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AN EVALUATION OF AVONDALE COLLEGE DIPLOMA OF HEALTH SCIENCE (Nursing) AND BACHELOR OF NURSING PROGRAMS

by RON PLANE

Research Treatise submitted to the Faculty of Nursing, Department of Behavioural and Social Sciences, SYDNEY UNIVERSITY, as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Nursing (Nursing Education).

November 1996

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ABSTRACT

In 1980 the Avondale College associated with the Sydney Adventist Hospital introduced its first tertiary level nursing course leading to the Diploma of Applied Science (Nursing). The course was uniquely different to any other tertiary nursing course being offered in Australia, having a semester of theory, alternating with a semester of 'hands on' clinical experience during which the students were given 'learning packages' to complete.

In 1986, the implementers of the curriculum were desirous of some information with which to evaluate the effectiveness of this new innovative program. Information gained through a research study would be examined to determine how successful the course was in relation to the academic/educational domain and the area of skill as a practitioner. To gain this information, a study was conducted (Behrens 1986) which was evaluated in a quantitative and a qualitative manner. From the results of this (Behrens 1986) study of the responses from the graduates of the Diploma of Applied Science (Nursing), the faculty of the Avondale College, developed a revised curriculum with the title of Diploma of Health Science (Nursing). The first of these four diploma classes graduated in 1991 and the last class graduated in July 1993. In mid 1990 an undergraduate curriculum was introduced leading to the Bachelor of Nursing degree. Since the first group graduated with this degree in November 1993 there have been 4 further classes graduate to November 1995. This study has been conducted with two goals in mind; the main goal is to look at, employment patterns, graduates' perceptions of the effectiveness of the course undertaken, satisfaction levels of the graduates and to determine changes and aspirations relating to career pathways. The other goal is to compare the responses of the graduates of the earlier diploma (Behrens 1986), with the responses of graduates from the later diploma and the degree program. Hopefully, from the responses obtained the college may be assisted in making changes to the current program as well as in the development of future curricula.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1:1 Background to the study

Just over 16 years ago, the Avondale College commenced the tertiary course for the attainment of the Diploma of Applied Science (Nursing). This was unique in Australia, in that it was designed to have two intakes per year over the three years with a semester of theory alternating with a semester of practical experience in the wards of the Sydney Adventist Hospital. The theory semester included one day per week of supervised clinical practice while the semester of practical experience was combined with a supervised, self-paced "learning package" completed outside the hours of the full time clinical work as a student nurse. The wages earned in the "working" semester were spread out over the whole year so that the student received a payment weekly allowing an ability to keep themselves as well as to meet the cost of their fees for this private college course. This was made possible as the Avondale College has a main campus at Cooranbong (near Lake Macquarie) and a nursing school campus beside the Sydney Adventist Hospital in Wahroonga, which is affiliated with the college.

The implementers of this radically different type of "tertiary" program believed that it would successfully produce the quality registered nurse for which it was designed. Having this belief confirmed was paramount and just relying on an inner feeling was not adequate, so it was imperative that some feedback be obtained. After two and half years and five classes had graduated a study was completed (Behrens, 1986) to evaluate the "end product". This study was "multi-pronged", in that it did not just address the theory component but also explored aspects of the practical/clinical areas of learning. As well as the ongoing assessments throughout the three year course, that is, the exams, essays, worksheets and tutorials with clinical competencies and ward nursing reports the study focussed on the

graduate as a practitioner. The employment pattern, the post graduation attrition levels and the graduate's perceptions of many different aspects of the course were explored. To attain a realistic result a course would need to be measured by how successful and how well accepted the graduate registered nurse was in the real world of "Health" employment.

From the findings of this study (Behrens, 1986) some adjustments and minor changes were made to the initial Diploma program until in 1988 a new Diploma in Health Science (Nursing) was implemented. At this time there was a growing demand for all nurses to be educated to a degree which applied much pressure for Avondale College to develop and implement a Bachelor of Nursing program. One semester before the first class of the new Diploma in Health Science (Nursing) was to graduate, students began to study the newly developed degree course, Bachelor of Nursing.

These two courses were different from the original alternating theory /practical diploma that was evaluated in the 1986 study, in that there was now an eight week clinical work block each semester either in the middle of the theory component or at the end of the semester. Continuing though was the weekly day of supervised clinical practice. As this still remains a unique method of teaching nurses in the tertiary mode and after five classes have graduated and are in the workplace as registered nurses, it is again vital for the course to be evaluated.

Similar to the first study (Behrens, 1986) this study will explore the graduates' perspectives of the two courses retrospectively as to how satisfied they were with various aspects of this different form of learning, and where they are now heading professionally and vocationally.

1:2 Statement of Purpose of the Study

Even though these courses have had external moderators, consultation with academics from other institutions, internal evaluation from each campus of the college as well as constant subject evaluation by the students, it would be so easy to just 'sit back on your laurels' and become

complacent. One tends to excuse the occasional dissatisfactions that arise as the exception rather than the rule, but this really is the time to organise a research study to ascertain whether the goals of the course have been achieved or not.

This study has been implemented by involving all 91 diploma graduates and 126 degree graduates with the following breakdown of male to female.

Table 1:1 Number of Graduates

GRADUATION YEAR	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Nov 1991	22	2	20
July 1992	23	6	17
Nov 1992	19	6	13
July 1993	27	12	15
Sub Total	91	26	65
Nov 1993	22	3	19
July 1994	19	4	15
Nov 1994	33	4	29
July 1995	24	10	14
Nov 1995	30	5	25
Sub Total	128	26	102
TOTALS	219	52	167

Other reasons that stimulated the decision to conduct this study included :

i) No evaluation study has been conducted on the Avondale College degree course.

ii) Feedback information on the theory content of the course is needed to assist in the revision and restructuring of the content as is required.

iii) An attempt to discover the direction taken by graduates in the field of employment and whether this is in line with what the college envisaged for those graduating from the nursing degree course.

iv) As the Avondale College now offers post graduate diploma courses plus a Masters in Nursing course this evaluative information can be used in modifying some aspects of these programs.

v) As very little research has been attempted in relation to course evaluation in New South Wales, this study will add to the growing bank of nursing research material in Australia.

Similar to the earlier study (Behrens, 1986) conducted on the first diploma course offered by the Avondale College the main objectives of this evaluation study of the Diploma of Health Science (Nursing) and the Bachelor of Nursing courses, were to :

i) Trace graduate employment patterns.

ii) Ascertain graduates' perceptions of the success of the course in fulfilling its overall aims for its graduates.

iii) Assess the satisfaction levels of Graduates in relation to specific aspects of the courses' curricula.

iv) Provide information to the College to assist in planning for future courses.

v) Determine possible future career intentions of graduates (Behrens, 1986 p.3).

vi) Compare the findings of this study with those of the earlier study (Behrens, 1986).

1:3 Course Aims and Philosophy

To determine how good or bad is a course, one would need to ascertain whether or not, the aims and objectives that the institution has for its graduates of the course, were being met or not. To achieve this it would be necessary to refer to the Mission Statement of the Avondale College as well as the Mission Statement of the Faculty of Nursing. Along with these Mission Statements one would also study the educational philosophy of the College and the specific objectives of the degree in nursing.

The Mission Statement of Avondale College is :

> *Avondale College is a community with a Christian world view committed to excellence in education, the development of the whole person with a love for life and learning, and the preparation of skilled professionals to serve in the workplace and in society.*

The Mission Statement of the Faculty of Nursing is :

> *The Nursing faculty is committed to providing an equitable and dynamic nurse education program that facilitates the development of a professional nurse who is able to utilise the process of nursing in the implementation of a safe, effective and compassionate Christian nursing practice.*

The philosophy of the Avondale College is committed to a wholistic approach providing development for each student in the physical, social, intellectual, spiritual and cultural spheres of life. At the beginning of this century the College had its beginnings as the Avondale Missionary College. The main purpose of this institution was to train teachers, ministers and other personnel to be used in S.D.A. employment throughout Australasia the Pacific Islands and other areas of Mission activity. Today the College provides education leading to diplomas and degrees in Teaching (Primary and Secondary), Science, Business studies, Music, Flying and Theology. One of the best advantages of Avondale College, is the small group learning situations with close personal relationships between the teachers and the students. Even though it is of paramount importance that students excel in their chosen vocation by high achievement the College feels that it also just as important for the graduate to be prepared for the joy of giving service to others.

Especially is this so, in this career of nursing, that the student reflect this caring attitude espoused in the philosophy of the College. The philosophy of the Faculty of nursing particularly promotes and includes beliefs relating to the nature of mankind, the nature of health and illness, the nature of nursing and the nature of learning. From the concept of a

health-illness continuum many human needs can be demonstrated which can be met using the Nursing Process that involves assessing, planning and applying nursing interventions followed by evaluation of the outcomes. It is on this wholistic concept of nursing that the conceptual framework of the nursing undergraduate degree program has been developed.

In designing the undergraduate nursing degree program it was expected that it would meet ;

i) The educational needs of a basic nursing course that would prepare a student to become an effective comprehensively registered nurse.

ii) The needs of a registered community nurse in her rapidly changing work pattern.

iii) The requirements of the national and state nurse registering authorities.

iv) The staffing needs for registered nursing positions in Seventh-day Adventist community services and health-care facilities in Australasia and overseas.

For these aims to be met the curriculum of the Bachelor of Nursing was designed to enable the graduate to :

- *provide nursing care within the context of the conceptual framework promoting the ethic of caring as the core concept of the discipline of nursing.*
- *base nursing actions on a body of knowledge which is derived from nursing science and related biophysical and behavioural science disciplines.*
- *develop caring attitudes and values and respond with tolerance and sensitivity to differences in belief and value systems.*
- *utilise the process of nursing in meeting the nursing and health care needs of clients and demonstrate an appropriate level of interpersonal and technical skill competence in implementing safe, effective and compassionate nursing practice.*
- *interact and collaborate with clients, colleagues and members of other health disciplines to provide a facilitative goal directed*

approach to nursing care and the utilisation of health care resources.

- *determine nursing roles and responsibilities and practice within professional standards of knowledge, integrity and accountability.*
- *participate in critique and utilise nursing and other health related research in order to contribute to nursing knowledge and enhance the quality of nursing and health care.*
- *reflect on and evaluate nursing practice experience extend nursing skills and assume responsibility for continuing growth and development both as a nurse professional and as a contributing member of society.*
- *role model a healthy life style and develop skills to promote health and facilitate health maintenance, disease prevention, habilitation and rehabilitation according to client needs.*
- *view nursing as a sub-set of Christian service and incorporate Christian philosophy and values into all aspects of nursing practice.*

The Avondale College graduate from the Bachelor of Nursing course will after registering with the N.S.W. Nurses Registration Board and with appropriate support and supervision, be able to :

- *Function as a beginning practitioner who is able to apply the principles of nursing science and related disciplines to the provision of safe, competent, ethical and responsible nursing care for individuals and groups in a variety of health care settings.*
- *Collaborate with clients, colleagues and other health professionals to provide care in the nursing practice areas of community nursing, maternal and family health nursing, paediatric nursing, nursing of the developmentally disabled, medical / surgical nursing, psychiatric and mental health nursing and nursing care of the aged.*

- *Practice independently and inter-dependently in accordance with*

- *Practice independently and inter-dependently in accordance with professional standards and demonstrate skills in nursing assessment and diagnosis of health care needs in goal identification, clinical decision making and problem solving and in the planning, implementation and evaluation of nursing care.*
- *Function within the limits of education and competence in the nursing roles of clinician, care co-ordinator, communicator, counsellor, education/facilitator, client advocate, clinical researcher, change agent and member of the health team.*
- *Reflect caring, compassionate attitudes indicating a humanitarian concern for the whole person regardless of age, gender, race, socio-economic status or belief system.*
- *Demonstrate capability for critical and reflective thought and assume responsibility for further learning experiences relevant to the professional development os self and the enhancement of the nursing profession (Bachelor of Nursing Course Assessment document Avondale College, 1991 : 4 - 5).*

CHAPTER 2

OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature that specifically relates to post registration evaluation of tertiary nursing programs by graduates is very limited. Articles that are related to this subject such as those discussing Evaluation, Evaluation by students, Studies on career pathways of tertiary nursing course graduates and some similar to the subject under review, will be addressed in this chapter in the order as given.

A paper discussing the evaluation of courses and the outcome of courses (Rotem, 1992) is related to health education generally and not to nursing specifically. Not only should evaluation be an ongoing process throughout the course but it is suggested that "results can only be appreciated after an interval of time", which applies to the present study. This paper (Rotem, 1992) suggests that when formulating questionnaires the questions should not be confusing but should be broad, clear and meaningful. In relating to methodology it mentions that in the past if research was not quantitative in nature it was not considered scientific, while qualitative material was rejected as being too subjective. Today modern research accepts both quantitative and qualitative material as the latter highlights different perspectives and allows that a mixture of people will have many varied points of view. In conclusion the paper mentions some advantages of program evaluation as giving a :

- *provision of appropriate information to diverse groups at the time they need it.*
- *wider and increased use of information for decision making.*

To draw attention to the importance of evaluation of the new tertiary nursing programs an article (Malko, 1988) stressed how important it was for nursing education in N.S.W. to be moved from the hospital schools of

nursing into the tertiary sector of education. This move allowed the graduate nurse to be more independent, to have a questioning attitude and to be more responsible, decisive and accountable. This article identifies the importance of evaluating the newly developed programs especially focusing on the clinical aspects because it is through clinical behaviour that the "product" will be evaluated by the "consumers".

In a small book on curriculum design in nursing (Heath, n.d.) reference is made to evaluation during a nursing course by students, by stating that :

> *"Students should be encouraged to take an active part in evaluating their own performance. This will involve them in identifying their own strengths and weaknesses and in choosing their own learning objectives. (In addition to those already selected by their teacher)." (Heath, n.d.)*

The book also refers to how it was essential to have nursing programs evaluated by graduates to gain feedback on how effective the course was, in the area of :

"- relevance to their job
- *usefulness of learning experiences provided*
- *suitability of learning aids*
- *length or enjoyment of sessions." (Heath, n.d.)*

It is also suggested that some nursing courses evaluate using short regular tests with assessments going on all throughout the progress of the course while others will use a long end-of-course evaluation questionnaire. Some schools will choose to evaluate their course by using a mix of both these methods.

A program evaluation study on a course for occupational therapists (Meyers, 1990) was a cross sectional study conducted by five senior students that were doing the course. The sample consisted of randomly chosen graduates of the course now with occupational therapy positions out in the workplace whom the students interviewed personally. It was stated that possibly the results would have been better had the study included some interviews with faculty of the school and some of the consumers who received occupational therapy treatments. It was a limited study in that there were only five interviewers who were all full time

students with very little free time, so consequently only a few (no number given) interviews were conducted. The response from the interviews was highly positive with written reports being submitted to the accreditation committee as the major evaluation of the occupational therapy program in the accreditation assessment of the university which was ultimately approved.

A cross sectional study in Israel (Ziv, 1990) on the evaluation of a tertiary nursing program was conducted by giving students in each level of the course a questionnaire to complete which related to the complete tertiary nursing course being evaluated. This was a first, as there does not appear to be any other similar case where the curriculum of a tertiary nursing course was evaluated using only the perceptions of students. It was of interest to the investigator of the present study even though the students used in the study were not currently studying in the program as were those in the (Ziv, 1990) study but had already completed the course, some of the findings and perceptions of the respondents parallelled those of the Israel study.

In N.S.W. in 1983 decisions were made to go from hospital schools of nursing into tertiary education. This meant great changes were to be made in a short space of time including the development of new curricula to meet the demands that had now been placed on the nursing profession and the nursing academics responsible for its implementation.

At first most institutions that were teaching nursing courses were teaching Diploma of Applied Science (Nursing), but it was important to move rapidly onto teaching a degree course in nursing. Zusy (1986) discussed many of the problems that had occurred in the various states of America and how they coped with same issue that was now being faced by the nursing profession in Australia. It was a major hurdle in Australia as entry to nursing practice was limited to having a nursing degree, and as

very few nurses had a degree, there was a great urgency to have all nurses graduate with a degree level of tertiary education.

A study that addressed this issue (McVeigh, Nees and Schickler, 1991) explored the programs designed to allow upgrading to degree while the student continued in full time nursing employment. Another report (Marquis, Lillibridge and Madison, 1993) looked at the problems and progress relating to this issue of one level of education as the only entry into nursing in Australia. One factor from this report was that each institution was responsible for developing their own curriculum and it was necessary for each one to evaluate their own unique program. Relevant to this, the present study has only evaluated the course promoted by the Avondale College and has not tried to relate to what other institutions have developed.

In the United Kingdom much interest was shown in follow-up studies of graduates from degree courses in nursing. Three of these studies were longitudinal studies using questionnaires sent out at intervals over 1 - 5 years. The first of these studies (Bircumshaw and Chapman, 1988a) surveyed 89 graduates from the Cardiff nursing degree course, the second study (Kemp, 1988) surveyed 99 graduates of the nursing degree course conducted by the University of Hull while the third study (Bircumshaw and Chapman, 1988b) surveyed 9 graduates from the post-registration nursing Bachelor degree course at the University of Wales. Even though these were longitudinal in nature and the present study is cross sectional it is of interest that there is a common pattern in the questions that explored :

- first position of employment.
- further positions gained.
- further education commenced
- perceptions of the value of theory in the course to the workplace.
- perceptions of the status accredited by others to their tertiary level of nursing education.

These three studies mostly discovered that graduates with a nursing degree entered the nursing workforce and mostly stayed in nursing employ.

They sought further education by attaining academic and nursing qualifications. It was also noted that the majority remained in clinical positions rather than in positions related to nursing education or nursing administration, instead a shift occurred toward nursing work in the community.

