

# Students' Transition from K12 Program to Nursing Program: An Experiential Detail

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## Abstract

Nursing is one of the toughest professions and during the preparation, student nurses are trained to be resilient in all aspects of life. Student nurses are expected to comply with the standards of nursing education and nursing practice. Along with struggles in taking the program cannot be denied, especially most during the transition period from the newly introduced K12 program in the Philippines to the nursing program. Thus, the study aims to explore the students' transition from K12 Program to Nursing Program. In meeting international norms and standards, better student preparation for life, preserving national identity and improving student competencies, K12 has been implemented. However, during class observation among graduates of K12 program were having difficulty in understanding the major courses, troubled following instructions with the basic rules of the college and excelling to nursing program was apparently sensed a struggle. To investigate further, the researcher utilized descriptive qualitative method in exploring the student-nurses' experiential detail during the transition from K12 program to the nursing program. The study was conducted to level 1 of Bachelor of Science in Nursing who took K12 program regardless of the strands. In exploring the experiential details of the transition, structured questions were formulated until the saturation of responses were reached. To further validate and clarify the meaning of the experiences a follow-up interview was completed. From the analysis of data, the study found that the transition period tests the student nurses in adopting to change. The result reveals, challenges encountered, coping strategies employed and personal growth and development among student nurses during the transition. In conclusion, the transition from K12 program to nursing program impacts the lives of students and taught them the value of experiences to prime success in the future.

*Keywords:* Student Nurses; K12 Program; Transition; Nursing Program; Experiential Detail

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## 1. Introduction

Nursing is one of the toughest professions, and during the preparation period, student nurses are trained to be resilient in all aspects of life. Student nurses are expected to comply with the standard of nursing education and nursing practice. However, struggles in taking the program are truly undeniable, especially during the transition period.

The implementation of K-12 program aims to meet the international norms and standards, prepare students for a better life, conserve national identity and improve student's competence. However, during class observation, students are having difficulty in understanding the major courses such as anatomy and physiology and following instructions with the basic rules of the college, and only few got high score in

quizzes and term examinations. In line with these, assessment was conducted to understand and plan for necessary actions to the situations. Most of the students made mentioned that it was difficult to be part of the experiment; faculty members were newly graduate and lack of experience; the school facility was inadequate for the track; the on-the-job training was not related to area of specialization; some focused on research but did not pay attention to other courses; blended learning gave them more chances to pass the course; and face-to-face meeting happened only 3 times a week, and sometimes, teachers were not attending classes. Similarly, the classroom is composed of 34 students who came from different tracks of K-12 program and different schools as well. Further, Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order No. 105 stipulates that all grade 12 graduates beginning Academic Year 2017-2018 are eligible to enter college regardless of the track or strand taken in Senior High School. In line with this, observation made and revealed students who took Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics perform well during class interaction, group activities and paper assessment in spite of having difficulty in transition.

To encapsulate, K-12 program impacts the student transition to Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program. Thus, this motivates and urges the researcher to conduct descriptive qualitative research specifically a phenomenology study to address the current problems observed in the classroom by exploring the students' experiences during the transition from K-12 program to BS Nursing program.

## 2. Relevant Literature

Angola, Djibouti, and the Philippines are the three nations that utilized a 10-year basic education in 2015. (Bergonio, 2013). The 2-year gap in the educational system has an impact on Filipinos' capacity to find work abroad. Due to the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013," which mandates a six-year primary education, a four-year junior high school, and a two-year senior high school, K12 was established. (Association of South East Asian Nation., 2015)

Pertinently, the planning and execution of the K–12 transition consume significant amounts of resources, both financial and human. Since the country is a low-income middle-income country, the case for restructuring must be strong. Following decades, an ambitious school education reform, K–12 system was initiated with the potential to reverse decline and create a high-performing and inclusive school education system. Simultaneously, an intensive program was launched to bridge input deficits in infrastructure and teachers that had accumulated to a point where confidence in the government to deliver quality public education was low. Halfway through rollout, limited absorptive capacity raises concerns about achieving reform milestones within its scheduled timeframe (Sarvi, J., Munger, F., Pillay, H., 2015).

