

OPINIONS OF THE 1956-1958 GRADUATES AND THEIR EMPLOYERS
REGARDING THE ADEQUACY OF THE CLINICAL EXPERIENCE
AND COURSE CONTENT OFFERED BY THE
IDAHO STATE COLLEGE SCHOOL
OF NURSING

by
MARDELL McPHETERS
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A PAPER
Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Nursing
in
partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Nursing
at
Montana State College

Approved:

Anna Pearl Sherrick, R.N., Ed.D.
Head, Major Department

Anna Pearl Sherrick
Chairman, Examining Committee

Leon H. Hutton
Dean, Graduate Division

Bozeman, Montana

May 27, 1960

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if, according to the opinions of the graduates and their employers, Idaho State College School of Nursing offers the clinical and academic background needed by the professional nurse for effective participation in professional nursing.

The survey method, employing the questionnaire as a tool, was used for this investigation. Opinions were sought regarding two aspects of the curriculum: clinical experience and course content.

The information obtained from this survey indicated that the graduates and their employers felt the need for the Idaho State College School of Nursing to offer additional experience in selected areas.

Fifty-three per cent of the graduates indicated that a change in course content should help the school better prepare other students.

The majority of the graduates of Idaho State College School of Nursing, as indicated by the information obtained from this survey, participate actively in professional activities.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem Situation

Nursing schools all over the country have been busy initiating new programs and reorganizing their curriculum. Some of the purposes of the change has been to better prepare the student to meet her responsibilities as a professional person and to help her understand the patient as a person. In some locations, entirely new baccalaureate programs have been initiated in colleges. Many of these schools have conducted the nursing programs by the same standards and practices as other college programs. This has changed the amount and equality of both professional and general education. The students have been treated as mature, responsible, intelligent individuals.¹

This has been true of Idaho State College at Pocatello, Idaho. They have maintained a truly independent collegiate status for their nursing majors. The students have not been obligated to give service to the hospital. The college controls the program with co-operation among college administration, hospital administration, faculty and students. The students have been definitely college students majoring in nursing.

The nursing program at Idaho State College was established in 1952 by joint action of the Idaho State Board of Education and the Board of Control of Bannock Memorial Hospital. The program was accredited by the Idaho Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education in 1953.

¹M. Cordelia Cowan (ed.), The Yearbook of Modern Nursing, 1956 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1957), p. 287.

The undergraduate degree program available at Idaho State College is a Basic Program for qualified high school graduates leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing. The aim of this program is to offer the clinical and academic background which the professional nurse needs for continued personal and professional development.

The philosophy of the school is as follows:

The curriculum meets the students' needs so that she may function effectively in the profession of nursing and in a dynamic society. The program in general and professional education helps the individual develop self-direction; ability to think objectively, critically, and creatively; and a sense of social and professional responsibility.²

Based on this philosophy the school has set up the following objectives:

The student should: (1) develop understandings, attitudes and skills (technical, communicative, and social) which are essential for effective participation in professional nursing and in nursing and in community living; (2) develop an awareness of health needs of the community, and the contribution which nursing makes; (3) prepare for participation in activities concerned with prevention of disease, maintenance of health, care of the sick, and rehabilitation of the ill; (4) develop self-direction; and (5) develop an interest for continued personal and professional growth, and for maintaining optimum health (emotional, social, and physical).³

When this program was initiated, there was criticism from many sources. Some of these criticisms were from doctors, graduate nurses from other schools, and local citizens. These criticisms were not of the aims of the school, but of the methods the school planned to use to achieve them. The main criticism was that the students would not receive

²Idaho State College, Bulletin: 1958-59, Vol. 12, No. 1, (issued May, 1958), pp. 111-112.

³Ibid.

the necessary experience in the hospital.

Since the students were on a strictly collegiate basis, the clinical experience was established in the same manner as other laboratory courses. Since the college assumes the cost of instruction and the students bear the cost of their maintenance, the time the students spend in the clinical field is determined on the basis of what clinical experiences they need and when these experiences are available. That nursing students would not be set apart from other college students was accepted as a matter of course in planning the new program. Because students were not depended on to provide service in the hospital, their experience was planned to coincide with the regular college term. The students were able to have the college vacation periods.

The college faculty was often asked, "How can you prepare competent nurses with such a short period of experience in any area?" The objectives of the school are based on the premise that the graduate of a basic collegiate program, though better prepared in many ways, is in no sense a specialist or expert. Nurses who complete the basic collegiate program are urged to seek further experience and advanced education in their chosen field.