Many aspects of a Canadian study (Ingram, Rideout, Weir, Brown, Woodward and Crook, 1994) are very close in methodology and content to the present study. The study surveys diploma graduates, degree graduates and those who have converted from a previous nursing level up to the Bachelor degree level. It is also a cross sectional study that surveyed graduates by using a questionnaire sent by mail. In the study the questionnaire included demographic information, positions of employment following graduation, reasons for leaving nursing (where applicable), further education, perceptions of :

- how well the course had prepared them for nursing responsibilities,
- acceptance in the workplace with a nursing degree,

and their levels of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the nursing profession.

It appeared that those graduates of the lower level of tertiary education the diploma in nursing were far more difficult to try and track down at their latest address as there were no forwarding addresses after graduation. So there were many in this group who could not be included in the study. This group had more children and received lower salaries than the other two groups. About 20 percent of the bachelor group were employed in community nursing positions whereas the conversion students mostly moved into nursing education or nursing administration. There was no significant difference in the levels of satisfaction with their present position of employment as expressed by the three groups. The diploma group ranked salary high on their list of areas of satisfaction whereas the other two groups ranked inadequate salary high on their list of areas of dissatisfaction. The attrition from nursing was fairly low with 12% from the bachelor group, 10% from the conversion group and only 7% of the diploma group.

In the United Kingdom interest was more focussed on the career pathways of graduates from nursing degree programs offered at three different universities. The first of these studies (Howard and Brooking, 1987) examined the career pathways and aspirations of nursing graduates from the University of London. This was a cross sectional study conducted by sending out by mail a self-completion questionnaire to graduates from the 1981,1982 and 1983 classes. Questions were asked about their first position taken upon registering and a 6 month employment history until the present. Most of the respondents had taken hospital clinical nursing positions : 73% initially 56% at the end of one year and down to 33% in two years but many had gone into other nursing work outside the hospitals. At the end of two years there were 23% that were either not working or were in non-nursing positions. It was noted that the graduate with a nursing degree with time undertook postgraduate studies which entitled them to enter nursing education or nursing administration positions and areas other than clinical nursing positions. The short term aspirations of these respondents who were in nursing employment were to :

Table 2:1 Short term aspirations.

- stay in present position	12%
- seek promotion	22%
- gain further qualifications	61%
- other	5%

whereas the long term aspirations were to enter :

Table 2:2 Long term aspirations.

- nursing education	36%
- community nursing	23%
- health education	15%
- hospital clinical nursing	13%
- nursing research	8%
- other	5%

An Irish study (Reid, Nellis and Boore, 1987) was a survey conducted on nursing degree graduates from the New University of Ulster. This was also a cross sectional study with a questionnaire sent by post to six classes of nurses graduating with a degree from 1975 - 1980; a total of 81 graduates with a response rate of 81%. As this study was also concentrated on the career pathways it was interesting that there were 76% of the respondents employed in clinical nursing positions and even though some of these had been in the work force for 11 years it compared well with the initial 73% that commenced in hospital clinical nursing positions but which had dropped off in 2 years to less than half of this figure. The long term aspirations of this group were as follows :

Table 2:3 Degree - Long term aspirations.

-	stay in clinical nursing	54%
-	enter nursing education	26%
-	do nursing research	4%
-	education and research	4%
-	enter community nursing	4%
-	unsure	8%

The last of these three British studies (Fraser and Titherington, 1991) examined the career pathways of experienced nurses who had studied part time and graduated with a nursing degree from three different English Polytechnics between 1982 - 1986. This study was similar to the other two British studies being a cross sectional study with questionnaires mailed to each of the 146 graduates having a 77% response rate. In contrast to the other two studies with most respondents being female this one had 28% male respondents and there was also a great difference in ages, with the first two studies having most graduates under 25 years and this third study all respondents were over 25 years (43% over 40 years). As this older group were all employed in nursing the interest was to see what changes occurred in the career pathways after the attaining of a nursing degree.

Table 2:4 Degree - Career pathways.

	Before degree	After degree
Clinical nursing	64%	34%
Nursing education	33%	49%
Nursing management	4%	12%
Nursing research		4%
Other		1%

It can be seen in Table 2:4 that prior to having the degree in nursing 37% were involved outside clinical nursing but after attaining the degree in nursing, 66% had then accepted nursing positions in education, management and research.

A longitudinal study (Battersby & Hemmings, 1991) that surveyed graduates and their employers to ascertain whether the level of clinical exposure during the course was reflected by clinical performance during the first twelve months in the clinical nursing workforce. There were two main groups of graduates that were surveyed, those who had received a high level of clinical experience during their course and another group who had received only a low level. (the high group and the low group). The results demonstrated that there was no significant difference in performance at the end of the twelve months, which challenges assumptions that are made, that the more clinical experience during the nursing course the more competent will be the registered nurse in the workforce. These results seem to suggest that quantity of the clinical experience may not be as important as is the quality of that clinical experience during the nursing course. The perceptions of the "low group" about their competence as a nurse, at the time they entered the clinical workplace, was much higher than that of the nursing unit manager of the area in which they were working. By the end of the year the levels of perceptions of clinical competence in both the "low group" and the "high group", was approximately the same as that of the N.U.M.'s.

Another longitudinal evaluation study (Hargreaves, 1994) of a nursing degree course was conducted at Sheffield Hallam University, while the course was in progress. The students filled in a semantic differential

scale at the commencement of a twelve month unit of the course, twice at four month intervals and again at the end of the twelve months. The students were all registered nurses upgrading to a tertiary qualification, some being midwives others were general nurses. As the study was wanting to evaluate attitudes the semantic differential scale, (the "Hoste Grid" developed by Hoste in 1981 from an idea by Osgood) had 25 bi-polar adjectives separated by a grid of 8 lines. The respondents indicated along this grid how they felt course rated related to the two adjectives. There was no way the researcher could properly explore some of the "attitudes" being shown from the grids because there was often disparity between the values of the researcher and the respondent. So even though it was felt to be valuable, giving a broad indication of the progress of the course, the actual results needed to be viewed with caution.

Another longitudinal study (Cassells, Redman and Jackson, 1986), with some characteristics similar to the present study, examined satisfaction levels of nurses related to their nursing degree course. From 220 different American colleges running tertiary nursing courses, 960 students were surveyed, with a 78% response. Questionnaires were given to senior students in their final year, and again 12 months after graduation. Similar to the present study there were two Likert scales, the first relating to satisfaction levels of the course while the second asked how well their preparation had been in various clinical nursing skills. On the whole, the results showed that the majority of respondents were *very satisfied/satisfied* ratings and 70% of respondents indicated that they felt they were *very prepared/prepared* in relation to their clinical skills when they first entered the workplace.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3:1 The Research Design

The research design to be used is a descriptive survey (Lo Biondo-Wood 1994, p233) as it will collect information about behaviours and things that have already happened with no manipulation of the variables by the researcher. This study involves a population all of whom have graduated after having completed a curriculum which aims to produce in its graduates a person with a high level of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour. The variables are mostly dependent eg. graduates that have left the profession for whatever reason. The independent variables can be those changes that occur with time and reflection eg. the teaching styles can differ if new teachers are introduced during the course or the teaching style of a teacher may change as the teacher perceives the changing needs of the students or assessment methods may change oral / written examinations, assignments / essays.

Using a descriptive survey provides no absolute proof of causality (Lo Biondo-Wood 1994, p242), but as there is a comparison being used an ex post facto study (Lo Biondo-Wood 1994, p237) can be used to establish some causality. The data collected may then be seen to support causality which is valuable when studying those variables that cannot be experimentally manipulated.

3:2 The Sample

i) Selection of the Sample

The sample to be used will be all of the graduates from the 9 graduation classes (4 Diploma of Health Science(Nursing) and 5 Bachelor of Nursing), the last of these classes graduating in November 1995.

ii) Characteristics of the Sample

The following relevant demographic data were extracted from the response sheets filled in by Graduates and some from graduation handbooks.

State or Country of Origin

These graduates came from all over Australia, New Zealand and 4 other countries so it may appear a mammoth task to get responses back but many of the graduates remained in Sydney because of employment. As all of these graduates were taught by the researcher and a friendly relationship was established with many it is anticipated that the response will be as high as it was in the 1986 (Behrens) study. The Avondale College policy is to accept some students from developing countries and one of the aims of this study is to see whether or not these students return to their homelands.

Table 3:1 shows the distribution of the nursing students according to the country or state from which they came. It can be seen that :

- 185 (85%) came from Australia
- 34 (15%) came from overseas
    - 8% New Zealand
    - 7% other countries

When these figures are compared with the figures from the 1986 (Behrens) study, it is noticed that there were :

- 76% from Australia
- 15% from New Zealand
- 9% from other countries.

Table 3:1 Place of Origin

Grad Year	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	NZ	OTHER
Nov 1991	10	3	1	1	2			3	HongKong 6
July 1992	10	4	2	1		1		3	P.N.G. 2
Nov 1992	10	1		1	2	1	1	1	
July 1993	14	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	Malaysia 2
Sub total	44	9	5	5	5	3	2	8	10
Nov 1993	9	4	2	1	1		1	2	HongKong 2
July 1994	11	5	1						Malaysia 2
Nov 1994	23	1	4	1		1		3	
July 1995	12	3	3		3			2	Canada 1
Nov 1995	15	4	4	2	1			3	HongKong 1
Sub total	70	17	14	4	5	1	1	10	6
TOTALS	114	26	19	9	10	4	3	18	16

Ratio of males to females in the graduate sample.

Over 23% of the sample are men, 4.7 times greater than the N.S.W. average and 6 times greater than that of the Canadian study (Besler 1991, p16). Having this greater number will allow wider data analysis using this as another factor. Table 3:2 shows the male to female breakdown.

Table 3:2 Total of Males and Females in each Group

Grad Year	♂	♀
Nov 1991	2	20
July 1992	6	17
Nov 1992	6	13
July 1993	12	15
Sub Total	26	65

Grad Year	♂	♀
Nov 1993	3	19
July 1994	4	15
Nov 1994	4	29
July 1995	10	14
Nov 1995	5	25
Sub Total	26	102
Sub Total (Diploma)	26	65
TOTALS	52 (24%)	167 (76%)

Age

85% were school leavers (21 - 22 years old), of the others 2 were (44 yrs and 47 yrs), the mothers of other students.

Table 3:3 Age-Groups at Commencement of the Course

GRAD YEAR	17 - 21 Yrs	22 - 30 Yrs	31 - 40 Yrs	41 - 50 Yrs
Nov 1991	17	3	2	
July 1992	18	5		
Nov 1992	15	3	1	
July 1993	18	8		1
Nov 1993	18	3	1	
July 1994	15	4		
Nov 1994	31	2		
July 1995	12	10	1	1
Nov 1995	24	5	1	
TOTALS	168 (76%)	43 (20%)	6 (3%)	2 (1%)

The main difference between these percentages to those of the percentages in the 1986 (Behrens) study is that there is a marked increase in the 22 - 30 year olds (less than 10% in 1986 and up to 20% in this study) which is made up by a drop in the same percentage of the school leavers age group, 17 - 21 years. The structure of the Diploma course in 1986, allowed the student to be self sufficient by being paid for clinical work, while the present structure of the Bachelor course does not make this possible, maybe, this could be why some now choose to go into the workforce for a few years prior to beginning the tertiary course.

3:3 INSTRUMENTS USED IN THE STUDY.

The instrument that will be used is a questionnaire because of its simplicity and because it is impracticable to interview people who now live a great distance away. Other advantages of this instrument is that it is less expensive; each respondent receives the sheet at about the same time and it contains standardised questions. Also it provides anonymity which of course is more likely to produce more truthful responses and real opinions. Because the responses from this study are to be compared and analysed against the responses obtained in the earlier study (Behrens, 1986) it is important that the instrument be the same, so only a few small alterations were made to the questionnaire, which were relevant to the current study.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE (See Appendix G - page 110)

The questionnaire is formed of three sections. The first section is concerned with demographic data, employment patterns, perceptions of the professional reputation of the course, any further post graduate study undertaken and interest in future post graduate study.

The second section uses a Likert scale as it relates to the graduate's perceptions about the extent to which they felt the course had prepared them to meet its aims and objectives.

The third section, also uses a Likert scale as it asks the graduates to be honest about many aspects of the course and its supporting framework, then by using open questions it provides the respondent with the freedom and opportunity to express feelings about specific aspects of the course. The final part of this section asks the questions "if preparing for a career again, having all the knowledge and experience of this course, Would you still choose nursing? Would you choose this school of nursing? Would you choose another career? Give the reasons for your responses .....

This questionnaire was developed for the original study (Behrens, 1986) after much research and it was described this way :

> *A number of questionnaires were examined in preparation for the study. These included a graduation competency in nursing functions questionnaire used by Moore and Boyd (1985:323), two follow-up alumnæ questionnaires in Green and Stone (1977:227) and Bevis (1982:263) respectively, and the questionnaires used by Goldsworthy, Pickhaver and Young (1985:Appendix 3) and Mackay, Brooke and Bruni (1981). An unpublished follow-up study from the Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education Department of Nursing was also consulted as was a Western Australian evaluation of the performance of College and Hospital graduates (Lansdale, Dennis, Hooke and Norvilas, 1982).*

Because this instrument has been tested in this earlier study and found to be effective, and the items on the questionnaire represent the content domain for which it was constructed it can be considered to have content validity (Gething, 1995, p107)(Lo Biondo-Wood, 1994, p369).

3:4 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The survey was commenced in April 1996 by sending out to all 219 graduates a questionnaire with a covering letter and a stamp addressed envelope. Unfortunately at the same time a questionnaire had been sent from the administration office of the Avondale College and from the New South Wales Nursing Board, all arriving in the same week. Initially many responses were received in the first few weeks and then in the next month there was only a small trickle of replies, finally they ceased. By chance, a graduate who is still employed by the Sydney Adventist Hospital, spoke to me and asked how the research survey was going, and it was then that the news of the three surveys all arriving together was discovered. So a second reminder letter with another copy of the questionnaire (but with no stamp addressed envelope) was sent to the graduates in July. This again produced a steady flow of responses which finally stopped in September.

Some difficulty was experienced in finding addresses of the scattered graduates. Some had married so now had a new surname, some had taken positions in London, Germany, America and Korea, while many others were living in Australian states other than their home state. Some classmates who were employed locally had kept in contact with many of their graduating group, with one graduate who forwarded a class letter to all her class so she had an up to date list of addresses. Telstra (the phone company) probably thought they had gained a new shareholder, as the Graduates parents were contacted for the current name and address of the son/daughter, with many parents residing in places like South New Zealand, North Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia.

3:5 THE RESPONSE RATE

Table 3:4 shows the final response rates from each graduating class and the breakdown of male to female, taken from the first section of the questionnaire.

Table 3:4 Response Rate

	Graduates	Responding			Not Responding		
Grad Year	Total	Total	♂	♀	Total	♂	♀
Nov 1991	22	18	2 (100%)	16	4		4
July 1992	23	20	4	16	3	2	1
Nov 1992	19	16	4	12	3	2	1
July 1993	27	20(70%)	9	11	7	3	4
Sub Total	**91**	**74**	**19**	**55**	**17**	**7**	**10**
Nov 1993	22	18	3 (100%)	15	4		4
July 1994	19	16	3	13	3	1	2
Nov 1994	33	30 (91%)	3	27	3	1	2
July 1995	24	20	8	12	4	2	2
Nov 1995	30	24	5 (100%)	19	6		6
TOTALS	**219**	**182**	**41**	**141**	**37**	**11**	**26**
%	100%	**83%**	23%	77%	**17%**	30%	70%

Behrens 1986 Figures

Totals	133	112	26	89	21	3	18
%	100%	84%	23%	77%	16%	14%	86%

It is interesting to note that in three of the graduating classes, all the males in the class responded to the survey. The most responsive group were the Bachelor of Nursing graduates in the November 1994 class with 91% returning their questionnaires. The poorest response was the July class of 1993 which is not surprising, as quite a few of them made comments expressing that they had felt *"diddled", "cheated", "it wasn't fair"*, because they had seen that the program being presented to the class ahead of them was nearly the same, and they received a Bachelor of Nursing, whereas their course allowed them to graduate *"only with a Diploma"*. It was interesting that this group had 12 males (44%) and 15

females (56%), with about the same percentage of each responding, so whether or not being "disgruntled" was the cause of the poor response, one cannot determine. Table 3:5 looks at percentages of the male and female responses and compares the present study figures with those from the 1986 (Behrens) study.

Table 3:5 Comparative Percentage of Response

Present Study					
Total ♂ Graduates	% of ♂ Response	% of ♂ Non Response	Total ♀ Graduates	% of ♀ Response	% of ♀ Non Response
52	79%	21%	167	84%	16%
Behrens 1986					
Total ♂ Graduates	% of ♂ Response	% of ♂ Non Response	Total ♀ Graduates	% of ♀ Response	% of ♀ Non Response
26	88%	12%	107	83%	17%
Present Study - Diploma					
Total ♂ Graduates	% of ♂ Response	% of ♂ Non Response	Total ♀ Graduates	% of ♀ Response	% of ♀ Non Response
26	73%	27%	65	85%	15%
Present Study - Bachelor					
Total ♂ Graduates	% of ♂ Response	% of ♂ Non Response	Total ♀ Graduates	% of ♀ Response	% of ♀ Non Response
26	85%	15%	107	84%	16%

Table 3:5 shows that the percentage of the female response was the same 10 years ago for the Diploma graduates as it is today for both Diploma and Bachelor graduates, which is interesting because at around 84% it appears to be higher than the average response rates that are reported in many similar types of studies that have been conducted in other fields of education. The male response in the 1986 (Behrens) study is marginally higher than the response from the male degree graduates, whereas the diploma graduates in the present study have a lower response.

