, training, teaching resources, and incentives for recruitment and retention. They also recognized a strong need to review all student policies and revise policies related to admission, progression, graduation, standardized testing and remediation. These findings are consistent with findings from the October 2006 report from The Task Force to Increase RN Graduates in Texas entitled “Strategies to Increase the Number of Graduates from Initial RN Licensure Programs.”

This report will provide:

- background information related to the requirement for programs to write a self-study report
- outline for self-study report provided in education guideline
- frequency rates of strategies
- limitation of information in the report

BACKGROUND:

Rule 214.4(c)(2)(B) and Rule 215.4(c)(2)(B) related to *Approval* require that when the passing score of first-time candidates who complete the nursing educational program is less than 80% on the NCLEX examination during the examination year, the nursing program shall submit a self-study report that evaluates factors which contributed to the graduates' performance on the NCLEX examination and a description of the corrective measures to be implemented. The self-study report is prepared following Board guidelines.

Education Guideline 3.2.1.a. *Writing a Self-Study Report on Evaluation of Factors which Contributed to the Graduates' Performance on the NCLEX-PN® or NCLEX-RN® Examination* provides an outline for the self-study report based upon analysis of the following contributing factors:

- Students
- Policies
- Faculty
- Curriculum
- Testing and Evaluation
- Evaluation Methods for Class and Clinical
- Total Program Evaluation

From this analysis, the program develops:

- Summary of Findings
- Conclusions
- Corrective Measures to be implemented

The corrective measures are presented as strategies to improve the success of graduates on the NCLEX examination.

This report examines strategies which have been planned and implemented by twenty-four (24) programs experiencing a low NCLEX examination pass rate for the 2005 and 2006 examination years. Most programs begin implementation of strategies as soon as they realize their pass rate will be lower than 80%. The pass rate for 91.6% of the programs increased to above 80% for the examination year following their self-study.

Strategies:

Self-study reports from these 24 VN and RN programs suggested a combined 178 individually-named strategies which have been categorized under the 7 factors in the self-study reports or under a separate category related to structural changes in the program.

**Frequency Rate of Strategies Within Categories:
Table A**

Category Strategies Related to:	Number of Individual Strategies Named	Percent of Total Strategies
Students	27	15.16%
Policies	42	23.60%
Faculty	44	24.72%
Curriculum	24	13.48%
Testing & Evaluation	22	12.36%
Evaluation Methods for Class and Clinical	12	06.74%
Total Program Evaluation	5	02.80%
Structural Changes	2	01.12%

Classification of Strategies:

Individual strategies were classified based upon similarity of suggested activities:

Students: Table B

General Strategy	Specific Areas Identified:
Provide student support	counseling services, advising preparation in test-taking skills and critical thinking practice with computer testing tutorial services test review and feedback peer mentoring stress reduction seminars
Develop more rigorous student orientation program	
Identify at-risk students	track students from admission to graduation remediation plan involving student faculty involvement in remediation referral to counseling and learning resources follow-up
Provide access to faculty assistance	communication opportunities (email, groups) faculty review of student progress individual faculty assistance
Decrease admission quotas	fewer students and more student attention decrease attrition - increase retention
Increase admission pool	more advertisement and recruitment

Policies: Table C

General Strategy	Specific Areas Identified
Review and revise admission policies	pre-admission testing requirements ranking of students pre-requisites requirements pre-admission GPA screening for at-risk students interview of potential students
Review and revise graduation requirements	capstone experience exit exams
Revise policies for transfer students and readmissions	
Revise grading policies	require higher scores
Strengthen or establish policies on progression, advisement and remediation	scores on standardized tests policies for at-risk students
Improve processes for policy development and adherence	new committees improved communication enrollment management plan review faculty and student handbooks

Faculty: Table D

General Strategy	Specific Areas Identified
Improve new faculty orientation	formal orientation plan online faculty orientation areas to include in orientation: item analysis, clinical evaluation, Web CT faculty mentors
Provide faculty training	test item analysis, test blueprinting test construction clinical evaluation tool effective teaching strategies exam review NCSBN item-writing workshop technology in classroom faculty role PAR score test analysis workshops in areas of expertise
Track faculty development	
Implement measures for faculty recruitment and retention	salary increase for part time faculty use of mentors reduced workload experienced faculty scheduled with inexperienced faculty in clinical sites option for calendar year appointment increased number of faculty increased salaries increased faculty benefits stabilization of faculty and staff more faculty preparation time
Evaluate teaching methods	faculty peer review feedback provided to faculty from evaluations regular evaluation of faculty clinical observations of faculty
Improve administration of program	hiring of VN coordinator to support teaching improved communications mentor for program director more presence of program director to faculty monthly faculty meetings
Provide additional teaching resources	
Change VN faculty requirement to RN licensure	

Curriculum: Table E

General Strategy	Specific Areas Identified
Utilize consultant in improvements	
Update teaching methods	WebCT simulation mastery of software various media
Include students on curriculum committee	
Plan faculty review of curriculum	evaluation and revision of curriculum content analysis evaluation of web-based courses plan for maintaining currency requiring capstone course monitor course objectives and test items WECM update ethics across the curriculum update of syllabi and clinical evaluation tools DELCC
Seek new clinical sites	review of clinical hours addition of clinical site faculty as liaison to clinical settings
Change class format	smaller classes shorter courses to early part of program

Testing & Evaluation: Table F

General Strategy	Specific Areas Identified
Utilize NCLEX test plan and test item blueprint	test construction reflection of NCLEX test plan test blueprinting test item analysis Kaplan Q bank plan for test revision
Utilize standardized testing and remediation plan	ERI competency testing at various points in program PAR score system ATI structured remediation total testing and remediation package
Ensure test security	
Review and revise testing calendar	
Implement test-taking strategies	

Evaluation Methods for Class and Clinical: Table G

General Strategy	Specific Areas Identified
Provide faculty with tools for analysis and revision of exams	improved exam analysis
Revise grading scale	review of course grades increase passing standard progression in testing through program
Develop testing committee to evaluate testing and evaluation methods	
Evaluate consistency of test items and curriculum	
Eliminate possibility of grade inflation	review and revision of clinical evaluation tools modification of capstone course

Total Program Evaluation: Table H

General Strategy	Specific Areas Identified
Revise TPE to reflect BON and accreditation standards	
Revise Institutional Effectiveness Plan	
Implement TPE	
Use data from TPE for revisions	

Limitations of Report:

- Information provided is self reported in self-study reports.
- Other strategies may have been implemented that were not mentioned in the self-study reports.
- The degree of effectiveness of strategies has not been determined.
- The extra attention given to students and curriculum because of the low NCLEX pass rate may have affected the performance of faculty and students.
- Differences in student demographics may have affected their motivation and performance.
- Self-study reports tend to be subjective in nature.
- Strategies of programs that consistently have high NCLEX examination pass rates are not included.