



## Nursing students' experiences of repeating units in an undergraduate program: A qualitative study

Rakime Elmir\*, Lucie M. Ramjan, Bronwyn Everett, Yenna Salamonson

Western Sydney University, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Locked Bag 1797, Penrith, NSW 2751, Australia  
Centre for Applied Nursing Research (CANR), Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research, Australia



### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

Academic failure  
Education  
Nursing  
Retention  
Students

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Academic failure in undergraduate nursing education programs is a growing concern globally. While some students choose to continue with their nursing course by repeating units of study, others discontinue from their respective nursing programs contributing to a marked increase in nursing attrition rates. This academic failure can be attributed to competing demands of paid employment and family commitments.

**Aim:** The aim of this study was to explore first year students' experiences of repeating a unit of study in the undergraduate nursing program.

**Methods:** A descriptive qualitative design informed this study which involved undergraduate nursing students enrolled at a large metropolitan multi-campus nursing school in Australia. Data were collected from nine nursing students who had repeated one or more units of study using face-to-face and telephone interviews and data were analysed using thematic analysis.

**Findings:** Four themes emerged from the data 'struggling to meet workload expectations', 'making the adjustment', 'utilising academic supports and resources' and 'the strength to carry on'. The struggles faced by nursing students repeating units of study included the university's academic environment, heavy workload and issues encountered to meet academic writing standards, juggling to balance the demands of paid employment and personal commitments. Participants demonstrated strength and resilience in their quest to fulfil their dreams and goals of becoming a Registered Nurse, and some reassessed their financial situations to make changes to paid employment hours or reduce study workload to part-time. While peer support was valued, participants expressed their desire for further tutor support to consolidate learning.

**Conclusions:** Support strategies tailored for students repeating nursing units are needed to ensure students continue successfully with their nursing programs.

### 1. Background

Retention of nursing students is a major issue and challenge worldwide. In the United Kingdom, as many as 27% of nursing students may never become registered, with some nursing programs reporting incompleteness rates as much as 50% (McLaughlin et al., 2010). In the United States incompleteness rates in nursing programs have been reported up to 20% (Brown and Marshall, 2008) and in Australia 24.5% (Gaynor et al., 2007).

There has been a shift from the traditional to non-traditional nursing student entering nursing studies, with students being academically diverse, older, and ethnically diverse suggesting student perseverance, retention and entry into the workforce is a challenge (Jeffreys, 2007;

Merkley, 2016). Some of the reasons for students discontinuing from their nursing studies include academic pressure, financial hardship and stress from the clinical environment (Hamshire et al., 2013). Kenny et al. (2011) highlighted the difficulties of work-study life balance among mature aged nursing students, particularly managing academic work and family commitments compounding the difficulties the students experienced. Often the time spent on family commitments reduces the time available for study and careful planning needed for assignments and exams.

Threats of failure and high stress levels are widespread in the process of becoming a nurse (Kantek, 2010). Bakker et al.'s (2018) study of dropout and retention of nursing students during their education found that student nurses required more direction and support, particularly

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [r.elmir@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:r.elmir@westernsydney.edu.au) (R. Elmir), [l.ramjan@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:l.ramjan@westernsydney.edu.au) (L.M. Ramjan), [b.everett@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:b.everett@westernsydney.edu.au) (B. Everett), [y.salamonson@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:y.salamonson@westernsydney.edu.au) (Y. Salamonson).

@RRakime (R. Elmir), @LucieRamjan (L.M. Ramjan), @bron\_everett (B. Everett), @salamonson (Y. Salamonson)

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2019.05.024>

Received 12 December 2018; Received in revised form 18 April 2019; Accepted 13 May 2019

0260-6917/ © 2019 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

those who were older (Harris et al., 2014).

Students may attribute failure to achieve minimum required marks to pass to poor preparation and poor time management. Nursing students who engage in paid employment often experience difficulty with time management which may have a negative impact on their academic performance (Garcia-Vargas et al., 2016). Salamonson et al. (2012) conducted a study with undergraduate nursing students and examined the impact of paid work on academic performance. Findings suggested a strong relationship with hours spend in paid work during university semester time and the negative impact on students' performance. There are reported negative consequences of paid employment for university students including higher stress levels, missing classes, and submitting assignments late (Hamshire et al., 2013).