A study conducted by Sherrod A., Harrison L., Lowery, B., Wood F., Edwards R., Gaskins S. Buttram T., (1992) assessed the initiative to increase the enrollment and retention of underprivileged nursing students. Twenty first-year baccalaureate nursing students were interviewed, and they were asked to discuss the good and bad parts of their academic and extracurricular experiences, as well as the challenges they encountered and suggestions for fixing them. It was shown that their experiences had been positive in terms of their academic, social, familial, and economical support. Excessive academic loads, course-specific issues like those with the sciences, big class sizes, faculty inattentiveness, racial tensions, dorm/roommate issues, and parking or commute time were among the issues related to external sources, while other issues included racial tensions. Poor study habits, loneliness, homesickness, family conflicts, and issues with peer connections were additional issues caused by internal factors. Another study conducted by Kim E. & Park, K. (2014) studied the elements influencing first-year nursing students' transition into college life. The study's findings showed a relationship between psychological health, coping skills, and mother connection and college adjustment. Psychological health was the best indicator of how well a student would adjust to college. Moreover, coping skills, contact frequency for professor interviews, and psychological well-being

explained 39.2% of the variance in college adjustment. The study's findings made the case that nursing students' growth in psychological well-being and coping skills is crucial to their adjustment to college life. It is necessary to conduct further study on enhancing psychological health and coping.

In line with the challenges encountered by freshmen students, recognizing the additional time spent traveling from home to school could be other-wise allocated to studying or devoted to physical activities, leisure and sleeping, activities positively related with academic achievement (Ahrberg K., Dresler, M., Niedermaier, S., Steiger, A., Genzel, L., 2012; Perkinson-Gloor, N., Lemola & S., Grob, A., 2013). Therefore, commuting duration alone has a significant effect to students' academic performance. Seconded by Tigre, R., Sampiao, B., & Menezes T. (2017), There is convincing evidence that the amount of time spent travelling has an adverse causal impact on academic performance. Wu, Q. (2014) It has been acknowledged that commuting time may cut into study time, and that study time has been linked to improved academic success.

In the same vein, due to the fact that accessibility and mobility are related to transportation disadvantage, another study focused on journey time. Also, it was discovered that students' attitudes of the impact of transportation on their education were negatively impacted by journey time. (Slaven Gašparović, 2014). It can be difficult for students during this transitional stage to adjust to a new social milieu, different pedagogical and learning approaches, more autonomy, but also greater responsibility because everyone handles these things differently. One study came to the conclusion that male students in particular are negatively impacted by the distance between the institution and their family's home. Examine the factors that affect how far a student is from their school in this essay. It was anticipated that it would strengthen the ongoing conversation about this matter, which is crucial for families, universities, student support services, and ultimately for the decision-makers in charge of planning the territorial dispersion of the network of higher education institutions. (Vieira, I. 2015).

On the other hand, Nelson, D., Misra, K., Syge G., & Mackie, W (2016) discovered that a wide range of variables affect students' capacity to succeed in college and finish a degree program. According to a survey, students who live on campus are more likely to finish their degrees than those who do not, at least during their first year. Conversely, commuting students may have greater time constraints and less opportunity to form deep bonds with their academics and their university. It may be assumed that students who reside further away from a campus might have more difficulty attending classes and completing extracurricular assignments assigned by their courses to attend classes and to complete outside tasks required by their classes.

Another study was conducted to examine the various travel behaviors, notably how students might be affected by their choice of commute mode. On the one hand, the idea has been put up that active commuting—including walking, cycling, and taking public transportation—will increase daily activity. Yet, engaging in too much physical exercise may cut into pupils' study time. Travel time could cut into study time, and study time has been found to improve academic achievement. Given the paucity of studies examining university students' travel habits and academic performance, more research in this area is warranted. Consider increasing the number of apartments near campus, creating more bikeways and walkways, and other measures to help Clemson University students do better academically. (Wu, Q., 2014).

Kokemuller, N. (n.d.) listed the difficulties college students have with their academics, including finding the time to study, comprehending the material, and being highly motivated. Along with overcoming these obstacles, students frequently struggle to strike a balance between the demands of their studies and their obligations to job, family, and friends.

To summarize, the literature cited are evidences that the transition from high school to college challenges every student in different aspects. Those challenges may lead to success or failure of the students in pursuing their chosen profession.

### 3. Methodology

The researcher used a qualitative research design, specifically, a descriptive phenomenology that was developed by Husserl in 1962. It primarily insists a careful description of ordinary conscious experience of an individual. According to Polit & Beck (2012), one approach to understanding the significance of people's life experiences is phenomenology. This indicates that the researcher did not use any theories, deductions, or preconceptions when she explored the students' transitional experiences from K12 to BSN programs.