Review of Literature. Nursing started as an apprenticeship system. The apprenticeship system developed with the education of the student subservient to nursing service. The pressure of nursing service often pushed nursing education into the background.

The transition from this apprenticeship training to an independent system of professional education has been a long slow process. Of great

significance in nursing education today is the importance attached to the teaching and supervision of the student's field experience.

The emphasis on the institutional aspects of the curriculum has resulted in many hospital schools of nursing placing the emphasis on clinical experience where the service is needed rather than on experiences the professional student needs to be prepared to take her place in comprehensive nursing.⁴

Not long ago a nurse was trained for three years in a hospital with the hospital bed and its occupants as her laboratory, received a maximum of practicum and a minimum of didactics on the theory that the doctor knew all and would order all. The trend now is in the opposite direction because the nursing profession is engaged in the stressful business of growing up. It is trying to acquire status; it is attempting to use a variety of scientific discoveries to enrich and improve nursing skill and broaden perspectives.⁵

It was decided in discussions of The Ninth World Health Assembly held in Geneva, Switzerland, that the primary purpose of a school of nursing is to provide a sound education in nursing. Nursing service assignments should be based on the educational needs of the students rather than the service needs of the hospital. The groups urged that more attention be paid to prevention of illness and promotion of health. They emphasized that modern methods of teaching be employed besides formal lectures. These methods include seminar discussions, demonstrations, and ward clinics.⁶

⁴Deborah MacLurg Jensen, Clinical Instruction and Its Integration in the Curriculum (St. Louis: The C. V. Mosby Company, 1952), pp. 19-27.

⁵Frank F. Tallman, "The Humanics of Nursing" (San Francisco: Proceedings of the Western Council on Higher Education for Nursing, 1958).

⁶Pearl McIver, "The Ninth World Health Assembly", The American Journal of Nursing, LVI (October, 1956), p. 1.

The Research Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine if, according to the opinions of the graduates and their employers, the graduates of Idaho State College School of Nursing obtained adequate clinical experience to fulfill the first objective of the program. This objective is to develop understandings, attitudes and skills (technical, communicative, and social) which are essential for effective participation in professional nursing.

Adequate clinical experience was measured in terms of the accomplishments of the graduates in comparison with the accomplishments of graduates of other nursing schools. Comparisons were made of the abilities of the graduates as compared, by employers, to other graduate professional nurses.

Limitations to the Problem. Limitations to this problem must be noted. Since questionnaires were used to obtain the opinions of the graduates and employers, the findings were based on the recollections and opinions of the respondents. This introspective evidence may lack objectivity.

This problem was also limited by the small number (20) of nurses graduated from the program from 1956 to June 1958.

Objectives

The main objective of this study was to secure information to help determine whether or not Idaho State College School of Nursing offers the clinical and academic background needed by the professional nurse for

effective participation in professional nursing. The above information was secured by graduates and their employers. It is hoped that this information may be useful to the faculty of Idaho State College School of Nursing in their curriculum planning.

Related Studies

There have not been any previous studies which were concerned with the bachelor's program at Idaho State College School of Nursing.

Many evaluations and follow-up studies of graduates are concerning other nursing schools; but only a brief summary of some of the work done on problems very closely related to the one at hand will be given here.

One study which was of considerable aid to the writer was done by a Master's student at the University of Washington School of Nursing. The problem of this investigation was to secure opinions from one hundred seven graduates of the master's program at the University of Washington School of Nursing concerning areas of advanced study: (1) field experience, (2) research, and (3) public health and psychiatric nursing experience.

The information concerning research and thesis activity, as obtained from this survey, indicated the majority of graduates were satisfied with the thesis activity as conducted by the University of Washington School of Nursing. A majority of graduates had theory and practice in public health nursing or psychiatric nursing before entering the master's program. Two-thirds of the graduates indicated that courses in public health nursing and psychiatric nursing should be offered in master's study, for those not majoring in these fields or who have not had previous experience.

Four-fifths of the graduates gave suggestions for strengthening the master's program. The suggestions were concerned with six major areas: courses, forty-nine; guidance, thirty-nine; teaching methods, seventeen; field experiences, sixteen; strengths, eleven; and weaknesses, ten.