Table 3:6 Response by Age-Group (At commencement of course)

Age Group	Total	Respond	%	Non - Respond	%
17 - 21 Years	168	137	82%	31	18%
22 - 30 Years	43	40	93%	3	7%
31 - 40 Years	6	4	67%	2	33%
41 - 50 Years	2	1	50%	1	50%
TOTAL	219	182	83%	37	17%

The percentages for the two younger age groups have a similar bias in the present study with the 1986 study (Behrens), the greater percentage being in the 22 - 30 year group at 93% (85%, in 1986 study). Could it be that the slightly more mature student is more likely to responsibly respond?

After analysing the differences in respondents in the present study and in the 1986 (Behrens) study it is obvious that the respondents represent the total population of graduates that were surveyed. So it would be reasonable to ignore any bias in the results as a result of non-response, as it has little significance.

3:5 METHOD OF DATA PROCESSING.

Once all the response sheets were returned, the data collected was then summarised, a content analysis carried out, frequency tabulations formed and a descriptive summary of data developed. As this was done by hand, a greater familiarisation of the data and a better possibility of recognising different combinations of variables was possible. All the graduates' comments from the open questions were collected and those having common ideas with a similar message were selected and grouped together. All other responses were reproduced in total, so that an overall understanding of each group's responses can be established. A careful check was carried out to evaluate any relationships that there might be, between variables.

To conduct a data analysis for a descriptive survey, the researcher can use a nominal measure to find numbers and the frequency of particular responses, to establish the central tendency (Gething, 1995, p119) which "describes the average member of the sample". But to gain a more complete picture the researcher would be wise to carry out a measure of variability so as to elicit the amount of dispersion. The material gathered can then be classified and put into different categories. The next step in the analysis is to use ratio measurements (Lo Biondo-Wood 1994, p386-389) to make comparisons between graduates' responses in relation to factors such as :- male responses : female responses, and comparing the responses of the earlier study with the responses from the present study. From the results obtained after the analysis of all the data collected, all the inferences that could be made, were discussed, and from these inferences, recommendations were then made.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Section 4:1a Initial place of employment on graduating

In considering the results, the first area to consider was the first place of employment, so this will be compared further on with the place of origin at the time of commencement.

Table 4:1 Place of First Post Graduate Employment

INITIAL PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT	NUMBER	%
Sydney Adventist Hospital	115	63%
Nursing elsewhere in NSW	26	14%
Nursing Overseas in home Country	11	6%
Nursing back in home State	10	6%
Nursing in another State	18	10%
Non-Nursing Positions	2	1%
T O T A L	182	100%

Section 4:1b i) Place of current employment

Table 4:2 Place of Current Employment (All Cohorts)

CURRENT PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT	NUMBER	%
Sydney Adventist Hospital	65	36%
Nursing elsewhere in NSW	29	16%
Nursing Overseas in home Country	13	7%
Nursing in another State	47	26%
Agency Nursing	8	4%
Further Study	1	0.5%
Non-Nursing Positions	16	9%
Unemployed	3	1.5%
T O T A L	182	100%

Table 4:3 Place of Current Employment (Diploma of Health Sc. Nursing)

CURRENT PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT	NUMBER	%
Sydney Adventist Hospital	20	27%
Nursing elsewhere in NSW	11	15%
Nursing Overseas in home Country	7	9%
Nursing in another State	19	26%
Agency Nursing	5	7%
Further Study	1	1%
Non-Nursing Positions	9	12%
Unemployed	2	3%
T O T A L	74	100%

Table 4:4 Place of Current Employment (Bachelor of Nursing)

CURRENT PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT	NUMBER	%
Sydney Adventist Hospital	46	42%
Nursing elsewhere in NSW	18	17%
Nursing Overseas in home Country	6	6%
Nursing in another State	28	26%
Agency Nursing	3	3%
Further Study	Some part time.	
Non-Nursing Positions	7	6%
Unemployed	1	1%
T O T A L	108	100%

Section 4:1b ii) Current employment in N.S.W.

Table 4:5 Graduates remaining in NSW (All cohorts)

ORIGIN	NUMBER OF GRADUATES	NUMBER RESPONDING	REMAINING IN NSW	EMPLOYED BY SAH	EMPLOYED ELSEWHERE
New South Wales	114	94	76	41	35
Victoria	26	24	10	8	2
Queensland	19	16	4	4	
Western Australia	10	8	6	2	4
South Australia	9	5	0		
Tasmania	4	4	2	2	
Northern Territory	3	2	1	1	
New Zealand	18	15	10	9	1
Hong Kong	9	8	1	0	1
Malaysia	4	3	1	1	
T. P. New Guinea	2	2	0		
Canada	1	1	1	1	
	219	182	112	69	43
	100%	83%	62%	62%	38%

When looking at the total of the graduates,

- 52% came from N.S.W.
- 32% from interstate and
- 16% from overseas (including New Zealand);

62% retained employment in N.S.W. (62% of these at the Sydney Adventist Hospital and 38% in other institutions in Sydney and country areas).

Table 4:6 Percentage of graduates remaining in NSW (All cohorts)

Group	From NSW	From Interstate	From Overseas	1st worked in NSW
Diploma Graduates	49%	31%	20%	84%
Bachelor Graduates	54%	33%	13%	73%
Total of Graduates	52%	32%	16%	77%
Final percentage of graduates remaining employed in NSW				62%
Percentage of these employed at Sydney Adventist Hospital				62%

Of the Diploma graduates,

- 49% came from N.S.W.
- 31% from interstate
- 20% from overseas (including New Zealand).

After graduating :

- 84% of the graduates took up their first nursing appointments in N.S.W. (66% at the Sydney Adventist Hospital and 18% in other institutions in Sydney and country areas),
- 8% returned to positions in their home countries
- 8% went to other states
  - 3% to their home state
  - 5% to another state)

Of the graduates with the Bachelor of Nursing

- 54% came from N.S.W.
- 33% came from interstate
- 13% came from overseas.

After graduation :

- 73% stayed in N.S.W. (61% at the Sydney Adventist Hospital and 12% in other institutions in Sydney and country areas)
- 4% returned to positions in their home countries
- 21% went to other states
  - 7% went to their home state
  - 14% to another state (11% of these going to Queensland)
- the remaining 2% did not take up nursing positions.

Compared with the 1986 study (Behrens) of the graduates with Diploma of Applied Science (Nursing) :

- 31% came from N.S.W.
- 45% came from interstate
- 24% came from overseas.

After graduation :

- 63% stayed in N.S.W. (46% at the Sydney Adventist Hospital and 17% in other institutions in Sydney and country areas)
- 7% returned to positions in their home countries
- 15% went to other states
- 15% did not take up nursing positions. (6% plan to return)Section 4:1b iii) Current positions (Respondents descriptions)

Table 4:7 Types of Current Nursing Positions as described by respondents.

POSITION	NUMBER
Agency Nurse	8
Assistant in nursing	1
Charge nurse (N.U.M.)	5
Clinical educator	2
Community nurse/worker	5
Intensive care registered nurse	1
Midwife	1
Midwifery student - full time work. (Graduate diploma)	3
Operating theatre nurse	14
Paediatric nurse	2
Recovery unit registered nurse	3
Registered nurse	115
TOTAL	160
% of all cohorts	88%

The information in Table 4:7 seems to suggest that Avondale College graduates that choose to enter the nursing work force are highly employable and have a wide range of options. It appears that there are many employers who are willing to give work to the Avondale College graduate.

Section 4:1c i) Reasons for not working in nursing

Table 4:8 Reasons for not working in nursing positions as described by respondents.

Alternative work
Another interest
Car accident, whip lash injury, cannot lift arms
Career path change
Challenge, fulfilled dream to do volunteer missionary work
Couldn't find work in country town - took mechanics apprenticeship
Dislike of nursing (3)
Dislike of Shiftwork (7)
Enjoy community health work
Extra casual work for money (2)
Health reasons
Lack of confidence
Not happy with the approach of western medicine to health care
On maternity leave (3)
Post hiking accident - learning to walk
Studying full time
Work with husband running a business

There are some graduates who have become involved in their spouses' work, others move as their spouses' employment dictates and find that there is no nursing employment available, some have chosen to enter courses of higher education - in and out of nursing, while there are a small percentage who have developed an antipathy towards nursing as choice of employment. Some have indicated in their comments that even though they are at present, pursuing a different strand of education or they may be in a different line of work, they are planning to return "to the fold".

Section 4:1c ii) Current occupations (not in nursing)

Table 4:9 Types of Current Non-Nursing Positions as described by respondents.

POSITION	NUMBER
Ambulance officer	1
Apprentice motor mechanic	1
Assistant college dean	1
Assistant manager of medical company	1
Child care worker	1
Central sterile supply department worker	1
English teacher (Volunteer missionary)	1
Factory worker	1
Kitchen hand	1
Medical sales representative	2
Nurse receptionist in doctor's surgery	1
Office worker	2
Partner in husband's business	1
Police constable	1
Student deaconess	1
Unemployed	2
Venepuncturist	3
TOTAL	22
% of all cohorts	12%

In comparing the information found in Table 4:8 with results of the 1986 (Behrens) study, it can be seen that a smaller percentage (12%) have chosen non-nursing positions in the present study compared with the 1986 results (19%). The higher interest shown in nursing positions by this more recent group of graduates, could be because there are 59% of this group who have a Bachelor of nursing and not a Diploma of nursing.

On the questionnaire, the graduates were asked to indicate from a choice of ten factors, which ones would most likely influence their choice of employment. The results have been ranked in order of highest percentage of respondents who chose the factor that would most influence their choice, down to the factor considered to have the least influence on their choice.

Section 4:1d Factors most likely to influence choice of a position

Table 4:10 Factors most likely to influence choice of a position.

	FACTOR	Frequency	%
1	Location of work place	29	16%
2	Working conditions	27	15%
3	Hours of work	24	13%
4	Rates of pay	22	12%
5	Types of experience available	20	11%
6	Opportunity for professional advancement	17	9%
7	Family commitments	15	8%
8	Opportunity for further study	13	7%
9	Desire to travel	9	5%
10	Need for services	6	4%
	TOTALS	182	

The factors indicated as the top 50% included *Location of work place, Working conditions, Hours of work and Rates of pay* whereas in the results in the 1986 (Behrens) study the top 50% included *Family commitments, Hours of work and Working conditions.* Family commitments appeared as the seventh choice on the current study and number one on the earlier study. Most frequent choice on the present study appeared sixth on the earlier study. An observation on the earlier study was that *"Rate of pay, about which nurses complain a great deal, was low on the list of priorities"* whereas, on the present study it was rated fourth most frequently chosen factor, which is a similar result to the Canadian study (Ingram et al, 1994).

Section 4:2a Perceptions of the professional reputation of the Avondale College courses.

Table 4:11 Perceptions of the professional reputation of the Avondale College Diploma/Bachelor course in nursing.

	DIPLOMA Frequency	%	DEGREE Frequency	%
POOR	1	1%		
FAIR	2	3%	1	1%
GOOD	22	30%	17	15%
VERY GOOD	31	42%	44	41%
EXCELLENT	16	22%	45	42%
NO COMMENT	1	1%		
Course/College Unknown	1	1%	1	1%
TOTALS	74		108	

These results show a difference in perception between the diploma graduate and the degree graduate. In the present study, the perceptions of the diploma graduate, as to the professional reputation of the Avondale College Diploma in nursing, was 72% Good/Very Good. Comparatively, in the 1986 study (Behrens), the perceptions of the diploma graduate, as to the professional reputation of the Avondale College Diploma in nursing, was 78% Very Good/Excellent.

In the present study the perceptions of the bachelor graduate as to the professional reputation of the Avondale College Diploma in nursing, was 83% Very Good/Excellent.

Section 4:2b Graduates Perceptions of the value of a tertiary qualification

Table 4:12 Perceptions of the value of having a tertiary qualification in nursing.

	DIPLOMA Frequency	%	DEGREE Frequency	%
AN ADVANTAGE	50	68%	101	93.5%
NOT AN ADVANTAGE	20	27%	5	4.5%
NO ADVANTAGE PERCEIVED	1	1%		
NO RESPONSE	3	4%	1	1%
NOT SURE			1	1%
TOTALS	74		108	

It can be seen from Table 4:12 that there is quite a difference between the perceptions of the diploma graduates and the degree graduates, as to whether the having of a tertiary qualification in nursing is an advantage or not. The diploma graduates at 68% with the degree graduates at 94% contrasted with the diploma graduates in the 1986 (Behrens) study, where 56% felt that it was an advantage. An observation made in this earlier study was, that it appeared that the longer the time since graduating, the more likely it was, that having the tertiary qualification in nursing would be seen as an advantage. This 1986 study appeared to indicate this, as 62% of the earliest group to graduate, thought it was an advantage compared to the 48% of the most recently graduated group.

This present study appears to be indicating a different story, but then it has another variable, in that the graduates of the most recent group have a degree as their tertiary qualification in nursing, whereas those who graduated 2 years earlier have a diploma. As the majority of the degree graduates perceive that having a tertiary qualification in nursing is an advantage, possibly it is felt that this higher level qualification, gives them a definite edge.

Because 68% of the diploma graduates in this present study thought that having the tertiary qualification in nursing was an advantage, and they had been graduated for a longer period than had the graduates in the earlier 1986 study, who had 62% thinking it was an advantage, it appears that it could be, that the longer time that elapses after graduation, the greater the number that will perceive, that the tertiary qualification in nursing is an advantage.

On the following pages are 2 tables containing summaries of the positive and negative comments made by respondents on the value of having a diploma/degree in nursing.

Table 4:13a contains the summary of the comments made by the diploma respondents. In Table 4:13b is a breakdown of percentages of male / female response.

In table 14:13c is the summing up of the comments made by the degree respondents with a breakdown in percentage of male / female response in table 4:13d,below.

Table 4:13a Positive and negative perceptions of the value of having a diploma qualification in nursing.

Positive responses from diploma graduates	Number
A good educational basis for other careers	2
Avenue for further study	5
Employment opportunities enhanced	6
Entitlement to Queensland psychiatric endorsement	1
Excellent background for work in the health field	1
Gave good scientific understanding for nursing actions	1
Gave a higher pay rate in Home Care service	1
Standard base line on which to build a career	2
Stepping stone to other areas of nursing	4
There are now limitless avenues to be taken	1
With the diploma, easy to upgrade to nursing degree	1
Without diploma, I would not have employment as a nurse	4
Negative responses from diploma graduates	Number
After car accident, diploma of no use	1
Cannot improve "hands-on apprentice style" learning	1
Diploma unnecessary for employment in Queensland	1
Few people realise diploma is 3 years tertiary study	1
Have not yet needed to test its value	2
Most still believe "on the job" is best way to learn nursing	1
No advantage yet - maybe one day it will be	3
Tertiary qualification does not assist with my aspirations	1
The diploma makes one over qualified for a position	1
To get anywhere, further study is still needed (eg. degree)	2

See Appendix A for Positive/Negative responses from Diploma graduates who found having a nursing diploma an advantage/disadvantage. (page 72)
See Appendix B for Positive/Negative responses from Diploma graduates who found having a nursing diploma advantage/disadvantage. (page 75)

Table 4:13b Comments of diploma graduates

	All cohorts	% of males	% of females
No Comment	41%	21%	47%
Positive Comments	39%	58%	33%
Negative Comments	20%	21%	20%

Nearly the same percentage of males and females made negative comments but 25% more males than females had a positive comment.

Table 4:13c Positive and negative perceptions of the value of having a degree qualification in nursing.

Positive responses from degree graduates	Number
A stepping stone to greater personal/professional autonomy	2
Avenue to further study	20
Avenue to other areas of nursing	3
Avenue to other careers	9
Better for problem solving	1
Employers, "old school types", like RN's with a degree	8
Employment opportunities enhanced	20
Gave me a better pay	4
Gave scientific understanding of nursing actions	1
Gives greater kudos	8
Good knowledge base	2
Graduates confident to become fully functional RN	1
Greater impressed employers in UK - get much respect	1
Having degree carries more weight than having diploma	1
My working in Queensland has given the course status	1
Rarely hear a bad word about Avondale College course	1
Supported me financially by providing employment	12
Negative responses from diploma graduates	Number
A medium is needed between tertiary study and practical	1
I've decided that I don't like nursing! Now what to do?	1
Most in this Qld hospital, oppose degree - discrimination	1
No value seen as yet - maybe later in my career	2
Nursing wage does not justify the study effort	1
Poor marks in course does not enable me further education	1

Table 4:13d Comments of degree graduates

	All cohorts	% of males	% of females
No Comment	20%	13.5%	22%
Positive Comments	74%	73%	74%
Negative Comments	6%	13.5%	4%

Nearly the same percentage of males and females made positive comments but nearly 10% more males than females had a negative comment. Which is the opposite to the comments of the present diploma group. It is of interest to note that a much higher percentage (nearly double) of degree respondents chose to make positive comments than did the diploma graduates.

Section 4:3a Courses undertaken since graduation.

Table 4:14a Courses undertaken since completing Diploma of Health Science (Nursing) by gender.

Courses	Male	Female
Graduates having completed no courses	8	12
Nursing Courses		
Nursing certificates eg. oncology, cardiac, acute care		7
Nursing certificates eg. maternity, plastics, aged care		4
Nursing certificates eg. pain, asthma, health promotion		3
Nursing certificates eg. massage, accident and emergency		4
Graduate Diploma	2	2
Bachelor of Health Science	2	
Bachelor of Nursing	4	24
Non-Nursing Courses		
Certificates eg. painting, photography,	1	2
Certificates eg. customer service, medical reception		2
Certificates eg. computer awareness, aromatherapy		4
Certificates eg. security, automobile mechanics	2	
Diploma eg. medical herbalism, social science (childcare)		2
Diploma eg. business management, child psychology	1	2
Diploma eg. floral art, naturopathy	1	1
Associate Diploma of Applied Science (Ambulance)	2	
Graduate Diploma of Theology	1	
Bachelor of Education		1
Bachelor of Church Ministry		1
TOTALS	16	59

It will be noted that 11 males completed a total of 16 courses and for every 11 females 15 courses were completed. This shows that the males have a slightly higher study load, but as 42% of the males did not study compared to 22% of the females, it appears that the females are working a little harder.