Furthermore, they also stated that descriptive phenomenology involves four steps including bracketing, intuiting, analyzing and describing. Bracketing is the process in which the researcher holds or avoids preconceptions about the phenomenon that is being studied. Though bracketing can never be achieved fully, the researcher strived to bracket out any presuppositions to interpret the data purely. Meanwhile, intuiting occurs when the researchers preserve openness to the meanings of phenomenon as provided by the key informants who have experienced the transition period. On the other hand, thematic analysis was utilized to comprehend the experiences of student nurses in the transition. Following the data analysis phases of familiarization, coding, topic generation, theme review, theme definition, theme naming, and narrative writing, an inductive technique was applied. (Willig, C. & Stainton-Rogers W., 2017) In addition, this includes the students from BSN Level I who finished K-12 program regardless of strands and who are currently enrolled in the university.

According to Polit & Beck (2012), since the sample size in qualitative research depends on the data that the participant provided, there are no set guidelines for sample size. Hence, there is a guiding principle in sampling for qualitative research, that is, the information provided by the key informants were obtained in a redundant manner. Meaning, the students' experiences during the transition period were fitting in into several themes. In this study, 5 out of 34 BSN students were interviewed and asked to write their experiences during transition.

Moreover, Creswell & Poth (2015) implied that there is one basic rule for conducting qualitative research, namely that the researcher must gather extensive information about each locale or subject under research rather than concentrating on a limited number of subjects. They mentioned that criterion sampling works well when all participants represent people who have experienced the phenomenon. Similarly, Polit & Beck (2012) described it as a technique that may be used to find and comprehend situations that are full with first-hand knowledge about the issue under study. Thus, the researcher used the criterion sampling techniques because it is the most appropriate sampling strategy in phenomenology to gain rich and significant amount of data.

On the same manner, the study focuses on the exploration of students' experiences during transition from K12 program to BSN program. The participants came from only 1 section and from different tracks in K-12 program. It excludes the class performance or rating in selecting the respondents and voluntarily subject themselves to be part of the study.

Likewise, key instrument of the study is the researcher herself. A technique to gather data needed for this study is grand tour question that allowed the students to express their experiences during the transition. After, the researcher conducted an interview to follow-up the verbal and written experiences to further

clarify its meaning. The researcher prepared an open-ended question to be answered by the participants. Polit & Beck (2012) emphasized that the researcher needs to be attentive because participants may respond spontaneously and may give information about questions that are later on the list. This technique provided the researcher flexibility in terms of data gathering, since the questions alone, to lead participants to narrate more and give clarity to written data. This also increase cogency since it provided opportunity for the researcher to clarify things to be stated.

Further, the study is solely concern with the experiences from the participants perspective through interviews, taking significant conversations, participant's observation, focus meetings, analysis of diaries and other personal texts.

The first step the researcher did was to present the research proposal to an in-house review for critics and approval of the topic to be studied. After it had been approved, a formal letter was sent to the participants asking their consent to be part of the study. This informed consent contained the title and objectives of the study to ensure that the data will be used only for the study and will be kept in full confidentiality. After which, the schedule of interview and narrative documentation of experiences followed.

## 4. Findings

After analyzing the result of written responses and follow-up interview to verify the meaning of the data, an exhaustive description of thematic analysis was presented to discuss the strong points of the themes.

### Challenges Encountered

The participants expressed their challenges in terms of travel time from their place to school and vice versa: difficulty in understanding the content of the subject, lack of preparation during examination because of a lot of requirements to submit at the same time, difficulty in prioritizing school work and home work/time management.

### Travel Time

One of the challenges encountered by the participants was the travel time from their place to school. The average travel time of the students were 1-1.5 hours from their place to school and vice versa considering the 24-unit academic load. It was a challenge because most of the participants came from nearby municipality where time allotted for travelling may be used for studying their lessons and doing their requirements. Travelling made them feel physically tired and coming in late reduces their productivity. So, instead of studying and doing their requirements for at least 2 hours before going to bed, they work on household chores, eat dinner and go to sleep in order to regain energy for another school day. It was also observed that during the class hours, those students who travelled from far municipality lack concentration and sometimes fall asleep.

Participant #1 "Yes, a lot of challenges came and challenged me- one of those challenges is transportation. So, of course, I needed to become responsible, and apparently, I was able to find the perfect strategy to address that difficulty."

Participant #2 "I also do not find it easy to go to school and return back home. Traveling for hours will really cause tiresome. And because of heavy traffic, I sometimes arrive home very late at night."