The information obtained from this survey indicated the need for the University of Washington School of Nursing to continue offering advanced field experience in functional and clinical areas.⁷

Mary J. Oberest completed a follow-up study of the graduates of a 3-year school of nursing. The most frequent suggestion made concerned the value and necessity of practical experience for students.⁸

A study of the graduates of the University of Minnesota School of Nursing was undertaken by the faculty of the School of Nursing. The purpose of this study was to obtain a description of the students who chose nursing as a profession, to determine the activities of the graduates, and to obtain their comments on the nursing profession and on nursing programs at the University of Minnesota. The study yielded the following data: Sixty-five per cent of the graduates are married; the majority took first-level positions upon graduation; further educational preparation was carried on by 56 per cent of the group; and a degree program could be recommended by three-fourths of the graduates.⁹

⁷Mary Edna Earls, "A Survey of Opinions of the 1953-1957 Graduates of the Master's Program of the University of Washington School of Nursing Regarding Three Areas of Advanced Study" (unpublished Master's Thesis, The University of Washington, Seattle, 1958).

⁸Mary J. Oberest, "Follow-up Study of the Graduates of 3-Year School of Nursing," (Master's Thesis, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C. [no date]).

⁹Faculty of the School of Nursing, "A Study of the Graduates of the University of Minnesota School of Nursing" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota [no date]).

Hypothesis

The contributions that these graduates have been making in their professional work and as members of their community will prove that the school has been established on a sound basis in comparison with other schools of nursing.

Procedure

The survey method, employing the questionnaire as a tool, was used for this investigation. A questionnaire was sent to the nurses who graduated from the school during the three years from 1956 to 1958. These are graduates of the basic professional curriculum leading to a baccalaureate degree. The total number of graduates was twenty.

This questionnaire was geared to determine the activities of the graduates, and to obtain their comments on the nursing program at Idaho State College. Dr. Anna Helen Gallagher, Dean of the School of Nursing at Idaho State College, was consulted and questions she suggested were included in the questionnaire.

Graduates are in a very good position to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their program of studies.

The follow up of graduates is an important way of identifying realistically the continuing effects of college education upon the graduates. A careful study of data of this sort provides a wealth of information helpful in identifying points in the college program which need improvement, in indicating aspects which are successful and should be retained, and in suggesting problems for further study.¹⁰

¹⁰Ralph W. Tyler, "The Road to Better Appraisal", National Educational Association Journal, XXXVIII (May, 1949), p. 337.

A questionnaire also was sent to employers for whom these graduates have worked. The purpose of this questionnaire was to obtain a comparison of the professional abilities of these graduates with other nurses employed. The number of these employers was estimated to be fifteen.

Conclusions which might have implications for further curricular planning were drawn from an analysis of data.

Remainder of Paper

In Chapter II a review is given of the methodology used for the study. An analysis of the results of the questionnaire is described in Chapter III. Chapter IV contains the summary and conclusions which might have implications for curricular planning, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The survey method, employing the questionnaire as a data-gathering tool, was used for the investigation. An attempt was made to discover from graduates and their employers their opinions regarding the preparation and education of the graduates, and to interpret these opinions in the light of possible curriculum needs.

The questionnaire was employed to obtain the necessary data for this study.¹ Although the questionnaire had limitations, it was considered the most effective way of obtaining information from these groups. The information received by this means could be used with a fair degree of accuracy, not only as a means of determining the value received from education, but also as a gauge by which to adjust the curricula to meet the needs of the students.

The activities of the survey fell naturally into three general categories: compiling the mailing lists, developing the questionnaires, and getting replies to the questionnaires. These activities were required for each of the two questionnaires.

Compiling the list of names and addresses of the twenty graduates of the Idaho State College School of Nursing from 1956 to 1958 was a comparatively minor task. The source of such a list was the mailing list for the Alumni Association of the Idaho State College School of Nursing.

¹See Appendix A and Appendix B.

The list of names and addresses of the fifteen employers was obtained from the graduates in their response to question Number 15 of the questionnaire. All but one of the graduates listed employers to be contacted.. This questionnaire could not be mailed out until the responses from the graduates had been received.

Questionnaire items were developed to elicit from the graduates and employers opinions regarding the education and preparation of the graduates.

Whenever possible, questions were phrased to permit objective answering by checking of appropriate items. However, open-end questions were deemed necessary to elicit comments, explanations, criticisms, suggestions, and ideas.

The questionnaires were not identified. The graduate's name, address, and date of graduation were not requested nor the employers' names and addresses. This was done to encourage free response to questions.

For the purpose of a pre-test, the questionnaire was answered by ten students in the master's program at Montana State College School of Nursing. On the basis of these results, faulty or ambiguous questions were corrected and the final questionnaire was prepared.