Despite attention on retention, attrition and progression of students in higher education and responding to the adaptation and learning needs of first year students, there remains sparse literature which examines students' experiences of repeating or failing university studies. In particular, little is known of the experiences of students who have failed one or more units in nursing and continue with the nursing course. For the purpose of this study 'unit' is defined as a core requirement of study to fulfil the requirements of the nursing course. Maximising student retention and success is a priority in all nursing programs. The aim of this study was to explore first year student nurses' experiences of repeating one or more nursing units.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Study setting and participants

This study is part of a university-wide program of research, established to provide a more comprehensive understanding of student experience and support during their transition to university study. The study was conducted at one of the largest nursing Schools in New South Wales, Australia, where students have the option of studying in the nursing program on a full-time (3 years) or part-time (6 years) basis. Students are required to successfully meet the requirements of 24 units to complete the course. Generally, if students fail to meet the minimum 50% overall requirement to pass units, they need to repeat the unit in the following year. The impetus for the study was as a result of a 20% failure rate for a first-year unit. The failure rate prompted the authors' interest to explore the experiences of first year students' experiences of repeating nursing units. In 2015, 1148 students were enrolled in the course and 216 or 20% of students had failed one or more units in nursing.

In this study, a descriptive qualitative design was used to allow for flexibility to investigate phenomena from a population of first year nursing students repeating one or more nursing units and to understand and explore in-depth nursing students' experiences (Borbasi et al., 2005). Ethical approval was obtained from the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval number H10338). A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants to produce a sample representative of the population. The first author invited students through email to participate in an interview. Interested students were encouraged to contact the primary author and, an information sheet and consent form was sent to each respondent. Data were collected with nine participants through semi-structured interviews (three face-to-face and six through telephone). The face-to-face data were collected on the home campuses of students in a private office to eliminate disruptions.

### 2.2. Data collection

Semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted with nine students who failed one or more units in their nursing studies (see Table 1), whereby data saturation was achieved. Open-ended questioning was used to elicit rich descriptive data. Students

**Table 1**

Characteristics of interview participants (n = 9).

Series number	Age	Australian/overseas-born	Domestic/international	Gender	Number of units repeating	First in family
Series 1	19	Australian	Domestic	F	2	N
Series 2	45	Nepal	International	F	1	Y
Series 3	22	Indonesia	International	F	3	Y
Series 4	28	China	Domestic	F	2	Y
Series 5	30	India	Domestic	F	7	Y
Series 6	37	Burundi	Domestic	F	2	Y
Series 7	34	Zimbabwe	Domestic	F	4	N
Series 8	54	Chile	Domestic	F	2	Y
Series 9	46	Australian	Domestic	M	1	N

were asked to describe their experiences of repeating nursing units, questions included; 'Can you describe the feelings and emotions you experienced when you learned of the need to repeat a unit of study?', 'How has it been adjusting to university life?', 'Can you describe the commitments you have outside university?', 'How does this impact on your nursing studies?' and 'Can you describe your motivation/s for continuing your nursing studies?'. Interviews were audio recorded and lasted between 15 and 44 min.

### 2.3. Data analysis

Data were transcribed verbatim using a professional transcribing company and were thematically analysed. Verbatim transcripts were initially checked independently and collectively by two researchers and then confirmed by the research team to ensure data transparency and accuracy. Transcripts were analysed on hard copy, examining each paragraph of text, often line by line to extract common identifying metaphors, statements and ideas that were salient in revealing participants' experiences and meaning of repeating nursing units (Borbasi et al., 2005). Constructions of participants' experiences were identified and patterns in the data became apparent. Four themes and eight sub-themes were generated. Raw data (participant's quotes) have been used as exemplars to illustrate the interpretation of findings.

## 3. Findings

Students repeating units in nursing are resilient and determined. Despite obvious setbacks and personal challenges in their lives, they demonstrate an admirable quality; nothing is going to stop them from graduating from the course and becoming a Registered Nurse. Four themes and their accompanying sub-themes below reflect the stories of nine students who share their struggles and how they have adjusted to university life and maintained the inner strength to carry on (Table 2).