Table 4:14b Courses undertaken since completing Bachelor of Nursing by gender.

Courses	Male	Female
Graduates having completed no courses	16	54
Nursing Courses		
Nursing certificates eg. Oncology, Child care, Acute care	1	12
Nursing certificates eg. Operating theatre, 1st aid, E.C.G.,	1	8
Nursing certificates eg. Ischaemic heart disease		1
Nursing certificates eg. Swedish massage, Palliative care		3
Nursing certificates eg. Wound care, Pain management	1	1
Nursing certificates eg. I.V. therapy, Child & family health	1	1
Graduate Diploma eg. Midwifery, Public health		6
Graduate Diploma eg. Peri operative, Acute care	1	1
Masters of Nursing in Critical Care Nursing		1
Non-Nursing Courses		
Certificates eg. Drug & alcohol counselling, Police	1	1
Certificates eg. medical reception, cycle coaching	1	1
Certificates eg. Artificial insemination, Abseiling		2
Certificates eg. Hotel bar course, Fitness and Health		3
Certificates eg. Surf lifesaving, Guitar		2
Certificates eg. Freelance writing and photography		1
Diploma in interior decorating and design		1
TOTALS	7	45

As The diploma respondents have been in the work force for the longer period, as well as the fact that many felt the need to upgrade to the degree in nursing (30 have already done so) their numbers for further courses undertaken, is much higher than those of the degree group in Table 4:14b. Using the same rating method - For every 11 degree female graduates there were 15 courses but for every 11 males only 12.8 courses.

Section 4:3b Interest in post graduate courses

Table 4:15a Interest in post graduate courses offered by Avondale College by gender. (Diploma graduates).

INTERESTED IN			Male	Female
GRADUATE DIPLOMA - YES			4 (21%)	17 (31%)
- NO			15	38
MASTERS IN NURSING - YES			2 (11%)	11 (20%)
- NO			17	44
STUDY METHOD - ON CAMPUS	- FULL TIME			1
	- PART TIME			2
- EXTERNAL	- FULL TIME			5
	- PART TIME		6	20

Table 4:15b Interest in post graduate courses offered by Avondale College by gender. (Degree graduates)

INTERESTED IN			Male	Female
GRADUATE DIPLOMA - YES			7 (32%)	32 (37%)
- NO			15	54
MASTERS IN NURSING - YES			6 (27%)	18 (21%)
- NO			16	68
STUDY METHOD - ON CAMPUS	- FULL TIME			4
	- PART TIME		8	16
- EXTERNAL	- FULL TIME			6
	- PART TIME		5	24

Nearly 60% of degree males are interested in upgrading their nursing qualifications compared to only half that percentage of the diploma males.

Over 50% of the diploma females indicated an interest in upgrading their nursing qualifications compared to nearly 60% of the degree females.

Section 4:4 Graduates' perceptions of how well they were prepared to meet their course objectives.

Table 4:16a Diploma Graduates' perceptions of how well they were prepared to meet their course objectives.

NOT PREPARED / NOT VERY WELL PREPARED
Perform selected medical procedures in emergency situations
NOT VERY WELL PREPARED / MARGINALLY PREPARED
Participate in nursing research
MARGINALLY PREPARED / QUITE WELL PREPARED
Handle the responsibilities of team leadership and general ward organisation
Assume the teaching role of the registered nurse using principles of education
Display a good understanding of the pathologies underlying patient problems
Recognise the importance of continuing education for professional growth
Recognise the need for and implement change in nursing
Demonstrate problem solving skill in a variety of situations
QUITE WELL PREPARED / VERY WELL PREPARED
Treat people as wholistic persons having many different needs
Perform well in a variety of nursing settings
Apply the activities of the nursing process in the delivery of patient care
Communicate with sensitivity and skill, fostering good interpersonal relationships
Demonstrate competence in performing of nursing skills
Become an ethical, responsible member of the nursing profession

In section 2 of the questionnaire, the graduates were asked to indicate on a likert scale, their perceptions of how well the course had prepared them to meet the objectives, of preparing them to be functional nurses in the workforce. In table 4:16a the perceptions of the diploma respondents have been ranked in order of frequency from least down to most frequent in each group.

Of the 14 items, the diploma respondents indicated that they were least prepared to perform medical procedures and to participate in nursing research. They felt most prepared to be a professional nurse, to perform nursing skills and to communicate with patients.

Table 4:16b Degree Graduates' perceptions of how well they were prepared to meet their course objectives.

NOT PREPARED / NOT VERY WELL PREPARED
Perform selected medical procedures in emergency situations
MARGINALLY PREPARED / QUITE WELL PREPARED
Handle the responsibilities of team leadership and general ward organisation
Participate in nursing research
Assume the teaching role of the registered nurse using principles of education
Apply the activities of the nursing process in the delivery of patient care
Demonstrate problem solving skill in a variety of situations
Display a good understanding of the pathologies underlying patient problems
QUITE WELL PREPARED / VERY WELL PREPARED
Recognise the need for and implement change in nursing
Recognise the importance of continuing education for professional growth
Perform well in a variety of nursing settings
Communicate with sensitivity and skill, fostering good interpersonal relationships
Become an ethical, responsible member of the nursing profession
Treat people as wholistic persons having many different needs
Demonstrate competence in performing of nursing skills

In Table 4:16b is recorded the perceptions of the degree respondents and as on the previous page the responses have been ranked in order of frequency in each cluster of levels of preparation.

The item they felt least prepared for was the exact same one that was chosen by the diploma group. The items for which they were most prepared were : first - performing nursing skills, followed by, treating persons wholistically, becoming a professional nurse and communicating with patients, fourth.

Section 4:5a Degree of satisfaction with certain aspects of the nursing course.

Table 4:17a Diploma Graduates' degree of satisfaction with certain aspects of the nursing course.

SOMEWHAT UNSATISFIED / MARGINALLY SATISFIED
The chance to participate in making decisions about school or faculty regulations
MARGINALLY SATISFIED / QUITE SATISFIED
The non-curricular and sporting activities available
The social events arranged for students
The study load in relation to the time available
The procedure for appeals against administrative decisions
The methods of assessment that were used
Adequate feedback about academic and clinical progress
QUITE SATISFIED / VERY SATISFIED
The support available from deans, chaplains, counsellors
The intellectual stimulation you got from being a student here
The accommodation and catering facilities
The availability of educators for discussion about course work
The chance for men and women to get acquainted
Learning packages as a way of obtaining academic credit
The variety and relevance of clinical placements
The interest that most educators took in their students
The integration of theory and practice during the course
The opportunity to fulfil your goals of professional and personal growth
The overall preparation that you received for your future career
The arrangements made for students to earn while they learn
The chance to make close friends

In Section 3 of the questionnaire, the graduates were asked to indicate on a likert scale, how satisfied they were in relation to 20 different issues, related to the nursing course. On table 4:17a the diploma respondents indicated that the item of least satisfaction was their "involvement with decision making about regulations". Under the cluster Marginally satisfied/ Quite satisfied they listed 6 items with the other 13 items clustered under Quite satisfied/Very satisfied. They were most satisfied with - The chance to make close friends, Being able to earn money while learning.

Table 4:17b Degree Graduates' degree of satisfaction with certain aspects of the nursing course.

SOMEWHAT UNSATISFIED / MARGINALLY SATISFIED
The procedure for appeals against administrative decisions
The chance to participate in making decisions about school or faculty regulations
MARGINALLY SATISFIED / QUITE SATISFIED
The non-curricular and sporting activities available
The support available from deans, chaplains, counsellors
The accommodation and catering facilities
The chance for men and women to get acquainted
The social events arranged for students
The methods of assessment that were used
Adequate feedback about academic and clinical progress
The study load in relation to the time available
Learning packages as a way of obtaining academic credit
QUITE SATISFIED / VERY SATISFIED
The variety and relevance of clinical placements
The intellectual stimulation you got from being a student here
The availability of educators for discussion about course work
The overall preparation that you received for your future career
The opportunity to fulfil your goals of professional and personal growth
The integration of theory and practice during the course
The interest that most educators took in their students
The chance to make close friends
The arrangements made for students to earn while they learn

In table 4:17b the degree graduates indicated their satisfaction levels nearly the same as did the diploma group.The two items with which they felt the least satisfied were : The procedure to appeal against administrative decisions and like the diploma group, the involvement with decision making about regulations. This group ranked 9 items under each of the two cluster headings : Marginally satisfied / Quite satisfied and Quite satisfied /Very satisfied.

They expressed most satisfaction with : Being able earn money while you learn, and : Making close friends, came a close second.

The graduates were given a free rein to express how they felt on any of the issues that had been addressed in this set of 20 questions related to the many and varied aspects of the Avondale College nursing course, or any other issue that was not mentioned relating to the course. As the respondents stated what aspects they enjoyed with an added negative aspect and occasionally put in a suggestion for improvement it was difficult to confine each comment to one specific type. To make some comparisons the comments have been divided into the three main areas, positive, negative and suggestions. The diploma graduates comments were collected together as were the comments from the degree course graduates, these will then be contrasted with comments made ten years ago by the diploma graduates in the 1986 (Behrens) study.

It is interesting to note that of the current diploma graduates, 28% of the respondents made comments compared with 43% of the degree graduates and 46% of the diploma graduates in the 1986 study. The following two tables 4:22 and 4:23 state to what the comments relate.

Section 4:5b Diploma graduates' comments about course issues.

{See Appendix C (page 80) for a comprehensive list}

Table 4:18a Summary of Diploma positive comments relate to :

- ★ obtaining employment
- ★ advantage over other university courses
- ★ learning enhanced by much work experience
- ★ approachable lecturers
- ★ communication and interpersonal skills
- ★ dedication of lecturers

Table 4:18b Summary of Diploma constructive suggestions relate to :

- ★ different grading methods
- ★ more social activities planned
- ★ more clinical experience in public hospitals

Table 4:18c Summary of Diploma negative comments relate to :

- ★ method of assessment
- ★ clinical ward reports
- ★ lack of chaplain / counsellor support
- ★ diploma course nearly parallel to the Bachelor of Nursing course
- ★ inadequate clinical practice
- ★ no structured social program
- ★ poor accommodation for married students
- ★ lecturer's role is to educate not to judge
- ★ need for lecturers to seek upgrading of clinical experience
- ★ poor clinical placements outside the hospital
- ★ educators having no time for the students
- ★ lack of confidentiality

Section 4:5c Degree graduates comments about course issues
{See Appendix D (page 84) for a comprehensive list}

Table 4:19a Summary of Degree positive comments relating to :

- ★ practical part of the course
- ★ support network for students
- ★ support from lecturers
- ★ positive learning environment
- ★ made many friends
- ★ highly valued course - excellent basis for nursing
- ★ wholistic approach
- ★ high quality course - course popular because of S.A.H. involvement
- ★ experience from work blocks
- ★ workload befitting for a registered nursing course
- ★ good "full-on" course
- ★ well organised and thought-out course
- ★ the work experience during the course led to gaining employment
- ★ dedicated friendly lecturers
- ★ practical experience produced excellent reputation interstate

Table 4:19b Summary of Degree constructive suggestions relate to :

- ★ greater range of work experience for all students
- ★ have much less Developmental Disability theory
- ★ use blocks of clinical experience instead of 1 day each week
- ★ experience needed in triage and emergency nursing
- ★ use only ID numbers for assessments and exams
- ★ more kitchenettes in the nurses residence
- ★ experience in theatre and recovery for all students
- ★ training in siting of IV's
- ★ greater variety in external clinical placements
- ★ less Developmental Disability clinical - more casualty / emergency
- ★ use of counsellors apart fro chaplains
- ★ co - ed living in the residences
- ★ more emphasis on spiritual aspects
- ★ more social activities needed
- ★ Avondale campus to inform Wahroonga campus about socials
- ★ provide married accommodation for married students
- ★ provide a gymnasium, pool tables and recreational areas
- ★ have competencies to complete for all clinical experiences

Table 4:19c Summary of Degree negative comments relate to :

- ★ high fees cause stress
- ★ too few clinical experiences in special areas
- ★ clinical days not fully utilised
- ★ gap between student problems and college administration
- ★ confidentiality from chaplains appears nonexistent
- ★ some theory a waste of time
- ★ lack of opportunity for students to participate in decision making
- ★ lack of support from some lecturers and deans
- ★ judgemental lecturers
- ★ bias in fee structure towards Seventh-day adventists
- ★ wasted clinical days
- ★ lecturers not keeping appointments
- ★ lecturers need clinical upgrading experience
- ★ course too crowded - not enough holiday time
- ★ too many assignments
- ★ repetitive learning packages
- ★ no apparent support from chaplains
- ★ heavy study load hinders earning capacity
- ★ lecturers like / dislike of a student, affects grading
- ★ some students given preferential treatment
- ★ clinical placements not adequate for New Zealand registration
- ★ many clinical placements boring and irrelevant
- ★ students not given support unless conforming to "Avondale image"
- ★ unchristian treatment by administration over supplementary exam
- ★ lack of clinical skill education

Section 4:5d Graduates who would or would not repeat same career.

In Section 3 of the questionnaire the graduate was asked :

"If you were to prepare for a career all over again, do you feel you would :-

1. Again choose the Avondale College Nursing course?

2. Choose nursing but at another College?

3. Choose another career not nursing?

The responses of the Diploma graduates have been placed in Table 4:20a with a summing-up in Table 4:20b.

Table 4:20a Choice of career - Diploma in Nursing

DIPLOMA IN NURSING CHOICE OF CAREER	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Avondale College Nursing Course	8	42%	30	55%	38	51%
Nursing but at Another Institution	3	16%	2	3%	5	7%
A Different Career	7	37%	15	27%	22	30%
I am Happy I Chose Avondale But I Would Like Another Career	1	5%	7	13%	8	11%
No Comment			1	2%	1	1%
TOTAL	19		55		74	

Table 4:20b Summing-up choice of career - Diploma in Nursing

DIPLOMA IN NURSING SUMMING-UP CHOICE OF CAREER	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Would Choose Nursing Again	11	58%	32	58%	43	58%
Would Not Choose Nursing Again	8	42%	22	40%	30	41%
No Comment			1	2%	1	1%
TOTAL	19		55		74	

The graduate was asked to give reason for this choice of career. A summary of positive and negative reasons given by Diploma graduates, is as follows, with copies of the actual responses in Appendix D.

Table 4:20c Summary of Diploma graduates' positive responses :

{See Appendix E (page 91) for a comprehensive list}

- ★ Opportunity to get practical nursing experience.
- ★ Developed as a person
- ★ Support, friendship and genuine caring from fellow students.

- ★ Would do nursing again as I believe "The Lord" directed me to.
- ★ Best course around.
- ★ Practical experience fantastic - clear advantage over other courses.
- ★ Avondale course provides integration of theory and practice.
- ★ Most of nursing skills were learned during work blocks.
- ★ Biggest asset was the opportunity to earn while studying.
- ★ Avondale has been the structural development of career.
- ★ Nursing gave confidence, study skills, knowledge and information.
- ★ Am proud of the base it gave in all facets of life.
- ★ Being able to put theory into practice in an authentic hospital area.
- ★ Avondale provides a good program, student has to put in the study.
- ★ Made wonderful friends while supporting clinical with practice.
- ★ Is convenient, has a good Christian ethic, lectures friendly and understanding.
- ★ Plenty of practical and basically a good round mixture.
- ★ A good base for life, gives security, and teaches personal development skills.
- ★ More than adequately prepared for nursing in all aspects.
- ★ Class size allowed for individual attention from lecturers.
- ★ Only tertiary based course in Australia allowing work in a hospital while you study.
- ★ Reputation of Avondale College and the Sydney Adventist Hospital has been a great benefit to me in my career.
- ★ Was nurtured better at Avondale than where doing post-graduate study.
- ★ Nursing as a form of employment has major advantages.

Table 4:20d Summary of Diploma graduates' negative responses :

- ★ Western medicine is so limiting, natural therapies and medicines are better.
- ★ The grass is always greener.
- ★ Avondale does not treat people as individuals, prefer to be where treated as an adult, with intelligence, allowed to have opinions.
- ★ Narrow minded organisation and people, course too restricted.
- ★ Nursing is frustrating, expected to be "Jack of all health professions".
- ★ Study and workload too heavy with not enough holidays.
- ★ Lack of female spiritual support - more female chaplains - female lecturers available but not always appropriate.
- ★ Have doubts as to whether to be a nurse or a teacher.
- ★ Nursing course should include more natural therapies.
- ★ The registered nurses pay is too poor for what they have to do.
- ★ Nursing too physically and emotionally demanding.
- ★ Nursing is a stressful profession with personal costs very high.
- ★ Did nursing as a back-up career in case chosen career fails.
- ★ Not suited to nursing, natural talents lie in other areas.
- ★ Nursing does not give personal satisfaction.
- ★ Hospital nursing poor - exposing immature students to dying cancer patients with inadequate counselling - middle-aged "bitches" on ward who hate nursing - inflexible rosters - part time workers preferred.
- ★ Lecturers more interested in own study than in their students.
- ★ Mainstream nursing not suitable for personal psyche.
- ★ Now incapacitated from an accident, feel nursing was a waste of time and money.
- ★ Should have chosen a career better compensated for hours and responsibility.
- ★ Overworked, underpaid, little recognition of high standard of performance.
- ★ Without clinical work-blocks in Avondale nursing program, be better off elsewhere.