Questionnaires were mailed to twenty graduates of the Idaho State College School of Nursing from 1956 to June 1958, and to fifteen employers of these graduates. Nineteen (95 per cent) of the questionnaires to graduates were answered and returned. Ten (67 per cent) of the questionnaires to employers were answered and returned.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The first survey included twenty nurses who had received a bachelor's degree from the Idaho State College School of Nursing from 1956 to June 1958. Nineteen of the questionnaires (95 per cent) were returned within an eight-week period. The checked responses were tallied and the open-end responses were studied and categorized.

Most of the questions were answered by each individual responding. A large percentage of those answering gave unsolicited comments on various phases of the program. The great number of responses and comments was thought to have indicated the interest these former students have in the school.

Table I, page 13, shows the positions held by the graduates since graduation and whether or not they felt they were prepared after adequate orientation to the position, to assume the responsibilities included in the position.

All the graduates answered these two questions. All but three of the graduates had held at least two different positions. The positions held since graduation were as follows: staff nurse, twelve; office nurse, three; public health nurse, three; private duty nurse, two; psychiatric nurse, two; director of school of nursing, one; recovery room nurse, three; operating room nurse, three; supervisor, three; school nurse, one; head nurse, one; assistant clinical instructor, three; emergency room nurse, one; clinical instructor, five; and pentathal technician, one.

TABLE I
 RESPONSES OF NINETEEN GRADUATES OF THE IDAHO STATE COLLEGE
 SCHOOL OF NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE 1958 REGARDING
 POSITIONS HELD SINCE GRADUATION AND
 PREPAREDNESS TO ASSUME THESE
 POSITIONS

Positions Held	Number of Times Indicated	Were you prepared to assume responsi- bilities included in this position?	
		Yes	No
Staff Nurse	12	12	
Office Nurse	3	3	
Public Health Nurse	3	2	1
Recovery Room Nurse	3	3	
Operating Room Nurse	3	2	1
Supervisor	3	3	
School Nurse	1	1	
Head Nurse	5	5	
Assistant Clinical Instructor	3	1	2
Emergency Room Nurse	1	1	
Clinical Instructor	5	3	2
Psychiatric Nurse	2	2	
Co-director of School of Nursing	1		1
Private Duty Nurse	2	2	
Pentathal Technician	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u> </u>
Total	48	41	7

The explanations given in the seven instances shown on Table I for feeling unprepared were categorized as follows:

<u>Explanation</u>	<u>Number Reporting</u>
Field too large to be adequately covered on bachelor's level	4
Lacked adequate leadership training	1
Lacked student background and experience	1
No explanation	<u>1</u>
Total	7

Examples of the comments made by the graduates related to the preparedness to assume responsibility of these positions are located in Appendix C, page 37.

All but one of the graduates answered the question, "Do you feel you would have benefited by field experience or clinical practice which you did not have?" Fourteen (74 per cent) answered "yes"; four (21 per cent) answered "no"; and one omitted the question.

In answer to the question, "What additional field experience, if any, would have been helpful to you?", fourteen graduates indicated additional field experience would have been beneficial. All fourteen listed at least one area in which additional field experience would have been helpful. Six persons indicated two or more areas. The areas indicated were as follows:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Number Reporting</u>
Operating Room Experience	5
Communicable Diseases - Tuberculosis	4
Obstetrical Nursing	3
Public Health Nursing	3
Medical Surgical	2
Nursing Service Administration	2
Additional Evening and Night Experience	1
Anesthesia	1
Comprehensive Nursing	1

In answer to the question, "What change in courses or activities do you feel would help the school better prepare other students?", thirteen graduates responded and six omitted the question or did not feel qualified to answer. The suggestions from the responses were placed into two categories, those relating to course content and those relating to practical experience. There were both general and specific suggestions in both areas. Examples of the suggestions made by the thirteen graduates for improvement of the program are located in Appendix D, page 38.

Operating room experience was most often indicated by graduates as the area in which additional field experience would have been helpful; this was a choice of five of the graduates. The area of communicable disease was indicated by more than one-fourth of the respondents.

The suggestions made were categorized as follows:

<u>Suggestions</u>	<u>Number Reporting</u>
Need for more practical experience in the following areas:	
Communicable disease nursing	4
Sterile technique	2
Administration	1
Patient teaching	1
Comprehensive nursing care	1
Team concept	1
Better planned experiences	4
Course content more applied to nursing	3
Practical experience better correlated with theory	2
Human physiology	2
More Pharmacology	2
Closer supervision of all experiences	1
Fewer Doctor's lectures	1
More reference reading in professional journals	1
More social science courses	1

Table II, page 17, shows the responses to the questions, "Do you feel you would have benefited from a course in Applied Physics?" and "Do you feel you would have benefited from a course in Statistics?". All of the graduates answered this question.