### 3.1. Theme 1: struggling to meet workload expectations

The theme 'struggling to meet workload expectations' reflected the struggles faced by students with meeting university academic requirements to pass nursing units. The expectations to write academically and understand and comprehend complex content in certain units of study proved to be challenging for some students. Compounding the struggles to meet university workload expectations were other equally competing demands, such as family and financial commitments.

For five of the nine participants, they revealed their struggles to meet the workload requirements for each unit of study. Four identified themselves as mature aged students and explained that they struggled particularly with academic writing and referencing; they desired greater support in this area. They also explained that "...some lecturers brush over [content]. Some lecturers go too deep with the content and don't stick to what we need to know". These lecturers had an expectation that students "understand what they're talking about". The impact of failing a

**Table 2**  
Themes and sub-themes.

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
Struggling to meet workload expectations	Lack of confidence in academic writing Dealing with competing demands with minimal support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Struggles faced</li> <li>● Meeting university demands</li> <li>● Family and financial commitments</li> <li>● Mature aged students</li> <li>● Academic writing and referencing</li> <li>● International students</li> <li>● Lack of confidence with academic writing</li> <li>● English as a second language</li> <li>● Minimal support</li> <li>● Reducing paid employment hours</li> <li>● Financial implications of repeating units</li> <li>● Reducing university workload hours</li> <li>● Support and resources for academic writing</li> <li>● Peer mentoring</li> <li>● Peer support</li> <li>● Professional support</li> <li>● Never giving up</li> <li>● Strength</li> <li>● Resilience</li> <li>● Goals</li> <li>● Commitments</li> <li>● Motivational support from family</li> <li>● Financial investment</li> <li>● Role model for family</li> <li>● Completing the course</li> </ul>
Making the adjustments	Cutting back on work hours Reducing load to part-time	
Utilising academic supports and resources	Wanting more The value of peer support	
The strength to carry on	“If one time you don't succeed, give it a second go” “I just want to finish the course”	

unit meant they were falling behind on their learning as some units supported each other in parallel.

*I do struggle a lot. I remember when I started...the other people may be spending two days for assignment. For me, I will spend one week*  
(Series 8, 54 years of age, repeating 2 units).

An international student explained that a lack of family support and conflicts in her home country added to the pressure of study and meeting workload expectations. She expressed a sense of isolation and loneliness in a new country.

*Sometimes you want to study and then you feel quite lonely...I think for me it's because of all that kind of pressure mentally I have to repeat the subject*  
(Series 2, 45 years of age, repeating 2 units).

### 3.2. Sub-theme 1: Lack of confidence in academic writing

While content knowledge may have played a part in poor performance in a theoretical or practical exam, most of the participants described their lack of confidence in academic writing and referencing as one of the main reasons for repeating a unit of study. This may have been because English was their second language, it had been a while since they had studied or academic writing was ‘new’ to them. They felt *frustrated, upset, depressed and disappointed* in themselves when they failed a subject: “*I felt frustrated and upset in the beginning, because I always failed by 49 or 48...one or two marks short*” (SERIES 9, 46 years of age, repeating 1 unit).

*I'm also a mature age student and I haven't completed Year 10. So all of this writing and referencing was - and it still is so new to me. I still struggle a lot now*  
(Series 1, 19 years of age, repeating 2 units).

### 3.3. Sub-theme 2: dealing with competing demands with minimal support

For most of the participants there were many competing demands that affected their studies, playing a role in their need to repeat a unit in the course. These demands included family and financial

responsibilities which may have necessitated undertaking some type of employment. For others, minimal family support enhanced the stress of studying full-time and the pressure to pass because of the financial implications for the family at home: “*...I feel like quite a depression in myself also because at that time I barely had anyone to support me...*”. Only one student who experienced significant adversity during their studies saw repeating units in a positive light: “*I'm just grateful for the opportunity...doing them [the units] with a new headspace...I understand things much better. Things click much easier than before*”.

*Yes I found it really hard, university life...I'm an international student...There's a lot of pressure because...you have to pass that subject...otherwise...you can repeat the subject but financially it's hard...parents also, they can also support you for a certain while only...*  
(Series 2, 45 years of age, repeating 2 units).