★ Rather not do shift work and nursing is a legal minefield.

★ Avondale is too restrictive.

★ Not suited to nursing, do not enjoy it.

★ Disappointed with lack of job satisfaction.

★ Disillusioned with whole nursing profession, shift work, rate of pay.

★ Don't like shift work.

★ Should have chosen a profession where one can be creative.

★ Dont like nursing.

★ Would choose an outdoor, agricultural career involving people.

Disappointed when teachers and chaplains judged students according to their own "greater vision".

★ Avondale is very immature and medieval in its practices.

The responses of the Degree graduates have been placed in Table 4:21a, with a summing-up in Table 4:21b.

Table 4:21a Choice of career - Degree in Nursing

DEGREE IN NURSING CHOICE OF CAREER	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Avondale College Nursing Course	13	59%	53	62%	66	61%
Nursing but at Another Institution			3	3%	3	3%
A Different Career	3	14%	13	15%	16	15%
I am Happy I Chose Avondale But I Would Like Another Career	6	27%	16	19%	22	20%
No Comment			1	1%	1	1%
TOTAL	22		86		108	

Table 4:21b Summing-up choice of career - Degree in Nursing

DEGREE IN NURSING SUMMING-UP CHOICE OF CAREER	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Would Choose Nursing Again	13	59%	56	65%	69	64%
Would Not Choose Nursing Again	9	41%	29	34%	38	35%
No Comment			1	1%	1	1%
TOTAL	22		86		108	

The graduate was asked to give reason for this choice of career. A summary of positive and negative reasons given by the Degree graduates, is as follows, with copies of the actual responses in Appendix D.

Table 4:21c Summary of Degree graduates' positive responses :

{See Appendix F (page 99) for a comprehensive list}

★ My knowledge expanded so I could be a better, more helpful person

★ Beneficial personal growth/experience will help me in chiropracty.

★ Enjoyed Practical more than theory - loved working at S.A.H.

★ Enjoy nursing but looking for something more challenging.

★ Went to Avondale for nursing experience - made some good friends.

★ Grateful to lecturers/nursing staff for so much help & understanding.

★ Provided opportunity to work and gain much clinical experience.

★ Important to have 50/50 work/study program, only at Avondale.

★ Opportunity to apply learning process in a clinical setting.

- ★ A great career that opens doors to a variety of professions.
- ★ A unique opportunity to work and study at the same time.
- ★ The range of clinical experience in the course is very valuable.
- ★ The AC/SAH nursing course has given great confidence.
- ★ The practical work/theory balance is so beneficial.
- ★ The chance to practice makes the course a most wholistic approach.
- ★ Love nursing, love the college.
- ★ Provides the best nursing course in the South Pacific.
- ★ Enjoyed the experience of College life, and all it had to offer.
- ★ Definitely the College course, "hands on" opportunity and credibility.
- ★ Enjoy 'spiritual care' discussions with patients - happy to be a nurse.
- ★ Thorough preparation of students for work place.
- ★ Bonus, being able to work in chosen profession during the course.
- ★ Strong clinical emphasis and exciting work blocks.
- ★ It is the SAH that gives this Avondale nursing course its credibility.
- ★ Highly esteemed, thorough course, providing a Christian environment.
- ★ Many resources in a course, which has a high academic standard.
- ★ Nursing! ah! now have fully realised my career.
- ★ Nursing is very versatile allowing freedom to choose.
- ★ Much practical experience is invaluable when competing for a job.
- ★ Better preparation for nursing job, than at any other institution.
- ★ Nursing has prepared me to be health educator in 3rd world country.
- ★ So many different work opportunities in nursing.
- ★ Really enjoyed Avondale and the course, though it is too expensive.
- ★ It was an excellent course - it was tough but I did it.
- ★ Clinical component an outstanding advantage.
- ★ Avondale nursing course enabled me to become a good nurse.
- ★ Integration of work, study, spiritual and social aspects.
- ★ Love nursing and Avondale has the best training.

- ★ Provides professional and wholistic education to nursing students.
- ★ Nursing shows Christian love toward people, a fulfilling profession.
- ★ Integration of theory and practice is a great balance.
- ★ Nursing has some bad points, but overall it has good opportunity for career advancement.
- ★ Avondale was hard - Had a "ball' though, great place to make friends.
- ★ A good base on which to build a career.
- ★ Best clinical education and preparation for role as registered nurse.
- ★ Enjoyed college life, especially SAH social and academic life.
- ★ Nursing is a Christian journey, opportunities to specialise.
- ★ Broader outlook on life - enjoy the work.
- ★ Satisfying occupation - basis for moving into other health areas.
- ★ Work experience is invaluable but not the "Avondale experience".
- ★ Course is good mix between theory/practice, Would also like flying.
- ★ Nursing is fulfilling.
- ★ Program has the propensity toward teaching high dependency and interdependent skills.
- ★ Gives all the skills needed to begin a nursing career.
- ★ Gave an opportunity to work in the operating theatre.
- ★ Valuable learning, making nursing a stepping stone.
- ★ Individual interpersonal relationships between lecturers and students is good.
- ★ Gave many happy memories and invaluable experience.

Table 4:21d Summary of Degree graduates' negative responses :

- ★ Nursing interferes with social/personal life, is wearing physically and emotionally.
- ★ Enjoyed SAH experience, disliked Cooranbong campus intensely.
- ★ In relation to family and friends, shift work is too difficult.
- ★ Dissatisfied with career choice, do not enjoy nursing.
- ★ Dislike shift work - nursing does not treat causes of disease.
- ★ Nursing is unstimulating and monotonous, pay in relation to effort is absurd.
- ★ No integration with other professions.
- ★ Lack of concern for student's development by teachers.
- ★ As a 'religious institution' it fails many - lowers students' self esteem.
- ★ Nursing is hard work - no thanks for effort put in.
- ★ Shift work a pain for family life - also not enough money.
- ★ With hindsight, now prefer physiotherapy or radiotherapy.
- ★ In nursing, males are made feel welcome, too regimented/restrictive.
- ★ Nursing physically, mentally and emotionally exhausting.
- ★ Desire to give wholistic care which is not easy to do in nursing.
- ★ Shift work is hard physical and mental work.
- ★ Dislike nursing as a career.
- ★ Lack of recognition of nurses as professionals.
- ★ Quality of course and lecturers poor, some should not be teaching.
- ★ Nursing not challenging enough - not enough autonomy.
- ★ Did not look at all the options before commencing nursing course.
- ★ After 3 years tertiary study, still showering patients, giving bed pans, and making beds while senior staff sit on their bums - not interested.
- ★ Just don't like nursing.

CHAPTER 5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Section 5:1 Review of Findings : Recommendations

Section 4:1a Initial place of employment on graduating.

Immediately after graduating, 99% of both the diploma and degree respondents, obtained nursing positions while the remaining 2 graduates, because of their husband's careers, chose non nursing occupations.The figure of 63% gaining employment at the Sydney Adventist Hospital would be higher, as a much greater number applied for work. The number taken on each graduation is always dependent on the level of nursing vacancies at the time. Most of the overseas students that are restricted by visa limitations, have to return home at the end of the course. Some have married and taken Australian citizenship, but these are the exception, not the rule. A few graduates from South East Asia have returned and completed postgraduate studies at their Alma Mater.

Recommendation.

Recruitment needs to continue in all Australian states and in New Zealand with the similar percentage of overseas students, so as to maintain the harmonious mix of cultures. As a major objective in operating a school of nursing at the Avondale College is to train personnel to be employed by the institutions owned and managed by the Seventh-day Adventist church, it is important that employment opportunities be made available to as many of the Avondale graduates as is possible.

Section 4:1b i) Place of current employment.

The overall figures show that only 36% still have employment at the Sydney Adventist Hospital whereas the numbers on Table 4:3 and Table 4:4 show that 27% of diploma graduates and 42% of degree graduates make up this figure. More than 10% are no longer in nursing occupations and 26% are now working interstate - which is an increase five times greater than that of the initial percentages of positions attained at graduation.

Section 1b ii) Current employment in N.S.W.

The breakdown of figures on Table 4:5 show that 81% of the respondents remained in N.S.W., 45% of these came from overseas and 39% were from interstate. The Sydney Adventist Hospital employs 62% of these graduates while the other 38% have employment in Sydney and many country areas.Table 4:6 shows that the percentage of Diploma graduates working in N.S.W. is equal to the percentage of degree graduates. There was 1½ times as many overseas diploma graduates working in N.S.W. as there was degree graduates. Initially, 77% of graduates took employment in N.S.W., but this has now dropped to 62%. Because all respondents obtained positions without a great deal of difficulty, it could be that this reflects the high acceptance level the Avondale College nursing course has in the community.

Section 4:1b iii) Current positions (Respondents descriptions)

The variety of descriptions of current positions on Table 4:7 appears to show that nurses from the Avondale College nursing course are accepted into a wide range of positions. Many who have described their position as registered nurse could possibly have been classified into some of the nursing specialty areas had the information been available. Five of these graduates have chosen to work outside the hospital environment in community nursing. Eight more have taken positions with nursing agencies, with most of their work being carried out in institutions, although not usually in one place for any length of time.

Recommendation.

That graduates be encouraged to explore the many and diversified types of nursing that there is on offer in the workplace. In the nursing programs, emphasis needs to be placed on the variety of nursing roles that, with inservice education, can be available to them on entering the work force. By creating more freedom of choice and independence, some graduates can be directed into careers that provide autonomy, such as nursing practitioners.

Section 4:1c i) Reasons for not working in nursing.

Some of the more common reasons given were :- shift work, dislike of nursing, maternity leave and needing more money. Two graduates have been debilitated in accidents while another states, health reasons. Some claimed that when they were young, all the alternatives had not been considered, but now, having completed this nursing course, they have experience and have had time to assess other career choices, and feel that it is now time to move into these "exciting" options. Two respondents felt that nursing was "boring" so ventured into other forms of employment. They are both happy to be back nursing as it isn't as "boring" as some of the alternatives. Some said that they chose nursing because of family expectations and pressures. They state that they are happy to have nursing to fall back on, but now they are going to explore their "real" choice of career.

Section 4:1c ii) Current occupations not in nursing.

Of all the respondents, only 12% are not in nursing positions, and of these 18% are males which is a little less than the male percentage (23%) of the total number of respondents. When compared with Australian and overseas figures this percentage of males is quite high. (4.7 times greater than in N.S.W. and 6 times greater than in Canada) This is one factor in maintaining a lower attrition level, as men tend not to leave on becoming married or having a child, as do many females in nursing.

Recommended.

That the intake of males into nursing continue at the same level while maintaining a flow of mature students as it is these two groups who have the lowest attrition in nursing.

Section 4:1d Factors most likely to influence a choice of position.

There are no reasons why one group will state why they choose a position of employment so different from another group.This present group chose factors all connected to the job eg location of work, working conditions, hours of work and pay. Where as in the 1986 (Behrens) a fifth of the group chose - Family commitments, as top of the list with - Rate of pay, way down in 7th place. For many young couples today, the economic circumstances require that there be two incomes, and having a family takes a back seat, hence the importance on tenure of work being a priority

Section 4:2a Perceptions of the professional reputation of the Avondale College courses.

The numbers in Table 4:11 show that 94% of the diploma respondents felt that the reputation of the Avondale College nursing diploma was Good to Excellent, with 64% feeling that it was Very good / Excellent. With the degree respondents was it the fact that their tertiary qualification was a higher level that gave 83% the perception that the reputation of the Avondale College Bachelor of nursing was Very good / Excellent. Some of the respondents comments indicate that many employers appeared to be more interested in the job application, when they mentioned that they were educated at Avondale College.

Recommendation.

That graduates be encouraged to be proud of their "heritage" and by their work and behaviour, reflect the high standards of an institution that has such an excellent reputation in the nursing work place.

Section 4:2b Graduates perceptions of the value of a tertiary qualification.

Graduates perceptions of the value of a tertiary qualification. It was interesting to read a few comments from graduates who went interstate. Three that went to Queensland said that there is still some antagonism shown by some to nurses who have a degree in nursing.One comment

from Western Australia was that tertiary qualifications were recognised but Avondale College was not known so very little recognition was given of this graduate diploma. Of those with degrees, 94% felt that it was an advantage with one respondent not sure. Tables 4:13a and 4:13b give a summary of positive and negative comments, on the value of having a Diploma of nursing. Some views expressed reflect ideas espoused by nurses trained in the hospital system eg. cannot improve hands-on /apprentice system, also Diploma and degree are "over qualified" for nursing.

Of the diploma respondents, 41% made no comments, with only 39% making positive comments. Nearly 50% of the females made no comment and only 33% made positive comments, whereas nearly 60% of males made positive comments.

In tables 4:13c and 4:13d the summary of the comments made by the degree group, there appeared to be a greater willingness to make comments; 74% of all cohorts (73%of males and 74% of females) The three most common positive comments relate to employment opportunities being enhanced, an avenue to further study, and it is a "stepping stone" to other careers, jobs, qualifications.

Section 4:3a Courses undertaken after graduation.

Of the diploma respondents, 27% had not been involved with further education, but 41% had already upgraded to a degree with another 31% having completed non nursing courses. The degree students had been completed for a shorter length of time, so only a smaller number had completed further courses.

Section 4:3b Interest in post graduate courses.

A total of 46% of the diploma graduates indicated interest in upgrading to Masters in Nursing or Graduate Diploma in Nursing, whereas 58% of degree graduates showed interest in these courses. The questionnaire confused many, as they indicated that they were already studying some of these programs, and as we don't have any

correspondence facilities, when they checked - Part time external - they meant that they did not live "on campus" but lived externally. So until someone asks about "correspondence" method of study being available, It will be assumed, that all who checked external may live "off campus".

Recommendation.

That the Avondale College nursing school explore this interest in "external" or correspondence method of study, as it could be valuable to many interstate and overseas graduates, wishing to upgrade to masters in nursing or graduate diploma.

Section 4:4 Graduates perceptions of how well they were prepared to meet their course objectives.

The group indicated that nursing research was one area that needed a lot more attention. Some even commented that this subject was a complete waste of time. They felt handling responsibilities of team leadership and ward organisation and assuming the teaching role of a registered nurse were two areas in which, they were under-prepared.

Recommendations.

Attention be given by the School of Nursing to reviewing the emphasis placed on some of the areas that the respondents perceived as needing some attention.

Section 4:5a Degree of satisfaction with certain aspects of the nursing course.

Overall levels of satisfaction were in the range of Quite satisfied/ Very satisfied. What was addressed in this segment of the questionnaire applied very much to those students who lived on campus in the dormitories. Protocols relating to residential, social, catering and disciplinary issues, as they affect the student studying the nursing course, are being considered by the College faculty. One aspect in which both

groups indicated lower levels of satisfaction, was a bit surprising as it was the "support available from deans chaplains and counsellors". In the comments, some students were very outspoken about the lack of support in this area. Another two areas highlighted as having low satisfaction levels, were : "opportunity to participate in decision making about faculty regulations", and, "the procedure for appeals against administrative decisions". One student commented "what procedure"?, have heard nothing about this during the 3 year of my course".

Recommendations.

As these same aspects were highlighted by the graduates in the 1986 study (Behrens) as having poor satisfaction levels it is obvious that some attention should be given this time, to address these problem areas.

There are many suggestions and negative comments that should be explored and considered.

- Assist students to learn coping skills, how to be assertive, and management of conflict.
- Include students into more management committees.
- address the balance of study and work.
- Teach appropriate study techniques.
- Revise various aspects of the course as to relevance and content.
- Continue review of standards and procedures.
- Develop effective techniques to integrate theory and practice.
- Ensure that students in need of counselling are appropriately matched to a suitable chaplain / dean / counsellor.
- Address the need for negative / positive feedback.
- Explore correct protocol for good student teacher relationships.

Section 4:5d Graduates who would or would not repeat same career.

Of the diploma graduates 58% would choose nursing again and 41% would choose another career. Twenty four chose to make positive comments and 32, negative comments. Of the degree graduates 64% indicated that they would choose nursing again, which is nearly the same

response, (63%) made by the diploma students in the 1986 study (Behrens). One might consider this a reflection on the quality of the course, but it has to be remembered that the exposure to nursing causes some to change direction, others may have made wrong choices when they were young and immature. There will, of course, always will be some who either have a negative experience or have had a relationship difficulty.

CONCLUSION

This study has been an enjoyable experience as it gave the investigator, opportunity to make contact with 219 ex students who are now graduates, sending each one a questionnaire and receiving replies back from 182 of them. Many of the number expressed pleasure at being given the privilege of being able to make positive and/or negative responses to a variety of issues and aspects of the course that had given a start in their career. Quite a few, even though they did not identify themselves, sent personal wishes to their ex teacher.The information gleaned gave an insight into employment patterns and reasons why some have chosen careers, other than, nursing. Even though reasons were given for the attrition that has already happened, there will be many hidden aspects that can never be ascertained.

Graduates expectations, perceptions and satisfactions were explored and opportunity was given in three different areas of the questionnaire, for graduates to write comments. There were many positive and negative comments made plus some made constructive suggestions. As the respondent had been assured of anonymity, many of the comments were frankly blunt, and honest. Much of this valuable feedback can be used in adapting, reviewing, modifying and improving of those aspects on which the greatest number of respondents focused. The responses indicating interest in further education and the methods of study preferred, will be of value to the co-ordinators of post graduation studies as they consider future programming.

Most importantly, were the responses from the graduates which indicated, that many of these new graduates are firmly committed to the profession of nursing, even though this was offset by a recognition of many of the frustrations that beset all service orientated professions. Many problems are seen in :

- little recognition of individual worth and capabilities,
- the problems of shift work versus family life
- a rate of pay not commensurate with the value of work

so is it any wonder that many nurses become discouraged and resign.