In regard to Applied Physics, eight (42 per cent) answered "yes", nine (47 per cent) answered "no", and two (11 per cent) were undecided. Regarding Statistics, seven (37 per cent) answered "yes", and twelve (63 per cent) answered "no".

TABLE II

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES OF THE GRADUATES OF THE
IDAHO STATE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF NURSING FROM 1956 TO
JUNE 1958 TO THE QUESTIONS "DO YOU FEEL
YOU WOULD HAVE BENEFITED FROM A
COURSE IN APPLIED PHYSICS
OR FROM A COURSE IN
STATISTICS?"

Do you feel you would have benefited from a course in Applied Physics?			Do you feel you would have benefited from a course in Statistics?		
<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	8	42	Yes	7	37
No	9	47	No	12	63
Undecided	<u>2</u>	<u>11</u>			
Total	19	100	Total	19	100

One of the objectives of the School of Nursing has been to develop nurses who will assume responsibility as professional persons. An endeavor was made to measure the attainment of this objective by the degree of participation in professional activities.

Table III, page 18, shows the membership in professional organizations. Thirteen graduates answered the question and six omitted it. Of the thirteen answering the question, eleven (85 per cent) belong to the American Nurses Association, eleven (85 per cent) belong to their State Nurses Association, one (8 per cent) belongs to the Association of Operating Room Nurses, two (16 per cent) belong to the National League for Nurses and one (8 per cent) did not belong to any professional organization. Three of these graduates belonged to more than one organization.

TABLE III

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF GRADUATES OF IDAHO STATE COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE 1958 WHO
BELONG TO PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Organization	Number	Percentage
American Nurses Association	11	85
National League for Nurses	2	15
Association of Operating Room Nurses	1	8
State Nurses Association	11	85
None	1	8
Omitted	6	32

The responses to the question, "List any other organizations in which you take an active part" were placed in the following categories: church affiliated organizations, four; business organizations, one; social organizations, five; and alumni associations, five.

Table IV, page 19, shows the professional journals which are read by the graduates. Eighteen graduates responded and one omitted the question. Of the eighteen answering the question, sixteen (89 per cent) read the American Journal of Nursing; eleven (61 per cent) read Nursing Outlook; seven (39 per cent) read Nursing Research; and nine (50 per cent) listed other professional journals. Some of the other journals mentioned were: Public Health Reports, O. B.-Gyn Journal, Briefs, Research, Modern Hospital, NLN Material, Nursing World, RN, and State Nursing Journals.

TABLE IV

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF GRADUATES OF IDAHO STATE COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE 1958 WHO
READ ARTICLES IN PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS

Professional Journal	Number	Percentage
American Journal of Nursing	16	89
Nursing Outlook	11	61
Nursing Research	7	39
Other	9	50

Table V shows the amount of further education attained by the graduates. All of the graduates answered this question. Fifteen (79 per cent) have had no further education; one (5 per cent) has attended workshops; one (5 per cent) has attended institutes; three (16 per cent) have taken post graduates courses; and two (10 per cent) have worked toward a Master's degree.

TABLE V

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF GRADUATES OF IDAHO STATE COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE 1958 WHO
HAVE OBTAINED FURTHER EDUCATION

Further Education	Number	Percentage
None	15	79
Workshops	1	5
Institutes	1	5
Post-Graduate Courses	3	16
Work Toward Master's Degree	2	10

Table VI shows the responses to the question, "Would you recommend Idaho State College School of Nursing to a young person who seemed qualified?" All of the graduates answered this question. Fourteen (74 per cent) answered "yes", four (21 per cent) answered "no", and one (5 per cent) was undecided. Examples of the comments made by the graduates in relation to recommending Idaho State College School of Nursing are located in Appendix E, page 39.

TABLE VI

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES OF GRADUATES OF THE
IDAHO STATE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE
1958 TO THE QUESTION, "WOULD YOU RECOMMEND IDAHO
STATE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF NURSING TO A YOUNG
PERSON WHO SEEMS QUALIFIED?"

Would you recommend Idaho State College School of Nursing to a young person who seems qualified?	Number	Percentage
Yes	14	74
No	4	21
Undecided	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>
Total	19	100

Table VII, page 21, shows the responses to the question, "Do you feel that you were as qualified as recent graduates of other schools of nursing who had similar experience?" All of the graduates answered this question. Eighteen (95 per cent) answered "yes", and one (5 per cent) was undecided. Examples of comments made by the graduates in regard to their

qualifications as compared to graduates of other schools are located in Appendix F, page 40.