Participant #3 "I wasn't briefed that college is really tiring because I am travelling 4 hours of my day in going to school and going back home. It's really a challenge physically because of the hours I spent on traveling which can already be used on other productive things than I must do."

Participant #4 "In the beginning, I was really struggling to adjust, specially, to the fact that I have to wake up way earlier compared to the time I was waking up before."

Participant #5 “The time I supposed to use for studying goes to the time I spend for traveling.”

### **Difficulty in understanding the content of the subject**

The participants experienced difficulty in understanding the content of the subject because most of the subjects are new to them. Likewise, familiarity to the terms used in the subject is difficult for them to recollect and comprehend. Most of the participants are not used to reading because they mentioned that in senior high school there were only few assignments and requirements as compared to college. Lack of understanding may be due to limited time in studying since they are travelling and loaded with personal responsibilities at home. Further, changing the words used during classes to their synonyms confuses the students because their vocabularies are limited. Thus, making reading as a habit and using of dictionary may assist them in dealing with this challenge.

Participant #1 “Another challenge comes from the anatomy and physiology subjects. I can say that these subjects are truly difficult to understand and for a student to get a good grade...”

Participant #2 “...taking down notes from the lesson, reading and understanding for the report, learning the lessons anywhere for as long as I get the opportunity to do so. But honestly, I totally get confused when other terms are being used.”

Participant #5 “I truthfully struggle in listening to the class discussion because I am still not very familiar with the lesson. I also have difficulty in complying to the requirement of writing in lecture notebook because I am not so used to it. Likewise, taking a quiz after a discussion is not easy since I frequently experience mental block during class.”

### **Lack of preparation for examination**

In order to pass the course, there are examinations to accomplish and lack of preparation may lead to failure. However, among the 5 participants there were only 2 who got low grades in class and the other 3 excel in class despite of lack of preparation before the examination. To correlate the student's performance with the requirements, writing notes pushes them to read aside from just writing it to comply with the demand of the course. Another is their attentiveness- active participation and interest shown during classes in spite of the challenges they encountered such as travel time, personal responsibilities and time management.

Participant #1 “Lastly, the major challenge I encountered came during examination period. I was really rattled because I still had some requirements to complete to the extent that I will not have time to sleep just to finish all those which will lead me to not have time to review for the exam at all.”

Participant #2 “Every time that there will be an examination the next day, I only get few hours to review because of the time I spent traveling from our home to school and my responsibilities to do the household chores which also add to the tiresome I feel.”

### **Time Management**

Balancing time among students during transition period is truly a challenge because other than their school works, students may even have personal responsibilities at home and other stuffs. In class, it is essential to teach students to have a study plan like spending an hour for each course every day and making free time for reading however tiresome, workloads from requirements, assignments and recitations complicate what to do first. Thus, students must learn how to manage time in order to accomplish academic tasks while fulfilling students' personal responsibilities.

Participant #2 “I honestly do not know which I am going to do first when school works and household chores come together. I also got shocked with the requirements that bombard us because when I was in SHS, we did not have much assignments and other requirements.”

Participant #3 “I am challenged on how I will make my time more productive because I really suck at



time management.”

Participant #4 “The struggles or challenges I have been facing so far are the notebooks which also serve as a requirement, reporting in front of the class or just answering questions in our daily recitation and the requirements in all our subjects.”

### **Coping Strategies Employed**

The participants' coping techniques are focused on how they will manage trying to assimilate the subject's material. Reading the content repeatedly improves their understanding likewise with group studies. In reviewing the participants responses, it has shown that they have individual coping style in adjusting to the current situation they are in. This may be considering a development of maturity wherein students find way to accomplish their tasks through self-assessment and looking for possible solutions to the challenges they are facing.

Participant #1 “Before, I just always memorized without totally understanding what I was memorizing. Now, I deeply realized that repeated reading can really improve the sense of understanding to what I try to learn, so every time that I feel like I don't understand it clearly, I just read it repeatedly as soon as I have the chance to until I can tell myself that I already knew the concept.”

Participant #2 “... reading and studying anywhere for the report as long as I have the chance to do so...”

Participant #4 “Group studies help me to understand the concept further”

Participant #5 “I was also not used to reading a material repeatedly. Nursing program truly becomes a challenge for me because it is definitely not easy to understand and learn. However, since this is what I really want to take up, I learned to adjust the time that I wake up in the morning. I also realized the value of being friendly to my co-nursing students. Similarly, I learned to strive harder to perform actively in class and get good scores in our quizzes. I even learned to read and read over and again only to understand the nursing concepts. Above all, I learned to love nursing more so I can finish the course and graduate.”