With all this information coming from this study, hopefully changes can be implemented in nursing courses everywhere, to give better preparation for nurses to be able to cope. As they become the educators and administrators of tomorrow, they will be better able to implement greater changes, for the good of nurses and of the nursing profession. Even though the registered nurses pay has been looked at over the past few years , much still needs to happen, to address the fact that the nurses salary does not recognise the skills, expertise, education and high levels of responsibility, associated with this noble profession.. Work patterns, flexibility of rosters and more balanced utilisation of staff resources, needs to be addressed by hospital administrators, to ensure that some of the staffing difficulties can be overcome.

So as education facilities develop new tertiary nursing programs, the graduates' perceptions, satisfactions and dissatisfactions should be given consideration, so that the end product of these programs, the registered nurse, can be not only competent, but also a successful and happy professional nurse.

APPENDIX A WAS HAVING A DIPLOMA OF HEALTH SCIENCE (NURSING) AN ADVANTAGE

The most common sentiments expressed by graduates who felt that having a Diploma of Health Science (Nursing) was an advantage, are as follows :

- ★ "It is impossible to gain nursing registration without tertiary qualification".
- ★ "The nursing background has given me a good foundation and a broad outlook to public health".
- ★ "I am interested in the health field and nursing helped me to see which direction I would enjoy the most".
- ★ "Nursing can be used as a base for so many other careers. Also it is an advantage over other applicants if you have nursing as a background".
- ★ "I was employed quite quickly".
- ★ "It is the starting point to most nursing careers".
- ★ "I received the highest rate of pay when employed by the Home Care Service of NSW, because of my diploma".
- ★ "It has allowed me to gain casual employment at other hospitals".
- ★ "In selling theatre equipment, it is useful having a nursing diploma".
- ★ "Can help with getting subjects accredited to other courses, eg herbalist
- ★ "It has given me a willingness to take further study commitments".
- ★ "Only advantage is, that it entitled me to be endorsed as a Queensland psychiatric nurse".
- ★ "There are limitless avenues that can be taken".
- ★ "It gives me the ability to complete other tertiary courses".
- ★ "It allowed me to work in child care until I completed my Diploma of Social Science (Child care)".

★ "I'm interested in working overseas, midwifery, flexible hours and an opportunity to get into health education - a nursing diploma gets me into all of these".

★ "The diploma made it easy for me to upgrade to a degree. The academic standard at Southern Cross university was much easier than it was at Avondale College".

HAVING A DIPLOMA OF HEALTH SCIENCE (NURSING) WAS NOT PERCEIVED AS AN ADVANTAGE

Respondents that did not perceive it an advantage in having a Diploma of Health Science (Nursing) commented as follows :

★ "I appreciate having a tertiary qualification but my career aspirations can be applied to any job whether a tertiary qualification is needed or not. ie. my aspirations would be no different without a tertiary qualification".

★ "It seemed that academics/theory was superfluous and that it cannot improve on the "hands-on apprenticeship" learning style, but it is necessary for employment".

★ "I've no idea why it is not an advantage".

★ "I am not highly motivated to move beyond ward level at the moment".

★ "After my car accident I am unable to work more than 4 hours per day and must sit as there is knee damage".

★ "Most people have a minimal understanding that a diploma in nursing equates to 3 years full time study at a tertiary institution".

★ "For further career opportunities I would like to complete a bachelor degree".

★ "The only use I have for nursing, is to use it to pay my way through the education for my chosen career. Also I will have nursing as a back-up".

★ "The majority of people still believe that practical experience is the best way to learn about nursing".

★ "Don't know whether I want to go with nursing yet".

★ "In Queensland the interviewing panel does not include further nursing (ie. degree etc) as a basis for job application or promotion - unlike NSW".

★ "Not as yet, but one day it may be an advantage".

★ "You still have to go on and do further study to get anywhere".

★ "It wasn't the diploma as much as the fact that I trained at the Sydney Adventist Hospital that opened the doors".

APPENDIX B WAS HAVING A BACHELOR OF NURSING AN ADVANTAGE

The most common sentiments expressed by graduates who felt that having a Bachelor of Nursing was an advantage, are as follows :

★ "It has made it easier to get a variety of jobs".

★ "Employers recognise the fact that you have achieved 'degree' status".

★ "It assisted me to understand the importance of having a scientific rationale for my nursing actions".

★ "Without my degree I would not have found it as easy to get work in UK".

★ "Especially as I trained at the "SAN". Tertiary qualifications are a definite plus for personal and professional growth".

★ "Some credits are given for nursing subjects when applying to other science / health degree programs".

★ "I am better at problem solving".

★ "It is now expected that new graduates have a Bachelor of nursing. It also enables further study to be done".

★ "My Bachelor of nursing gives me a higher pay and I feel a little respect for finishing the degree instead of a diploma".

★ "It was beneficial in determining whether I got a job or not. The experience and knowledge has been helpful in emergency situations outside an actual work place".

★ "Especially the practical experience during training, which is the main reason I got such a good job".

★ "For the service and improvement of mankind".

★ "A huge advantage as I was able to get a job as a nurse".

★ "Gives you confidence and enables you to grow as a person and to be able to branch into other areas with a greater ability to help others."

★ "All areas of employment in today's society are becoming more specialised and competition for employment necessitates higher qualifications".

★ "The bachelor of nursing is more recognised".

★ "Having a bachelor of nursing carries more weight than a diploma".

★ "I would like to work more in the area of natural health and prevention of illness and disease through lifestyle. Nursing knowledge is a good basis and is a higher degree, therefore has more study".

★ "The bachelor of nursing enables me to enhance my career and to pursue other courses at university".

★ "During my degree course at Avondale College and the Sydney Adventist Hospital I gained nursing experience in maternity, operating theatre, orthopaedic and cardiac nursing, gynaecology and paediatric nursing. Also I learned "time management skills" whilst being rostered on all three shifts (morning, afternoon and night shifts). To me this has all been well worth the money spent on fees".

★ "When it is understood that I have a Bachelor of Nursing which is a tertiary degree, people are impressed. It is generally understood, to get this, a good deal of effort has been required".

★ "Even though I was overseas when I applied for a nursing position in a North Queensland hospital, I was successful because I had a Bachelor of Nursing from the Avondale College / Sydney Adventist Hospital".

★ "I am adequately qualified and there is no pressure to upgrade".

★ "The degree provides the opportunity to further and diversify my career options".

★ "The Bachelor of Nursing degree means that people have greater expectations from you".

★ "It provides a well known and respected base from which to add on more degrees, experience etc".

★ "To progress in your chosen field you need a tertiary qualification which also is a stepping stone to greater personal and professional autonomy.

★ "Even though it is a good knowledge base, it is excellent to maintain the integration of study and work".

★ "Perceptions of abilities is higher when people know you have a degree".

★ "It gives you more confidence in your own intellectual ability. It also helps as people (eg. the doctors) respect you more".

★ "It opens the door to do the post graduate course in midwifery".

★ "It is a greater advantage having a Bachelor of Nursing from Avondale College rather than from other institutions. This is because we still get much more clinical experience during our course along with the required knowledge base. It also gives the opportunity for further direction and access to study in specialty areas".

★ "As nursing education is getting so much attention these days, it is good to know that I am one step ahead and was fortunate to graduate with a degree".

★ "It greatly impressed my employers over here in England, plus it helped me attain my UK registration. You also seem to get more respect from people who find out that you have a degree level in nursing".

★ "The degree is knowledge based information, allowing me to understand the reason behind why things are done in certain ways, rather than doing things blindly without any understanding".

★ "Having general knowledge, let alone a nursing degree involving the human body, advantages yourself and the employer in relation to first aid at work. It also helps with quality assurance and occupational health and safety knowledge".

★ "This qualification is a ticket to the world with numerous opportunities. It also helps you to leap to further education".

★ "I am now doing a post graduate diploma and I did not need the research bridging course, simply because I have a nursing degree".

★ "In nursing, knowledge needs to be equally balanced with practical.This degree that I have completed at Avondale College did supply a lot of practical which definitely helped".

★ "It made it easier to obtain work in Victoria with a Bachelor of Nursing".

★ "A definite advantage in obtaining employment, particularly when the employer sees a qualification from Avondale College / Sydney Adventist Hospital, but sadly the nursing wage does not justify the study effort".

★ "When applying for the Queensland Police service, it was an advantage to have a degree and especially as it was in nursing".

★ "Other nurses and employers are pleased to have staff with a degree. It is now becoming more accepted amongst "old school nurses" - especially when it has all the practical skills provided by Avondale College and the Sydney Adventist Hospital".

★ "Very rarely do you hear a bad word about the Avondale College School of Nursing. The students graduate feeling relatively confident having the preparation to become a functional registered nurse".

HAVING A BACHELOR OF NURSING WAS NOT PERCEIVED AS AN ADVANTAGE

Respondents of the Degree in Nursing who did not perceive that it was an advantage to have a Bachelor of Nursing, made these comments :

- ★ "A tertiary qualification makes nursing seem like a professional career when it is not. One is over qualified for the position".
- ★ "I've decided that I don't like nursing! Now what to do?"
- ★ "I am sure it will be an advantage, but not as yet!"
- ★ "My marks are too low for me to upgrade, as I did not work hard enough".
- ★ "I believe that a medium between tertiary study and practical is needed.
- ★ "Most people in the Brisbane institution where I am working are opposed to the degree system, hence I am being discriminated against".

APPENDIX C POSITIVE/NEGATIVE COMMENTS FROM DIPLOMA GRADUATES ABOUT COURSE ISSUES

Examples of positive comments from Diploma graduates about course issues, were as follows :

- ★ "I have found that the impact of my place of education has been only positive and I have not had any difficulty obtaining employment at any time.
- ★ "Overall, I am very pleased with the Avondale course. Having worked with many new graduates from other university courses, I feel at a huge advantage, having had the comprehensive exposure to clinical nursing, that the Avondale course offers. Plus the course has a very good reputation.
- ★ "The nursing course I completed was a good course with regard to what it was designed for. It is well respected in other areas of Australia. The real advantage this course has over other nursing courses at other universities is the amount of "on the wards" work experience that is available during this course. This is its main "claim to fame".
- ★ "The lecturers were always approachable and helpful.
- ★ "I was able to develop very good communication and interpersonal skills.
- ★ "It is the dedicated lecturers that make the college.

CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS FROM DIPLOMA GRADUATES ABOUT COURSE ISSUES

Those comments making constructive suggestions relating to course issues, which were made by the Diploma graduates, were as follows :

★ "Assignments with the same topic as that given in a tutorial presentation, seems to be "over-kill" for that topic. If a student presents a well researched and professionally delivered tutorial, why should it be necessary to prepare an assignment on the same topic. Perhaps the grading should be for one or the other.

★ "Perhaps the integration of more "nights out", 'picnics" etc. that had transport available, would help with "bonding".

★ "The college provided what it could but it is often up to each individual to utilise these resources. Perhaps more experiences / practicals are needed in public hospitals to assist those who end up working in places other than the Sydney Adventist Hospital, so that students could appreciate how well equipped and staffed this hospital is.

★ "Perhaps more access is needed to female chaplains / counsellors, considering that most of the students are females. There seems to be a lack of female spiritual support. Female lecturers are available but were not always appropriate.

NEGATIVE COMMENTS FROM DIPLOMA GRADUATES ABOUT COURSE ISSUES

Examples of negative comments made by Diploma graduates about course issues are as follows :

★ "Accommodation for married students is pathetic, having to live with an old lady, with interference from a hospital administrator and the men's residence dean, with virtually no privacy and basic rights not respected. Then having to eat in the hospital cafeteria was another experience, the "health food" was full of fat".

★ "The accommodation provided was adequate but the rent was continually being raised."

★ "The "grapevine" can be a terrible thing! When either trying to get to know someone, or to console another on personal matters only to hear it back through other people. Absolutely devastating!"

★ "Some educators were more approachable than were others. Many had busy schedules and just didn't have time for seeing their students".

★ "The clinical placements at the Sydney Adventist Hospital are probably the best that are available throughout the course. As for the clinical placements elsewhere, I feel that not much was gained from these compared with what could have been".

★ "The Avondale College seems to be going through great change. While I enjoyed the closeness that this course brought, I feel strongly that educators must educate students, not judge them. Further they should indicate in their own professional lives, a desire to continue to learn.Those who showed an ongoing learning desire, made the best lecturers. I am currently battling with another university whose "head" has got too big. I hope that Avondale College never rests on its laurels".

★ "A major problem is that there is no organised program for nurses after working hours".

★ "Whilst Avondale College is better than other colleges, there is not enough time spent in clinical practice. This includes clinical skills and "time management" skills of a workload. Most first year registered nurses now are not prepared enough to cope with managing a patient load, most though are over confident, which is dangerous".

★ "My major complaint is that my class, the last class to do the diploma course, had nearly the identical course as the Bachelor course that students in the class ahead were doing. Nothing was done to address this discrepancy, we were forced to do another fulltime semester for our degree, and we had already covered the "new" degree material".

★ "My brother became acutely sick and finally died. During this time I approached chaplains and counsellors for help, but they did not think that I really needed any help. I did not cope very well with this tragedy in my life and my grief. I am still "hurting" from the way in which I was pushed aside by those who should have been helping me, I feel completely let down by these 'christians'!"

★ "I found that the clinical ward report written about my work and progress during a work block on a ward, quite often unsatisfactory. It was not a true reflection of how I had performed,because the person writing it was often someone who had hardly any acquaintance with my work experience - it was written from the hearsay of others".

★ "Fees are quite expensive compared with other private colleges".

Examples of the positive comments made by Degree graduates, about course issues, are as follows :

APPENDIX D POSITIVE/NEGATIVE COMMENTS FROM DEGREE GRADUATES ABOUT COURSE ISSUES

Examples of the positive comments made by Degree graduates, about course issues, are as follows :

★ "The practical part of the course prepared me for work in a high dependency unit".

★ "The graduates from the Avondale College nursing course give the college the excellent reputation it has, by their high standard of work".

★ "The nursing educators, collectively, are unequalled in dedication and friendliness".

★ "Taking my Avondale College experience into the public sector has helped me to understand the meaning of "multidisciplinary team".

★ "The work experience during my course was the direct reason I have my current nursing position".

★ "The Avondale College nursing course is well thought out and organised, but my concern is that some lecturers 'spoon feed' the students".

★ "It is a 'full on' course - but very good too. As I am now practising it in the wards, it is easier to understand ('what you don't use, you lose')".

★ "A degree is earned by time and effort, this may be lost if the workload was reduced. The workload throughout the Avondale course is quite adequate.

★ "I loved my experience at the SAN".

★ "My main experience and knowledge was gained from work blocks, allowing me to piece together the theory with the clinical skills".

★ "I enjoyed my training at the SAH, not so much up at Avondale. Lecturers made all the difference, like family, with genuine concern for you, well, some did!"

★ "On the whole, I think the study load at tertiary level was fair. Avondale College is the best place to enter nursing, providing high quality training and it is very supportive with students".

★ "I thank God for allowing me to do nursing at Avondale College / Sydney Adventist Hospital, giving me an excellent foundation on which to continue to build as I practise nursing. I greatly appreciated the wholistic approach".

★ "Being the first class to graduate from the Bachelor of Nursing course meant that we were under more pressure as the status of the Avondale College was in question. I will value my accomplishment for life".

★ "I am extremely grateful for having completed my degree at Avondale College. I had great teachers, I made friends for life, a wonderful career".

CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS FROM DEGREE GRADUATES ABOUT COURSE ISSUES

Those comments making constructive suggestions relating to course issues, which were made by the Degree graduates, were as follows :

★ "To maintain the popularity of the Avondale College course, do not lose the Sydney Adventist Hospital experience".

★ "Increase the clinical placements outside the Sydney Adventist Hospital from a half day per week, to 1 - 3 weeks".

★ "To enhance the fitness and social development of the students, recreational areas including a gymnasium and pool tables should be provided".

★ "To promote maturity and independence by encouraging students to make decisions about their own morality, introduce co-ed dormitory living".

★ "The college funding authority should develop units for married students".

★ "It would be great to spend longer times in some clinical areas, rather than just a few hours, you barely get to learn about the area".

★ "On the Wahroonga campus we would like to be told about 'special and social functions' that are planned for college students at the other campus - when and where they are to be held".

★ "I would have liked more social events arranged for the students".

★ "More counsellors should be provided, because many students who need one, feel that no-one has any time to spare for them".

★ "As a Christian institution, I feel that there needs to be a stronger, wholesome religious and spiritual emphasis all through the program".

★ "An external counsellor in some instances, would be of value. Many students could not always relate to chaplains who appear hypocritical".

★ "The variety of clinical placements were good, except that there was far too much with developmentally disabled people. Could there be instead, more exposure in the accident and emergency units".

★ "Many clinical placements seemed to have little bearing on nursing. Perhaps more placements could be organised in relevant areas to nursing for longer periods".

★ "It would be of great value to get more experience in an emergency area, operating theatre and recovery units. It would also be of value to be trained in I.V. siting".

★ "As there are many students cooking their own food in the residence and the facilities are short on, it would have been nice to have had more kitchenettes in the dormitories".

★ "Could it be possible for less hours of lectures be allocated to the study of the developmentally disabled people".

NEGATIVE COMMENTS FROM DIPLOMA GRADUATES ABOUT COURSE ISSUES

Examples of negative comments made by Degree graduates about course issues are as follows :

★ "The presentation of 'research' was a complete and utter waste of time. If it has to be included in the course, then make it a small part of another unit'.

★ "I found being in Cooranbong to be a lonely experience with no support from lecturers deans etc. But I made some good friendships".