TABLE VII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES OF GRADUATES OF THE
IDAHO STATE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE
1958 TO THE QUESTION, "DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU
WERE AS QUALIFIED AS RECENT GRADUATES OF
OTHER SCHOOLS OF NURSING WHO HAD
SIMILAR EXPERIENCES?"

Do you feel you were as qualified as other recent graduates of other schools of nursing who had similar experiences?	Number	Percentage
Yes	18	95
No	0	0
Undecided	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>
Total	19	100

The second survey included fifteen employers who had been named by the graduates for obtaining opinions. These employers included Directors of Nursing, Doctors, Public Health Department Directors and the Dean of a Graduate School.

Ten of the questionnaires (67 per cent) were returned within a four-week period. All but one of the employers answered all of the questions.

Table VIII, page 22, shows the positions in which the graduates were employed since graduation and whether or not the employers felt they were qualified after adequate orientation to assume these positions.

TABLE VIII

RESPONSES OF FIFTEEN EMPLOYERS OF GRADUATES OF IDAHO STATE
COLLEGE SCHOOL OF NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE 1958
REGARDING POSITIONS HELD BY GRADUATES AND
OPINIONS REGARDING PREPAREDNESS TO
ASSUME THESE POSITIONS

Positions Held	Number of times indicated	Prepared to assume these positions?		
		Yes	No	Omitted
General Duty Nurse	4	3	1	
Operating Room Nurse	1	1		
Supervisor	1	1		
Public Health Nurse	2	1		1
Office Nurse	2	2		
Graduate Student	1			1

All but one of the employers answered these two questions. The positions held were as follows: General Duty Nurse, four; Operating Room Nurse, one; Supervisor, one; Public Health Nurse, two; Office Nurse, two; and Graduate Student, one.

Table IX, page 23, shows the responses to the question, "How did the preparedness and ability of this graduate compare with the same qualities in graduates with similar experience which you have employed in the same positions?". All of the employers answered this question. Two (20 per cent) felt the graduates of Idaho State College School of Nursing were better prepared; six (60 per cent) felt they were the same; and two (20 per cent) felt they were not as well prepared as graduates of other schools.

TABLE IX

RESPONSES OF FIFTEEN EMPLOYERS OF GRADUATES OF IDAHO STATE
COLLEGE SCHOOL OF NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE 1958
TO THE QUESTION, "HOW DID THE PREPAREDNESS
AND ABILITY OF THIS GRADUATE COMPARE
WITH THE SAME QUALITIES IN OTHER
GRADUATES WHICH YOU HAVE
EMPLOYED IN THE SAME
POSITION?"

Idaho State College School of Nursing Graduates were:	Number of times indicated	Percentage
Better prepared	2	20
Same	6	60
Not as well prepared	<u>2</u>	<u>20</u>
Total	10	100

Table X shows the responses of the employers to the question, "What do you consider to be her professional strengths?" All but one of the employers answered this question. The strengths indicated were as follows: technical skills, organization and planning, interpersonal relations, personal appearance, knowledge of theory, and personal assets.

Table XI, page 24, shows the responses of the employers to the question, "What do you consider her professional weaknesses?" Two of the employers omitted this question. The weaknesses indicated were as follows: lack of leadership, lack of experience, and weak in interpersonal relations. Examples of the comments made by the employers regarding the professional strengths and weaknesses of the graduates are located in Appendix G, page 41.

TABLE X

STRENGTHS OF THE GRADUATES OF IDAHO STATE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF
NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE 1958 AS INDICATED BY
FOURTEEN EMPLOYERS

Professional Strengths	Number of times indicated
Technical skill	4
Organization and planning	5
Interpersonal relations	4
Personal appearance	2
Knowledge of theory	4
Personal assets, Interest, dependability, etc.	3

TABLE XI

WEAKNESSES OF THE GRADUATES OF IDAHO STATE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF
NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE 1958 AS INDICATED BY
THIRTEEN EMPLOYERS

Professional Weaknesses	Number of times indicated
Lack of leadership	1
Lack of experience	1
Weak in interpersonal relations	1
No weaknesses noted	10

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to obtain opinions of the graduates of the bachelor's program at the Idaho State College School of Nursing and of their employers to secure information that would be useful to determine if the school offers the clinical and academic background needed by the professional nurse for effective participation in professional nursing. The survey by questionnaire included those persons who had received their degrees from 1956 to June 1958. Opinions were sought regarding two aspects of the bachelor's curriculum: clinical experience and course contents.