### **Personal Growth and Development**

In spite of the challenges experienced by the participants, these challenges contribute to their personal growth and development. Participants realized to take the program seriously and found ways to cope with every challenge. Values learned from their experiences matter to them - like being responsible, well-disciplined, believing to self, positive thoughts, controlling and pushes self to do more for their chosen profession. Those attitudes were considered helpful to the students to overcome the challenges. Thus, developing students to be more self-reliant will most likely be helpful to succeed in the program along with the proper guidance of their parents and teachers in school.

Participant #1 “...but, as time goes by, being responsible and well-disciplined individual is the only key to face, conquer and surpass all the challenges.”

Participant #2 “Even so, I still feel proud of myself because I am still doing it and I get to help myself to improve and be better.”

Participant #3 “Until now, I'm really trying to overcome these challenges by thinking positive thoughts, believing in myself more and finding things to keep my fire burning.”

Participant #4 “I am coping with the struggles by making myself become more disciplined and facing my fear of standing in front of others”

Participant #5 “... I will really do everything like waking up early in the morning, being friendly and nice to everybody, performing better during class discussions and examinations. Above all, I will learn to love reading and the program itself so I can finish this with pride.”

In summary, the data revealed the experiences of student nurses during the transition in terms of challenges encountered, coping strategies employed and personal growth and development.

### Thematic Framework



**Figure 1. The Thematic Analysis of Students' Transition from K12 Program to Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program**

The themes presented are patterns across the data set that are important to the description of the phenomenon and are associated with the grand tour question made. It was derived from the experiences of BSN I students who transitioned from K-12 to BS Nursing Program. The thematic analysis was also established following the phases of coding until the final report was made.

Further, the result of the study will be valuable to the School Administrators to increase awareness on the experiences of students during the transition period and a basis for supporting faculty in their teaching strategies in terms of resources. The result can be a basis for the Dean of the College in planning for faculty and student's development and for Faculty to provide the appropriate strategies for every student after expressing their experiences and possibly identifying the problems to be addressed since they are direct contact with the learners. Likewise, to Students to have an opportunity to improve themselves based from their basic knowledge, skills, values and learning styles. And for Future Researchers to persuade a new study based from its findings and resolving the gap of students' transition or basis to measure the extent of effectiveness of strategies used in managing the challenges student nurses during the transition period.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results, it deemed that the students on transition experience different challenges in terms of travel



time from their place to school, understanding the content of the courses, preparation on written examination and time management. However, brought by the student's challenges, reading the content repeatedly, following good time management, religiously taking down notes and conducting group studies were developed by the students as coping strategies.

Further, the participants realized to take the program seriously and find ways to cope with every challenge. Values learned from their experiences matter to them- like being responsible, well-disciplined, believing to self, positive thoughts, controlling and pushes self to do more for their chosen profession. Those attitudes were considered helpful to the students to overcome the challenges. Thus, developing students to be more self-reliant will most likely be helpful to succeed in the program along with the proper guidance of their parents and teachers in school.

Looking at the thematic analysis, recommendations were made.

Problem	Strategies	Responsible Person	Time Frame
<b>Travel Time</b>	Create time management program on how to balance time for studying if time spend to traveling is uncontrolled. Inform the parents about the students' difficulty in travelling and explain how it affects their academic performances. Suggest renting of boarding house near the school to reduce the time of travelling and have more time in studying.	Faculty/ College  Parents	Before the start of the semester
<b>Difficulty in understanding the content of the subject</b>	Train students to read habitually. Conduct tutorials or individual conferences. Encourage students to seek help whenever necessary. Promote peer education since most of the students are comfortable being with their friends/classmates. Give specific task that stimulates their best interest. Group students according to their learning styles and conduct a group discussion.	Faculty	Before the start of the semester
<b>Lack of preparation for examination</b>	Create time management program to help them balance their time. To the faculty, consider the workload given to student from each course. Suggest an hour of reading every day to help them prepare for the examination. Encourage and motivate students to spend time studying their lessons in preparation for their future profession.	Faculty	Before the start of the semester

<b>Time Management</b>	Instruct students to create a study plan. Create time management program on how to prioritize multiple tasks. Inform their parents about the demand of the program and if possible, reduce household responsibilities.	Faculty Parents	Before the start of the semester
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