★ "Very little social activity arranged outside classes, and a lack of opportunity to participate in decision making related to the course".

★ "Respect and doing things properly are important but there was a huge gap between administration and the handling of students problems".

★ "As far as chaplains, confidentiality was non-existent and they appeared to enjoy 'having goods' more than helping those in need".

★ "After working for 8 weeks in a unit, to be sent there to observe for 6 hours as a clinical placement, was just stupidity".

★ "One short ambulance and psychiatric visit gave no real insight into these areas. Why is it that other universities get better exposure to these areas?".

★ "The stress of course fees created many worries and I am now paying back to my father $10,000".

★ "Being sent to the ward in the Sydney Adventist Hospital is just like another day at work. Why aren't there competencies to be completed on all clinicals?".

★ "Clinical skill education was often lacking in some educators. 'You will learn that on the ward during work block' meant that it sometimes just wasn't learned".

★ "Having no accommodation for married students and very high rents in the area, nearly saw me fail to complete the course".

★ "I felt that the lack of support from college administration was most un-Christlike. I was treated as if I was the first student to fail a paper. The lack of decision making cost me 3 months pay as a registered nurse and I lost job opportunities".

★ "Few nurses aspire to enter the developmental disability nursing field, so why was so much time wasted in this area? Some, Yes, but not over 2 semesters".

★ "The support of some lecturers was inadequate. I found that a lot of the lecturers were too judgemental of students. There was no room for individuality, I found that after I had conformed to the Avondale image, I gained the support of lecturers, but I was not at all happy".

★ "I found minimal support from teachers, deans and chaplains. Many clinical placements were boring and irrelevant. There was no involvement in decision making. Overall many aspects of the course I found irrelevant".

★ "Upon moving to New Zealand I found that all the work blocks and clinicals done during the Avondale College nursing degree course, met about half the requirements of the N.Z. nurses registering body".

★ "Freely available is help relating to counselling, entertaining etc., but only to 'the right type of person', unless of course you make a mistake. So unless a student is one of the 'select few' they are basically ignored".

★ "Some assessments(ie tutorials) seemed to be graded according to the lecturers like or dislike for the student".

★ "A heavy work load in the course, diminished my earning capacity as I had to be researching and preparing assignments and tutorials when I could have been working".

★ "Socialising and pursuing of other pursuits is very limited during the three years of the course because of the heavy study load in the course work".

★ "The support from chaplains - What support? it was sadly lacking".

★ "Some learning packages were extremely repetitive or were prominently revisiting texts".

★ "With the lack of holidays due to work blocks, too many tasks were crammed into the study blocks. Three months break at the end of each year, would have been ideal".

★ "Some clinical placements appeared to just make up the numbers, many were great though".

★ "Relating to assessments, there were too many small tasks that I don't believe some lecturers know just how long it takes to complete them".

★ "The support from deans, chaplains and counsellors was available to 'some', and sadly there were the occasional breaches of confidentiality, which was distressing".

★ "If there are 'procedures for appeals against administrative decisions', why are they kept secret? I never heard a whisper about them in the three years".

★ "I feel very much that some lecturers have been teaching for so long, that clinical practice is foreign to them. Why don't teachers have to keep up to date? They could take yearly refreshers. It is needed that Avondale College teachers be aware of current methods and technologies".

★ "I know that most lecturers are upgrading their degrees, but this does not necessarily keep them in touch with current practical nursing issues".

★ "Most lecturers were available and very helpful, but a few were <u>not available</u>, even after an appointment was made in the appointment book. Just did not 'front', which was most unprofessional - what sort of role model was that?".

★ I found many S.D.A. lecturers were very judgemental. It was difficult to pay $400 per month fees, whilst others (SDA's whose parents worked for the church) paid virtually nothing. I believe there should be concessions for students whose parents give no financial support".

★ "My complaint is also about useless clinical placements. Going all the way across the city for a visit to a hospital where you just felt 'in the way', I just wanted to leave".

APPENDIX E DIPLOMA STUDENTS - CHOOSE NURSING AS A CAREER AGAIN

DIPLOMA POSITIVES

★"I appreciated the opportunity to get practical experience at the same time as studying, it is much easier to understand the concepts which are being learned, which is not the case when studying at other institutions."

★"I grew as a person as well as learned to be a nurse during this course."

★"I love nursing and get a lot of satisfaction from my work. I feel the support, friendships, and genuine caring from fellow students and lecturers, could not be found at any other University /College."

★"I believe the Lord directed me to do nursing, so yes I would do it again given the same circumstances."

★ "I would only choose Avondale, as it is one of the best courses around."

★"I found the course very stimulating intellectually and practically. I heard so many people who studied elsewhere that their course focused on feministic subjects and psychosocial studies. I think the nursing course through Avondale, was excellent in its approach to more practical subjects. The amount of practice/ work time spent on the wards was also very beneficial - far superior to any other nursing course. I found I was ready for what faced me as a registered nurse. In Tasmania the uni students have very little practical experience and everyone of them I have spoken to say that they are frightened to graduate.That should not be the case, and it was not the case when I finished at Avondale, because I knew I was well prepared."

★"The mixture of working as a nurse whilst studying to become a registered nurse works very well. I believe it increases competence as a registered nurse and confidence in the decision to become a registered nurse."

★"As Avondale is our College (S.D.A) I'd rather study in Avondale instead of another college."

★"I believe Avondale College nursing course is the best in Australia because of the clinical experience gained and the comparatively strenuous testing of clinical skills and procedures before use on the wards."

★"Avondale course provides the integration of both theory and practice, which is not as strong in other institutions."

★"I am happy in my career, nursing opens many doors and you can work hours to suit around family life. Part of my job is to preceptor on the ward for students from university, their wholistic and practical skills are very poor.They are getting nowhere enough practical experience. A lot of our skills were learned during our work blocks rather than our clinical hours, our college/hospital course, was far superior."

★"The biggest asset to Avondale college was the opportunity to earn while studying, and the good grounding in basic nursing care. Which is miles ahead of most other tertiary trained nurses."

★"I love my career and I feel Avondale has been the structural development for my career."

★"I would do nursing at Avondale College again and then go on to do child care as I have done. I feel my nursing helped prepare me, and gave me the confidence, study skills and knowledge and information to complete the child care course I have now completed."

★"Even though I no longer am able to work as a nurse, I am proud of the base it has given me in all facets of life."

★"The ability for a student to learn theory in the class room, then to be able take that theory and put it into practice, in an authentic hospital situation, was excellent. It was great to be able to work your way (on the wards) through the course."

★"Overall, Avondale College provides a good program. Its up to the individual to make the most of their study program and the opportunities provided."

★"I had an enjoyable time, made some wonderful friends, and supported clinical with practical."

★"Avondale is convenient, has a good Christian ethic. Lecturers are mostly helpful, friendly and understanding. The nursing course appears to be growing and improving. Expectations are becoming more realistic."

★"Nursing at Avondale is the best course, plenty of practical and basically a good round mixture."

★"Nursing is a good base for life, gives security and teaches personal development and skills. I may not always stay in nursing but my future is secure. Avondale gives excellent practical experience."

★"I thought the course at Avondale more than adequately prepared me for nursing in all aspects, clinically, theoretically, and academically. Further study and work outside Avondale and the San. has further reinforced my views of superior opportunities/experiences provided by Avondale/San. Due to family commitments (being a mum), limits have been placed upon my career, but with the knowledge /confidence, my time at Avondale provided me with, I was able to confidently return to the work force and complete my degree in 12 months. My nursing practice, in my opinion has adequately provided safe and sound practice. Thanks Avondale."

★"Similar values, good reputation, good social network as already acquainted with people, class size, allow for more individual attention from lecturers."

★"It seems to be the only tertiary based course in Australia where the opportunity exists to work in a hospital while you study. This opportunity is what makes Avondale nurses good, as we have sound practical skills as well as a tertiary training when we leave college."

★"I have found that because of the reputation of Avondale College and the Sydney Adventist Hospital, my course was a great benefit to me, in my career."

★"'I believe I was nurtured better at Avondale, but following this course to broader horizons, other institutions are great for further study. External study being the best option for me, as difficult shifts and family situations, restrict my attendance to university."

POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES

★"The bad thing is it can be very immature and medieval in it's practices."

★"I was disappointed however when teachers and chaplains judged students on their own "greater visions'."

★ "But its not worth it to be a nurse, ie. overworked and underpaid."

★"The practical experience in the Avondale College/SAH nursing course is fantastic, a clear advantage over the courses from other nursing places."

DIPLOMA STUDENTS - NOT CHOOSE NURSING AS A CAREER AGAIN
DIPLOMA NEGATIVES

★"Since being involved in the health profession, I have seen that western medicine is looking to make people well - they use palliative medicine. I have found natural therapies and medicines to hold their own in many areas where medical health has failed. Western medicine has its place in acute care and treatment but for chronic illness it has no answer".

★"The grass is always greener".

★"Unfortunately Avondale College/Sydney Adventist Hospital are unable to treat individuals as just that - individuals. If I'd known what Avondale College involved, I would never have attended. Certainly I would have done nursing elsewhere, where you are treated as i, an adult ii. with intelligence iii. your opinion both accepted or considered'.

★"Narrow minded organisation and people, inability to let students explore and experience other areas while in an academic institution."

★ "Nursing frustrates me, as you are expected to be Jack of all health professions, master of none, slave to all, shoulder the majority of responsibility without credit and accept the flack from all, ie. you are always the middle man."

★ "While nursing as a career has major problems, nursing as a form of employment has major advantages."

★ "If I had the choice again I might choose to go to another institution, only because I sometimes felt that the study/work load was too heavy in comparison to other places (also less holidays). I'm very busy outside of nursing and felt that there wasn't enough time to involved in say church work etc., this also seemed to effect other students who abandoned their faith. I felt disillusioned/burnt out etc. Perhaps more access is needed to female chaplains etc. and considering most of the students are female there seems to be a lack of female spiritual support (lecturers were available but not always appropriate)."

★ "Sometimes I question if nursing is the right career for me. Sometimes I wish I had studied teaching."

★ "The nursing course should include more natural therapies, from studying nursing I became increasingly more interested in rehabilitation, health, aromatherapy, relaxation, massage, and improving health care."

★ "I did not like the amount of pay registered nurses received. To make any money in the profession meant also more academic requirements. Registered nurses are basically underpaid for what they do. Having completed my course, I feel secure - that it is something good to be able to fall back on if required."

★ "Nursing too physically/emotionally demanding, shift work etc. I should have been a teacher."

★ "Nursing is a stressful profession. I do not think people appreciate the personal cost that goes into being a nurse. It is a profession that is rewarding as you are actively assisting people to maintain and restore health. However today nursing is entering into a legal minefield."

★ "I have always planned for another career after my nursing course. I have done nursing as a backup career in case there is no job in my chosen career."

★ "I found that I am not as suited to nursing as I thought I would be and some of my natural abilities lie in other areas."

★ "Nursing does not give me the satisfaction I require at this stage in my career."

★ "Typical "Sevy" institution. Lecturers too interested in their own study/ advancement / ideas rather than in students. For them it seems a chore."

★ "Mainstream nursing was not suitable for my psyche."

★ "Because of the way my life has turned out, all of the nursing studies (with the high cost in fees) I have done, seems to of unfortunately turned into a waste of money and time. I'd love to be able to do some form of nursing that allows me to use the physical and mental abilities I still have (post hiking accident)".

★ "I am glad I did go through the course, but as a career I wish I had chosen something that is better compensated for, the hours of work and responsibility ie money, recognition and working conditions".

★ "Overworked, underpaid, little recognition for a high standard of performance, minimal chance for professional advancement."

★"Difficult to decide at a young age what you truly want to do/be until you have 'experienced the world'. a) To be exposed to some issues ,such as patients dying of cancer and their families at the tender age of 19/20 years with no support,no education on counselling to the level required is dreadful. b) Surrounded by 40/50 year old bitches (on wards) who truly hate their jobs and let everyone feel it, does not inspire. c) Little to no flexibility in rosters is pathetic. d) Preference to part time workers etc. e) Millions of reasons I'd never recommend hospital nursing."

★"Only if the quantity of clinical work blocks remained. If there wasn't the clinical support at Avondale/Sydney Adventist Hospital, with the theoretical side, maybe it would be better elsewhere, ie Avondale nursing needs the clinical component to make it the successful course it is."

★"I would rather not do shift work. Also legality issues are becoming more important."

★"I would prefer a career that is less restrictive, no shift work, not so physically demanding, with less stress."

★"I found Avondale college too restrictive. Also the only reason I went to Avondale was the on-ward experience which has decreased so much that it now, does not seem worth it ."

★"Nursing is something I don't feel suited to, nor do I enjoy. I don't feel comfortable dealing with other people on such a personal level. I dislike shift work. Nursing is not a profession I would have chosen if I had put any thought into my career, it is something which I just drifted into thoughtlessly, oops!"

★"Disappointed with lack of job satisfaction, I now realise my strengths and interests are in other areas."

★"Disillusioned with the whole profession, shift work, rate of pay."

★"I don't like all the shift work."

★"I realise now that I should have aimed for a career that would have challenged my creative side .Nursing (as a registered nurse) does not allow for any creativity, so I'd choose something different next time."

★"I don't like nursing."

★"I most likely would not do nursing. If I was to start again, probably would steer to something more outdoor/agriculture, but in a career that was still 'people orientated'."

★"If I had a chance to choose my career all over again, I would have chosen a career other than nursing, as there are many other kinds of jobs I had not tried."

★"If given another chance I would have liked to do a nutrition course. However, nursing is still my second choice and yes, I would like to do the course at Avondale College."

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APPENDIX F DEGREE GRADUATES - CHOOSE NURSING AS A CAREER AGAIN

DEGREE POSITIVES

★ "Expand my knowledge further so as to become a better and more helpful person."

★ "The personal growth and experience of the nursing course was very beneficial and it has placed me in good stead for my future profession that of chiropractic."

★ "I enjoy the practical side of nursing rather than the theoretical. I loved working at the Sydney Adventist Hospital."

★ "I enjoy nursing but feel I need to get into an area I enjoy and feel a challenge, I'm yet to find that area."

★ "If I did choose nursing I would go to Avondale because of the clinical experience I gained and the opportunity to work. Also I have made some very good friends from going to Avondale, however nursing was not my first choice of a career. I find it extremely rewarding at times but don't wish to do it for the rest of my life."

★ "I could never thank Avondale college /Nursing Administrators enough for giving me the opportunity to do the nursing course. Everything about the course was tops for me and the extra time it took me to complete the course helped me in many ways. I found working in the hospital with "work experience" and extra shifts gave me a far wider range of experience and understanding of nursing in general and patients, compared to the experience gained by new graduates from other institutions.the nursing staff Being able to work in the oncology ward so much, enabled me to know I was suited to that area of nursing, and here at Brisbane I'm working in an oncology ward and am totally happy here, always learning and improving on my nursing knowledge and skills. I am always so grateful that the nursing lecturers and many of the nursing staff gave me so much help and understanding, Thank you very much."

★ "Because it has so much clinical experience and provides the opportunity to work and therefore gain more experience."

★ "I feel that it is very important for nursing students to have the 50/50 work / study program that is only available at Avondale. And I've only ever wanted to be a nurse so I'd choose it over again anyway."

★ "Provides opportunity to apply the learning process in a clinical setting allows a transition period for young adults to merge into the "big real world" with support."

★ "Nursing is a great career which opens the door to a variety of professions, either nursing or non nursing."

★ "Adequate clinical experience."

★ "The College is a unique opportunity to work and study at the same time. Nurses desperately need to have clinical experience. We have university trained students do their clinical here at the Royal Brisbane, they have no idea on patient nurse communication and time management."

★ "Although at the time I felt that the course was taxing on your personal (family) and social life, I still feel this way, but I believe having the opportunity to learn in a wide variety of areas (midwifery, theatre, natural relaxation, (massage) with clinical / practical, and the opportunity to work with pay as one of the team was, more valuable than I ever imagined, now I am a Registered nurse in the public system."

★ "Avondale College (nursing course) is the place where I would study nursing although it has it's negatives, the positives outweigh any negative experience there. The people and the friendships made, the clinical experience, provided me with the best coping mechanisms during my first year.And now I do many in charge shifts with my current employer, I do attribute my confidence to the Sydney Adventist Hospital program with student nurses."

★"I feel that there is a strong need for the on ward practical work that we get, along with the theory of the universities. Students seem to come out somewhat handicapped practically. I think practical work experience if anything should be increased, however due to university trends and government (bla bla), inevitably it will be decreased anyway. Avondale College should keep the amount of practical it has in its course for nursing even if the students fail to see how important it is to their career at the time."

★"Avondale College Nursing course is a most wholistic approach. In addition I like the learning environment and more chance to practice during the course".

★"I love nursing, I like the college I hope I can go back to study sometime in the future".

★"Avondale College still provides the best nursing course in the South Pacific. May not choose nursing as I feel I have skills in other areas which could also be developed".

★"I enjoyed the experience of Avondale College life and all it had to offer, however chiropractic has always been my first career choice.I sometimes wish I had gone straight into chiropractic, however I would never give up the experience and memories of the places and people involved in my nursing. So I'm caught between two loves".

★"Would definitely do the Avondale Course of nursing because of the hands on opportunity and credibility. Sometimes I think a different job would be a nice change,for regular hours, nursing can also be stressful physically and emotionally as well as legally".

★"The aspect I most enjoy about nursing is extremely in depth discussions with patients in a "spiritual care" situation so I guess I need to pursue that area further. However I wouldn't know that now, if I hadn't done nursing already".

★ "I found the Avondale course to be thorough in its preparation for its students for the work force. However now that I am there myself a lot of things have disappointed me about nursing but tis hard to know what else to do at this stage. And nursing is a good career to always go back to".