Summary and Conclusions Related to Clinical Experience

Seventy-four per cent of the respondents indicated that additional clinical experience would have been beneficial. All the graduates who indicated that additional clinical experience would have been beneficial listed clinical experiences which they thought would be helpful. Additional operating room experience was mentioned most often: five times. Additional communicable disease experience was listed second: four times.

Eighteen per cent of the employers felt that technical skill was a strength of the graduates. Twelve per cent felt that a weakness of the graduates was a lack of experience.

The information obtained from this survey indicated that the graduates and their employers believed that there is a need for the Idaho

State College School of Nursing to offer additional clinical experience in selected areas.

Summary and Conclusions Related to Course Content

Forty-two per cent of the graduates indicated that they felt they would have benefited from a course in Statistics. The information concerning these courses, as obtained from this survey, indicated that a small majority of graduates did not think these courses were necessary.

Ten graduates indicated that a change in course content should help the school better prepare other students. Thirty per cent of these felt courses such as Chemistry and Physiology should be more applicable to nursing.

Eighteen per cent of the employers indicated that a good knowledge of theory was one of the strengths of the graduates.

Summary and Conclusions Related to Professional Participation

Eighty-five per cent of the graduates belong to the American Nurses Association and State Nurse Associations. Twenty-three per cent belong to other professional associations. Only eight per cent did not belong to any professional association.

Eighty-nine per cent of the graduates read the American Journal of Nursing. Sixty-one per cent read the Nursing Outlook and thirty-nine per cent read Nursing Research.

The information obtained from this survey indicated that the majority of graduates of Idaho State College School of Nursing participate actively in professional activities.

Recommendations for Further Study

The following recommendations were made in the light of the questionnaire results and experiences received in conducting the survey:

1. That consideration be given to the advisability of follow-up studies of their graduates at stated intervals. Information received from graduates might have more validity for curricular planning than opinions of students currently enrolled in the program. Graduates of the program were in a position to view more objectively their educational preparation. A comparison of opinions of graduates and students could be investigated.

2. That investigations be made to acquire more specific information regarding actual problems and situations which made the graduates feel a need for additional clinical experience.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Cover Letter

Prefab #1
Bozeman, Montana
August 7, 1959

Dear Graduate:

I am a student in the master's program at Montana State College with a major in Nursing Education. As partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Nursing degree I am doing a study of the graduates of the Idaho State College School of Nursing from 1956 to 1958.

A survey is being made for the purpose of obtaining opinions of the graduates regarding their clinical nursing experiences. It is hoped that such a study will reveal implications for educational planning in the curricula at the Idaho State College School of Nursing.

I will be most appreciative of your assistance in this survey. Enclosed in a stamped self-addressed envelope. Please fill out the questionnaire and return it as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

/s/ Mardell McPheters

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE GRADUATES OF THE
IDAHO STATE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF NURSING

1. What positions have you held since graduation?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
2. Do you feel you were prepared after adequate orientation to the position to assume the responsibilities included in this position?
☐ Yes ☐ No
Explain.
3. Do you feel you would have benefited by additional field experience or clinical practice which you did not have?
☐ Yes ☐ No
4. What additional clinical experience, if any, would have been helpful to you? Why?

5. What changes in courses or learning experiences do you feel would help the school better prepare other students?
6. Do you feel you would have benefited from a course in Applied Physics?
() Yes () No
7. Do you feel you would have benefited from a course in Statistics?
() Yes () No
8. List the professional organizations in which you hold membership.
a.
b.
c.
d.
9. List any other organizations in which you take an active part.
a.
b.
c.
10. Do you read articles in:
a. American Journal of Nursing () Yes () No
b. Nursing Outlook () Yes () No
c. Nursing Research () Yes () No
d. Other (specify) () Yes () No

11. What further education have you had since graduation? Degrees attained or working toward?
- a.
- b.
12. Would you recommend Idaho State College School of Nursing to a young person who seems qualified?
- () Yes () No
13. Do you feel that you were as qualified as recent graduates of other schools of nursing who had had similar experience?
- () Yes () No
14. May I have your permission to send a questionnaire to your employer and past employers or Deans of Nursing Departments where you have done graduate work? The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain their opinion of the abilities of the graduates of ISC.
- () Yes () No
15. If you checked yes to Number 14, please list the names and addresses of these employers.
- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

APPENDIX B

Cover Letter

Prefab #1
Bozeman, Montana
November 1, 1959

Dear :

I am a student in the master's program at Montana State College with a major in Nursing Education. As partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Nursing degree I am doing a study of the graduates of the Idaho State College School of Nursing from 1956 to June 1958.