### 3.4. Theme 2: making the adjustments

The theme ‘making the adjustments’ revealed the necessary changes that students instigated to pass nursing units. Eight of the nine participants described that failing a unit had financial implications, and this made them realise that something needed to change. Many identified that they needed to reduce the number of hours they were working to meet the workload expectations of the course. Some talked to their course advisor about their study schedule and reducing their load, while others reassessed family obligations and duties. All participants realised though that if they wanted to graduate, which they did, they needed to take action and make some adjustments to their lives.

#### 3.5. Sub-theme 1: cutting back on work hours

Most identified that “*financially it's hard*” when they needed to repeat a unit and while they still needed to work “*to eat...to pay bills*” they could not keep up full-time work commitments or needed to cut back on their current working hours “*to balance work and study*”.

*...I had to make an appointment and talk about my study load because previously I was working a lot [30h] so now I've cut that right back...I'm only doing 12 h a week*  
(Series 1, 19 years of age, repeating 2 units).

### 3.6. Sub-theme 2: reducing load to part-time

Other students realised that the stress of full-time study was a significant issue. They met with an academic course advisor, who advised on their progression with the course. These students received advice on how to reduce their current full-time study load to part-time so that they could balance both their work and study commitments.

*As I said, wasn't easy for me. The stress was too much for me. I had never experienced stress like that. I don't know if it is I am a mother (3 kids), I have too many responsibilities. Then...I thought to myself, what's best way for me...part-time was a good choice for me*

(Series 8, 54 years of age, repeating 2 units).

### 3.7. Theme 3: utilisation of academic supports and resources

The theme 'utilisation of academic supports and resources' illustrated how students demonstrated resourcefulness by using available supports to assist them with their studies. All nine students were aware of the academic resources and supports that were available to students, including Professional Communication Academic Literacy (PCAL) staff, Badanami (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander student support) staff, Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) and the library. One participant reported that the supports are in place, students just need to access them: "Everything you could possibly need or want...is there. I just think it's up to the individual students". There were however mixed reviews on how helpful these resources were for individual students, some finding them helpful, others not.

*...found two e-mails from the teachers, please don't forget to visit the PCALs if you need to... Then the library is great, the times are great too*

(Series 5, 30 years of age, repeating 7 units).

*...so-so, 50/50. Some they help, some they're not help [at all] for me...They just correction the grammar only*

(Series 4, 28 years of age, repeating 2 units).

### 3.8. Sub-theme 1: wanting more

While sources of support were available to students, participants felt that they needed more supports or more targeted supports that would assist their transition into university life and their study success. Some of the participants were international and mature aged students and required supports tailored to their unique and specific needs rather than being grouped with other students of dissimilar demographics. Participants provided the following suggestions for supports: subject specific PASS sessions not just for the science subjects; referencing workshops; mature aged student computer literacy support; an international student group; and peer mentoring study sessions.

*If there was like a student [International] representative and talking to students and making them feel comfortable in a way - talking to me, talking to each other and understanding their problem and telling them about all the resources there is...*

(Series 2, 45 years of age, repeating 2 units).

### 3.9. Sub-theme 2: the value of peer support

Regardless of wanting more support, a prominent theme that emerged was the value participants placed on peer support and camaraderie, rather than individual tutors. Six of the nine students highlighted that the friends they had made at university were influential in their transition to university studies and were their greatest source of support. Students turned to their peers rather than academic

and professional support in view of feeling more comfortable and trusting of their English language skills. The type of support sought from peers varied from previewing assignments, writing and language acquisition.

*I met...really great friends and they've been helping me through assignments and all that and studying for tests, preparing and everything. Yeah, it's just good company...they know what you're going through as well*

(Series 3, 28 years of age, born in China, repeating 2 units).