★"The ability to work in your chosen profession during the course is the biggest bonus out, and the educators are more available and sincere in their work than other institutions".

★"As long as Avondale maintains its strong clinical emphasis and its work blocks, it will remain a distinct advantage to study at Avondale. If these dissolve I would be ticking no 2 ".

★."Practical nursing practice in the Sydney Adventist Hospital is the most beneficial aspect. The public say that we are "San trained" not "Avondale trained" It is the Sydney Adventist Hospital that gives credibility, Students /graduates are picked up early because of this. This practical experience is invaluable".

★"I gained a lot through the course, both personally and professionally which is assisting me in my current career of policing".

★"Very practical course /clinical experience excellent".

★"The course is thorough, highly esteemed in the industry, and provided in a Christian environment".

★"I would more fully utilise the resources that were available to me during my training. The academic aspect of the course was highly underrated by my peers".

★"Since finishing nursing I have realised what I really want to do for a career".

★"I have had so many life experiences that have helped me grow mentally. I wouldn't swap the experiences for all the Wee-Bi in Cooranbong!".

★"Nursing is very versatile and will let me do what I want to do in life. There is always work and opportunity for change".

★ "I really wanted to do optometry and after this masters program in critical care, which is great, maybe then, who knows".

★ "(1) Yes if it was for a postgraduate course related to nursing.

★ (2) Yes if I did not get accepted into nursing course".

★ "I found my experiences at Avondale to be very pleasurable ones. The huge amount of practical experience is a big advantage, especially when applying for jobs against university students.Having worked with many university students,I now realise how much we really know and I'm very grateful for the opportunity to study at Avondale".

★ "I enjoy my work and I think I received the best preparation for it through Avondale , than any other institution".

★ "I love nursing and because I had a rough time at the end of my career I never gave up on nursing and I've never regretted that decision. Its given me everything that I've wanted. Nursing is a very broad career because you can go into any area you choose, where as teaching mathematics etc you stay as that or in that area.For me I hope and will become a health educator in nursing and work in a Third World country with this qualification.That's why if I had to do this career over again I would definitely do it ".

★ "There are so many different work opportunities as a result of doing nursing, not just ward work. Its a great opportunity to travel, learn and grow. Shift work is a big down (negative) point to nursing"

★ "I really enjoyed Avondale and the course, and so would go there again, but it is too expensive".

★ "I am glad I completed my nursing course through Avondale. Because it was an excellent course and an excellent learning experience in a Christian institution.Even though in the future I will be leaving nursing I am glad I've had the Avondale / Sydney Adventist Hospital experience. It was tough but I did it".

★ "The clinical component is an outstanding advantage".

★ "I enjoy nursing and know that Avondale College nursing has enabled me to become a good nurse".

★ "Nursing is a stepping stone for me on the way to the career of my choice. I would choose Avondale again because of the integration of work, study, spiritual and social aspects".

★ "Love nursing and Avondale has the best training".

★ "Avondale College provides professional and wholistic education to nursing students, which in turn will provide the services and care all the clients deserve, and at the same time bring professional satisfaction to nursing professionals. Avondale also provides a Christian environment which I personally appreciate. Nursing is one way of showing Christian love towards people as well as a fulfilling profession".

★ "The integration of theory with practice is excellent! other courses offer mainly theory and very little practical.The Sydney Adventist Hospital course is a great balance. You actually have to put knowledge into action!".

★ "Nursing has its bad points but overall it gives a good opportunity for career advancements. I'm still interested and enjoy most nursing aspects".

★ "Provided opportunity to work in some clinical areas and apply theoretical knowledge before graduating and entering the work force full time".

★ "Even though I feel Avondale over assesses with its academic load, and expectations are far greater than any other university I had a ball, its a great place to make friends and have fun".

★ "Nursing is a good base on which to build a career in the health field. The practical component at Avondale is why I choose to do my degree there".

★ "Its given me a great basis to further my career as a health professional".

★ "I enjoy my nursing career and feel that Avondale gave me the best clinical education / preparation to assist me in my role as a Registered Nurse".

★"Because I enjoyed my time at College, especially Sydney Adventist Hospital social and academic life, that this experience has not only enhanced my quality of life, but it is helping achieve the life style I ultimately wish for".

★"Nursing is a Christian journey. There is opportunity to specialise in an area".

★"I love being a nurse and I loved the Avondale College course".

★"I have felt the nursing course has given me a broader outlook on life and I enjoy the work .I am unsure how long I will stay with nursing, however I would not take back the experience. Very worth while".

★"Its a satisfying occupation and gives me the basis I need to move into related areas of health".

★"I would do nursing at Avondale again because of the work experience that is on offer (not the Avondale experience). But I would then use this as a stepping stone into another career".

★"As far as nursing is concerned Avondale has a good mix between theory and practice. As far as careers are concerned there were a couple of things I wanted to do (flying being one of them). However I don't regret doing nursing".

DEGREE GRADUATES - CHOOSE NURSING AS A CAREER AGAIN
POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES DEGREE

★"Nursing is fulfilling, however nothing prepares you for the demanding responsibility of having work that wears you physically, emotionally and interferes with your social and personal life. It's hard to often give patients only the basic care, the essentials, when I really want to do more, but don't have time."

★"If I was to start the nursing course as a school leaver, then I would choose Avondale College, Sydney Adventist Hospital program for its propensity towards teaching high dependency and interdependent skills. But if I was able to manipulate my own career; then I would be most likely to pursue a career witch offered an interdependent practice opportunity."

★"Avondale costs too much. Enjoyed the Sydney Adventist Hospital experience. Disliked Cooranbong campus immensely."

★"Avondale College gave me the skills I needed to begin my nursing career. I couldn't imagine myself working in another career but do find the shift work difficult to cope with at times (in relation to family and friends)"

★"If it were not for the opportunity to work in the operating theatre I would have chosen another career. I find ward work a bit monotonous. But enjoyed the experience."

★Avondale nursing is well known in the Eastern states and the graduates are in demand, but in Western Australia, hospitals seem to be unaware of the course content and tend to prefer Western Australia graduates."If I was to prepare again I would consider the nursing courses at Western Australian university."

★"But it is still very valuable for learning more about what you want, maybe nursing is a stepping stone ."

★"If I were to start over again I would not study nursing however the 3 years of study have not been wasted."

★"I would choose Avondale , Sydney Adventist Hospital , for the work experience, but I wouldn't go back to Avondale for its narrow mindedness."

★"Avondale has the advantage of clinical experience I do believe there are a lot of problems with administration ie a lot of wasted time travelling to Cooranbong for classes.I also believe that the individual interpersonal relationships between lecturers and students was good, however assignments should be marked with student I.D. number and not names.(to reduce favouritism.) Students were also used as "navvys" by the hospital on many occasions concerning employment. Students should be made aware of their rights as casual employees and be allowed to exercise these rights without any repercussions. I would consider this course to be one of the best nursing courses in Australia and I am pleased I chose it, as it gave me invaluable experience and many happy memories."

DEGREE NEGATIVES

★"Dissatisfied with my career choice and do not enjoy nursing."

★"I dislike shift work as it is most disruptive while trying to live a normal lifestyle.I realise that the medical/ nursing side of health care is very important, but I am quite disillusioned with the fact that often the treatment given to patients is aimed at only treating the symptoms and not trying to treat the cause of their disease, for this reason I do not anticipate I will be working in a full time capacity in nursing for much longer and am undertaking steps to begin further studies within the health care profession,but outside of the scope of nursing."

★"Nursing is hard work, you rarely get any thanks for all the effort you put in."

★"Shift work is a "pain" when starting a family, also not enough money."

★"Knowing what I know now, I would prefer to have studied another field in the health profession ie. physiotherapy or radiography etc."

★"Nursing is not a field where men are made to feel welcome. It is too regimented and restrictive."

★"Nursing is a very unstimulating, monotonous, profession with little respect for the medical field, Not to mention the pay in relation to effort is absurd."

★"Would not choose Avondale as we missed out on the opportunity to integrate with other professions Unhappy with the standard and lack of concern for the students development by teachers.It is a small college and I believe that teachers should be offering help to struggling students before they fail subjects. As it is a "religious institution"and failing to many, leads to an adverse in self esteem and decrease in ones interest to bother trying."

★"Nursing is very demanding (and rewarding.) Physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting.Shift work isn't for marriages! (I know there is room to change nursing aspects, specialise.) But my interests are now in naturopath, natural remedies and to help / meet people under less pressured situations.It's sometimes hard to give 100% of yourself or do your best when it's so busy and demanding, keeping up with the physical needs." I'd love to give more wholistic care, which isn't actually that easy to do in nursing (even though it's necessary)" "I would have chosen something which involved all of my interests. Avondale is sheltered from some aspects of society (this is not all bad of course.)"

★"Shift work, hard physical and mental work at times ."

★"Dislike nursing as a career."

★"Perhaps because of the lack of recognition of nurses as professionals."

★"The quality of the course and lecturers that I paid good money for was poor and some should not be teaching. I only went through Avondale because of the opportunity to get hands on experience at the Sydney Adventist Hospital."

★"At times I do not find nursing challenging enough, I would choose a career that is more challenging and one that offers more autonomy."

★"I don't think that I looked at what really interested me the most, and I thought that maybe I couldn't do it. So I chose nursing knowing I could at least do that."

★"Not interested in study for 3 years and still showering patients, getting bedpans,making beds and having senior staff sit on their bums while you do all their dirty work."

★"Don't like nursing."

★"Although nursing can be very rewarding I think that I would prefer another career that did not involve so much politics. It seems so many nurses are becoming "burnt out" and the issue of being sued for a simple mistake is becoming more popular. The Avondale College however offers an excellent course."

★"Is it what you want to do for the rest of your life?I'm not sure."

★"I'd choose something related with direct education, I see education as a direction that I am head in."

★"Once you become a registered Nurse you realise the many limitations of the profession.You are limited in autonomy and ability to earn an income equal to your ability."

APPENDIX G QUESTIONNAIRE - Section I

1. Sex ..... M ( ) F ( )
2. Year of Birth ..... !9 ( )
3. Time of Graduation..... Month July ( ) November ( ) Year 19 ( )
4. Australian state or country from which you came to commence this tertiary nursing course. (.....)
5. Employment history since graduation. *(In sequential order from 1st appointment, including nursing and non-nursing positions, if any)* (If needed use box over the page)

Year	Place of appointment. *(Institution, State, Country.)*	Description of appointment. *(eg.1st year R.N., Supervisor, Educator etc.)*

6. If you are not working in nursing, please state reason.
   (eg. family responsibility, dislike of shift work, etc.) .....
   .....
7. Which of the following factors would be likely to influence you most in your choice of a position ?

1. Location of workplace ..... ( )
2. Hours of work ..... ( )
3. Rate of pay ..... ( )
4. Working conditions ..... ( )
5. Family commitments ..... ( )
6. Opportunity for professional advancement ..... ( )
7. Type of experience available ..... ( )
8. Desire to travel ..... ( )
9. Need of your services ..... ( )
10. Opportunity for further study ..... ( )

8. From your experience since graduation, do you perceive the professional reputation of the Avondale College Diploma/Bachelor course in nursing as .....
(Circle the number of your choice.)

POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
1	2	3	4	5

9. Have you found that having a tertiary qualification in nursing has been an advantage to you in your career aspirations.

YES ( ) NO ( )

Please specify.....

.....

.....

10. Have you undertaken any course/courses, nursing or non-nursing, since completing your Diploma of Health Science (Nursing) /Bachelor of Nursing?

YE S ( ) ...Please specify in box. NO ( ) ..Go to question 11.

Course	Institution	Date (commenced)	Date completed (expected date)

11. Avondale College offers a Graduate Diploma degree in a variety of nursing areas, which can be completed in 1 year (full time) or 2 years (part time), are you interested in applying ?

YES ( ) NO ( )

12. Avondale College will be offering a full time and part time Master of Nursing degree in 1997, are you interested in applying ?

YES ( ) NO ( )

13. If so, would you prefer to study..

ON CAMPUS - FULL TIME ( )
ON CAMPUS - PART TIME ( )
EXTERNAL STUDIES - FULL TIME ( )
EXTERNAL STUDIES - PART TIME ( )

QUESTIONNAIRE - Section II

The following section is designed to gain information about graduate's perceptions of the results of the College course in relation to the skills and attributes its objectives aim to produce. Please read each objective carefully, decide how well you feel you were prepared to meet it, then using the key shown below, circle the number which agrees most with your opinion. A N S W E R A L L QUESTIONS

KEY
1. Not prepared.
2. Prepared, but not very well.
3. Marginally prepared.
4. Quite well prepared.
5. Very well prepared.

Indicate how well you were prepared to :-

1. Demonstrate skill in problem solving in a variety of situations..... 1 2 3 4 5
2. Treat people as wholistic persons having physiological, psychological, spiritual and social needs 1 2 3 4 5
3. Display a good understanding of the pathologies underlying patient problems 1 2 3 4 5
4. Apply the activities of the nursing process in the delivery of patient care 1 2 3 4 5
5. Perform well in a variety of nursing settings 1 2 3 4 5
6. Demonstrate competence in the performance of nursing skills 1 2 3 4 5
7. Perform selected medical procedures in emergency situations (eg. suturing, vein cannulation) 1 2 3 4 5
8. Communicate with sensitivity and skill, fostering good interpersonal relationships 1 2 3 4 5
9. Handle the responsibilities of team leadership and general ward organisation 1 2 3 4 5
10. Assume the teaching role of the registered nurse using pertinent principles of education 1 2 3 4 5
11. Recognise the importance of continuing education as a means for professional growth and personal maturity 1 2 3 4 5
12. Become an ethical, responsible member of the nursing profession 1 2 3 4 5
13. Recognise the need for and implement change in nursing 1 2 3 4 5
14. Participate in nursing research 1 2 3 4 5

QUESTIONNAIRE - Section III

The purpose of section 3 is to give you the opportunity of expressing your feelings about certain aspects of your nursing course, by indicating those areas with which you were satisfied and also those which you may feel were unsatisfactory.
Read each of the following items and decide how satisfied you were with that aspect described, then using the key in the box below, circle the number that represents your level of satisfaction.

KEY
1. Very unsatisfied
2. Somewhat unsatisfied
3. Marginally satisfied
4. Quite satisfied
5. Very satisfied

Indicate how satisfied you were with :-

1. The overall preparation that you received for your future career. 1 2 3 4 5
2. The interest that most educators took in their students 1 2 3 4 5
3. Learning packages as a way of obtaining academic credit 1 2 3 4 5
4. The social events arranged for students 1 2 3 4 5
5. The arrangements made for students to earn while they learn ... 1 2 3 4 5
6. The non-curricular and sporting activities available 1 2 3 4 5
7. The study load in relation to the time available 1 2 3 4 5
8. The chance to participate in making decisions about school or faculty regulations 1 2 3 4 5
9. The accommodation and catering facilities 1 2 3 4 5
10. The integration of theory and practice during the course 1 2 3 4 5
11. The intellectual stimulation you got from being a student here ... 1 2 3 4 5
12. The chance for men and women to get acquainted 1 2 3 4 5
13. The variety and relevance of clinical placements 1 2 3 4 5
14. The methods of assessment that were used 1 2 3 4 5
15. The support available from deans, chaplains, counsellors 1 2 3 4 5
16. The procedure for appeals against administrative decisions 1 2 3 4 5
17. The availability of educators for discussion about course work .. 1 2 3 4 5
18. Adequate feedback about academic and clinical progress 1 2 3 4 5
19. The chance to make close friends 1 2 3 4 5
20. The opportunity to fulfil your goals of professional and personal growth 1 2 3 4 5

Please feel free to comment on any areas mentioned above, or others that may not have been included.

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QUESTIONNAIRE - *Section 3* (continued)

If you were to prepare for a career all over again, do you feel you would :-

1.Again choose the Avondale College Nursing course?

YES ( ) NO ( )

2.Choose nursing but at another College ?

YES ( ) NO ( )

3.Choose another career (Not nursing)

YES ( ) NO ( )

Please give your reason for this decision.

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April 12th 1996

Dear Graduate,

At the Avondale College it is over 15 years since the first Tertiary program for Nursing commenced, and it is 10 years since an evaluation study was conducted on the Diploma of Applied Science (Nursing) program. At that time a questionnaire was sent to all Avondale College graduates of this course, with the responses (data) being collated, processed and analysed. From the recommendations that were made, the Diploma of Health Science (Nursing) program was developed.
Five classes have now graduated from the Bachelor of Nursing program, so a research study has been developed to evaluate this course, and at the same time, evaluate the Diploma of Health Science (Nursing) course. As part of my role as a teacher here at Avondale College, I am collecting this information so that the courses can be evaluated and as you were in one of those graduating classes, I am asking for your help as I undertake this study. It will help me to assess what the graduates feel are its strengths and weaknesses, and the information thus gained will be used to monitor the overall impact and relevance of courses being offered by this institution.
The enclosed questionnaire is designed to obtain information about the following areas.

1. Your place/places of employment and the type of work in which you have been engaged since graduation.
2. The factors influencing the choice of your employment.
3. Any further courses, either nursing or non-nursing, which you have undertaken since completing your nursing course.
4. Possible future career directions.
5. Your perceptions of the success or otherwise of the course in fulfilling its aims for its graduates.
6. Your opinion of specific aspects of the course.

As all the data collected is pooled, the information you give, remains confidential, which makes it impossible for anyone to identify information given by any individual.
Would you please complete the 3 sections of the questionnaire, taking care to answer all items, and return it to me in the enclosed, stamped, addressed envelope. These letters were addressed by the clerical staff of the Avondale College academic office.
Thankyou very much for helping out with this project as it also assists me in my Master of Nursing degree program.

Yours sincerely

Ron PLANE
Lecturer in Nursing

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