A survey is being made for the purpose of obtaining opinions of the employers of these graduates regarding their achievement and ability. It is hoped that such a study will reveal implications for educational planning in the curricula at Idaho State College School of Nursing.

I have received permission from the following graduates to obtain this information from you:

All replies will be held confidential.

I will be most appreciative of your assistance in this survey. Enclosed is a stamped self-addressed envelope. Please fill out the questionnaire and return it as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

/s/ Mardell McPheters

QUESTIONNAIRE TO EMPLOYERS OF GRADUATES
OF IDAHO STATE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF NURSING

1. In what position was this graduate employed by you?
 - a.
 - b.
2. Did she seem qualified after adequate orientation to assume this position?
☐ Yes ☐ No
3. How did the preparedness and ability of this graduate compare with the same qualities in graduates of other schools of nursing with similar experience which you have employed in the same position?

The Idaho State College graduate was:
☐ Better prepared ☐ Same ☐ Not as well prepared
4. What do you consider to be her professional strengths?

5. What weaknesses, if any, do you consider might be due to a weakness in her education?

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLES OF COMMENTS BY GRADUATES OF THE IDAHO STATE COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE 1958 RELATED
TO THE PREPAREDNESS TO ASSUME THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF POSITIONS
AND THE NEED FOR
ADDITIONAL
EXPERIENCE

A few of the comments directed toward the lack of preparedness for work situations were as follows:

Lacked adequate leadership training in our program.

As the Acting Director or Co-director definitely not prepared.
I do realize we were never thought to be prepared for this task.

The type of experience needed is not the type that could be obtained as a student.

Student orientation to operating room gave little preparation for present position.

A better background in public health nursing would have been most helpful.

More leadership and supervising experience.

Additional experience in area of communicable disease.

Needed experience tying together all clinical areas.

APPENDIX D

EXAMPLES OF SUGGESTIONS MADE BY THIRTEEN GRADUATES OF THE IDAHO
STATE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE 1958
FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROGRAM

A few of the suggestions made by the graduates for improving the program were as follows:

A complete clinical day without interruptions for classes.

A master plan so students know where they will be and what is expected of them.

Human rather than Mammalian Physiology.

Chemistry applicable to nursing practice.

More correlation between theory and practice.

Closer supervision during experience.

Fewer doctors' lectures.

More patient teaching opportunities.

More experience in supervisory field.

More Pharmacology.

Team concept.

APPENDIX E

EXAMPLES OF COMMENTS BY GRADUATES OF THE IDAHO STATE COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE 1958 REGARDING
RECOMMENDING IDAHO STATE COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF NURSING

A few of the comments made by those who would not recommend the school were as follows:

Due to the unrest in personnel relations at Idaho State College, I would not recommend the school.

Not at this time--based on the unrest in the Nursing Department.

A few of the comments of those who would recommend the school are as follows:

I would recommend the school to a serious student who is mature in thinking and acting.

A qualified yes--depending on how close the school is to accreditation and depending on what the girl wanted to do after graduation.

I would want to look more closely into the program as it is now.

APPENDIX F

COMMENTS OF THE GRADUATES OF IDAHO STATE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF
NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE 1958 RELATED TO THE
QUALIFICATIONS OF GRADUATES AS
COMPARED TO OTHERS

A few comments of those who felt they were as qualified as other graduates are as follows:

I feel we were more qualified due to the fact that we were treated as adults and not pampered students.

In certain situations, yes; others, no.

APPENDIX G

EXAMPLES OF COMMENTS OF THE EMPLOYERS REGARDING PROFESSIONAL
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE GRADUATES OF
THE IDAHO STATE COLLEGE SCHOOL OF
NURSING FROM 1956 TO JUNE 1958

A few comments of the employers concerning the professional strengths found in the graduates were as follows:

Alertness, interest, initiative.

Technical skill excellent. Organization and planning of work program excellent.

Tactfulness, efficient.

Above average well rounded nursing status.

Excellent nurse--well qualified--efficient and above all well liked by both patients and Doctors.

With experience the student from this Idaho State College program could qualify far beyond a student from the diploma program.

Consistent in thinking.

Dependable, follows orders, nursing techniques are good.

A few comments of the employers concerning the professional weaknesses found in the graduates are as follows:

Needs more practice in nursing.

Needs more experience.

Weaknesses found in relation to directing and instructing personnel.