### 3.10. Theme 4: the strength to carry on

The theme 'the strength to carry on' revealed a strength and tenacity among participants regardless of initial doubts and questions: "Can I do this? Can I cope? Have I chosen the right thing to do? Why can't I take it all in?" Yet despite these reservations all nine participants revealed their fortitude and resilience to finish what they had started, accomplish their dream of becoming a Registered Nurse and make their family and friends proud. Many of the participants had sacrificed so much in terms of leaving close family and friends overseas, their family counting on them to succeed and being a role model for family and community members. 'The strength to carry on' with their course and not fail any more units came from the motivational support they received from others of "not giving up on things" and the thought of reaching a significant milestone in their lives; receiving their degree and graduating as a Registered Nurse.

#### 3.11. Sub-theme 1: "If one time you don't succeed, give it a second go"

Many received motivational support from family members to persevere with their studies despite the setback and to not give up hope of achieving their dream. They had already invested so much in the process it was worth persevering a little bit longer to reach their ultimate goal of being a Registered Nurse.

*...my boyfriend motivates me a lot - never give up on things that you want to do...If one time you don't succeed give it a second go, you will definitely succeed in the second go*

(Series 2, 45 years of age, repeating 2 units).

#### 3.12. Sub-theme 2: "I just want to finish the course"

Other participants explained that nothing was going to stop them. Their primary goal was to finish the course. Participants envisioned themselves passing all units, graduating, donning the Registered Nurse's uniform and working in a stable profession ultimately fulfilling their lifelong dream.

*Every time I see the RN uniform, I will dream about what if I'm in the uniform. I think that's the motivation for me. I want to work in the hospital and I want to graduate...I don't want to fail any more*

(Series 7, 34 years of age, repeating 4 units).

## 4. Discussion

This study has provided insight into the struggles repeating students face in their quest to become a Registered Nurse. Compounding students' struggles with the nursing program at university, are competing demands, commonly attributed to family, carer and paid employment responsibilities. Some students made adjustments to their lives to help achieve their goal of being a Registered Nurse. These adjustments included being realistic about the mode of study and cutting back on paid employment. Academic and peer support was viewed as valuable sources of support to meet the nursing benchmark at university to pass units. Despite the draw backs and for some repeated failure of more than one unit, nursing students found inner strength to continue with

the course and succeed.

#### 4.1. Resilience and grit in repeating nursing students

Despite many students experiencing numerous setbacks meeting university workload expectations and academic literacy standards, students demonstrated resilience and hardiness to continue with their nursing studies. Our finding that nursing students' main source of resilience were their families, peers and friendships is consistent with findings in the literature from the work of [Thomas and Revell \(2016\)](#), [Carroll \(2011\)](#) and [Crombie et al. \(2013\)](#) who found that support from family, friends and faculty impact students' resilience and sense of empowerment. Encouragement from parents, extended family and peers and friendships were important to resilience, especially integration within a supportive peer group within the nursing program ([Crombie et al., 2013](#); [Thomas and Revell, 2016](#)). While both studies, [Crombie et al., \(2013\)](#) and [Thomas and Revell \(2016\)](#) did not specifically explore repeating students, their findings corroborate our findings on factors contributing to students' developing resilience and continuing with the nursing program. According to [Thoits \(2011\)](#) emotional and instrumental support from others and empathy is efficacious in alleviating the physical and emotional impacts of stressors. Resilience was also linked to their passion and love for nursing and goal of becoming a Registered Nurse for the students in our study. Being a role model for their children and other family members in succeeding at university was expressed, contributing to student's tenacity to go the extra mile and make changes to paid employment in a bid to succeed. [Salamonson and Andrew \(2006\)](#) highlighted, students who are not in paid employment in nursing had the highest academic achievement in their nursing program.

Students in our study expressed the nursing course as placing a great deal of pressure on study and family balance and at times there was a mismatch of expectations and reality with students not being adequately prepared. [Karsten and DiCicco-Bloom's \(2014\)](#) study of students who failed nursing units and continued to successfully complete their nursing program report on students acknowledging the pressures and expectations to meet academic standards in the nursing program, including the difficulties students faced with the theoretical components of the course. [Karsten and DiCicco-Bloom \(2014\)](#) findings corroborate our study findings suggesting repeating nursing students are experiencing difficulty in finding a happy medium of study and family life and dedicating time to study.

#### 4.2. Social support

While family is a fundamental form of support, in the study context, peer support was a significant emotional support for students being able to talk about their assessments, course experiences and recommendations for additional support. Social support increased students' self-efficacy and was a form of emotional support. Students' self-confidence increased and they believed in their abilities to continue with the nursing course. According to [Schaefer and Moos \(Schaefer and Moos, 1998\)](#), social support may be a precursor of personal growth by influencing coping behaviour and fostering successful adaptation to life events. Seeking social support may be distinct from receiving or perceiving social support and may improve resources by reducing the individual's feelings of isolation and loneliness.

[Cohen and Willis \(1985\)](#) highlight social support as a predictor for psychological wellbeing. [Martin et al. \(2018\)](#) introduced a drop-in-support centre (DISC) for nursing students to provide academic and literacy support and found students who attended the weekly drop in centre were less likely to repeat units of study and suggest this may be attributed to the students being in a community of engaged, self-directed learners. This is a new finding, social support has not been explored in this context and adds to the body of literature on students who repeat units in their respective courses.

Our study findings revealed that students utilised academic literacy support (PCALs) and PASS sessions to assist them with assessment and exam preparation and understanding unit content and material. Many of the participants were from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CALD) and mature age students and yearned to belong in a culture and community that was foreign to them. They sought support from various avenues in a quest to comprehend content and assessment requirements and wanted ongoing academic support. Difficulties in English language can make learning difficult and lead to dislike of engaging with other peers in group activities and reluctance to ask questions and engage in class discussions ([Ramjan et al., 2018](#)). Studies by ([Hillege et al., 2014](#)) and [Ramjan et al. \(2018\)](#) report on the effectiveness of an embedded literacy support program and found it promoted student confidence with seeking support for their written and verbal language skills, ultimately reducing students' anxiety and increasing success in their studies.

#### 5. Limitations of the study

This study was a qualitative study, as such, the sample size was relatively small with only nine participants and may not capture a true representation of the demographics of repeating nursing students. However, the sample is appropriate for qualitative methods where the primary purpose is to generate rich descriptive data from participants' subjective realities and experiences. The data set was generated from a single university which may not be representative of all students repeating unit in the undergraduate nursing program.

#### 6. Conclusion

Students repeating units of study in a nursing program are a unique group that require a multifaceted approach including academic and literacy support structures to ensure they meet the academic standards of the course. These students' dispositions are different to other students as they have the tenacity and resilience to continue with units of study in nursing, despite needing to repeat more one or more units, as opposed to discontinuing altogether. Further research is needed to explore specific support strategies to facilitate transition, retention and successful progression of students who repeat units in nursing studies.

#### Author contributions

RE, YS, LMR and BE were responsible for the study conception and design. RE, YS, LMR & BE undertook the initial literature searches; RE, YS & LMR performed the data analysis. RE, YS, LMR & BE were responsible for drafting the manuscript. RE, YS, LMR & BE made critical revisions to the paper for important intellectual content.

#### Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge Associate Professor Betty Gill, David Roach and team in the 'Student Transition, Retention and Success' (STARS) project for their support.

#### Declaration of competing interest

No conflict of interest has been declared by the authors.

#### References

- [Bakker, J.M.E., Kox, A.M.H.J., Miedema, S.H., Bierma-Zeinstra, S., Runhaar, J., Boot, R.L.C., Roelofs, D.D.M.P., 2018. Physical and mental determinants of dropout and retention among nursing students: protocol of the SPRING cohort study. BMC Nurs. 17 \(27\), 1–9.](#)
- [Borbasi, S., Jackson, D., Wilkes, L., 2005. Fieldwork in nursing research: positions, practicalities and predicaments. J. Adv. Nurs. 51, 493–501.](#)
- [Brown, J., Marshall, L.B., 2008. A historically black University's Baccalaureate enrolment](#)

- and success tactics for registered nurses. *J. Prof. Nurs.* 24 (1), 21–29.
- Carroll, S., 2011. Resiliency as a Factor in the Successful Completion of a California Community College Based Associate Degree in Nursing Program. (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation).
- Cohen, S., Willis, A.T., 1985. Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychol. Bull.* 98 (2), 310–357.
- Crombie, A., Brindley, J., Harris, D., Marks-Maran, D., Thompson, T.M., 2013. Factors that enhance rates of completion: what makes students stay? *Nurse Educ. Today* 33 (11), 1282–1287. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2013.03.020>.
- Garcia-Vargas, C.M., Rizo-Baeza, M., Cortes-Castell, E., 2016. Impact of Paid Work on the Academic Performance of Nursing Students *PeerJ*.
- Gaynor, L., Gallasch, T., Yorkston, E., Stewart, S., Bogossian, F., Fairweather, C., et al., 2007. The future nursing workforce in Australia: baseline data for a prospective study of the profile, attrition rates and graduate outcomes in a contemporary cohort of undergraduates. *Aust. J. Adv. Nurs.* 25 (2), 11.
- Hamshire, C., Willgoss, T.G., Wibberley, C., 2013. Should I stay or should I go? A study exploring why healthcare students consider leaving their programme. *Nurse Educ. Today* 33 (8), 889–895. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2012.08.013>.
- Harris, R.C., Rosenberg, L., O'Rourke, M.E.G., 2014. Addressing the challenges of nursing student attrition. *J. Nurs. Educ.* 53 (1), 31–37.
- Hillege, S.P., Catterall, J., Beale, B.L., Stewart, L., 2014. Discipline matters: embedding academic literacies into an undergraduate nursing program. *Nurse Educ. Pract.* 14 (6), 686–691. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2014.09.005>.
- Jeffreys, M.R., 2007. Tracking students through program entry, progression, graduation, and licensure: assessing undergraduate nursing student retention and success. *Nurse Educ. Today* 27 (5), 406–419. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2006.07.003>.
- kantek, F., 2010. Why do student nurses leave? *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 9, 1922–1925.
- Karsten, K., DiCicco-Bloom, B., 2014. Acknowledging the academic rigor of associate degree nursing education: a grounded theory study of overcoming failure. *Teach. Learn. Nurs.* 9 (4), 153–163. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2014.04.003>.
- Kenny, A., Kidd, T., Nankervis, K., Connell, S., 2011. Mature age students access, entry and success in nurse education: an action research study. *Contemp. Nurse* 38 (1–2), 106–118. <https://doi.org/10.5172/conu.2011.38.1-2.106>.
- Martin, M., Ramjan, L.M., Everett, B., Glew, P., Lynch, J., Salamonson, Y., 2018. Exploring nursing students' experiences of a drop-in support-Centre: a mixed-methods study. *Nurse Educ. Today* 69, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2018.06.026>.
- McLaughlin, K., Muldoon, O.T., Moutray, M., 2010. Gender, gender roles and completion of nursing education: a longitudinal study. *Nurse Educ. Today* 30 (4), 303–307. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2009.08.005>.
- Merkley, R.B., 2016. Student nurse attrition: a half century of research. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice* 6 (3), 71–75. <https://doi.org/10.5430/jnep.v6n3p71>.
- Ramjan, L.M., Maneze, D., Everett, B., Glew, P., Trajkovski, S., Lynch, J., Salamonson, Y., 2018. Students' experiences of embedded academic literacy support in a graduate entry nursing program: a qualitative study. *Nurse Educ. Pract.* 28, 302–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2017.12.001>.
- Salamonson, Y., Andrew, S., 2006. Academic performance in nursing students: influence of part-time employment, age and ethnicity. *J. Adv. Nurs.* 55 (3), 342–349. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.03863.1.x>.
- Salamonson, Y., Everett, B., Koch, J., Andrew, S., Davidson, P.M., 2012. The impact of term-time paid work on academic performance in nursing students: a longitudinal study. *Int. J. Nurs. Stud.* 49 (5), 579–585. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2011.10.012>.
- Schaefer, J., Moos, R., 1998. The context for posttraumatic growth: Life crises, individual and social resources, and coping. In: Tedeschi, R., Park, C., Calhoun, L. (Eds.), *Posttraumatic Growth: Positive Changes in the Aftermath of Crisis*. Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ pp-126.
- Thoits, A.P., 2011. Mechanisms linking social ties and support to physical and mental health. *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour* 52 (5).
- Thomas, L.J., Revell, S.H., 2016. Resilience in nursing students: an integrative review. *Nurse Educ. Today* 36, 457–462. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2015.10.016>.