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Understanding the enrolled nurse to registered nurse journey through a model adapted from Schlossberg's transition theory

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Understanding the Enrolled Nurse to Registered Nurse journey through a model adapted from Schlossberg’s Transition Theory

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Abstract:
Background: Substantial numbers of Enrolled Nurses (ENs) enrol in higher education programs to undergo the transition to Registered Nurse (RN) with the experience described as containing numerous challenges.
Objectives: This paper reports on a synthesis of the literature that explores the experiences of ENs undertaking a program of study to convert to RN. Consequently, a model is developed to identify educational interventions and resources to enable a successful transition for these students.
Design: A narrative review was completed with thematic synthesis of the literature guided by Schlossberg’s Transition Theory, and Thomas and Harden’s framework for systematic analysis of qualitative studies.
Data sources: CINAHL, Scopus, ProQuest Central and Health Collection were searched.
Review Methods: The databases were searched for English language journal articles, theses and grey literature published from 1987 to 2016 from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA. The key search words included truncations of: ‘enrolled nurse’, ‘licensed practical nurse’, ‘transition’, ‘conversion’ and ‘experience’. This resulted in the identification of 33 related articles for review.
Results: Themes and sub-themes developed from the literature synthesis were integrated into an ‘EN to RN Transition model.’ The four stages of the model reflect the experiences of the ENs as they overcame the various challenges they encountered during their transition to RN. The model was used to develop recommendations that may improve their transition experience and decrease attrition.
Conclusion: This paper reports on a synthesis of the literature, and presents a four stage model, that reflects the experiences of ENs in their transition to RN. Recognising the elements within each stage can assist educators develop strategies and provide educational resources to enhance the EN journey.

INTRODUCTION
There are increasing numbers of Australian, New Zealand (NZ), and United Kingdom (UK) Enrolled Nurses (ENs) and other international equivalents, such as North American Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), enrolling in programs of study to undertake the transition to become Registered Nurses (RNs). It is important that these transition experiences are well understood to ensure strategies for their success are optimised, particularly in the current context of global nursing shortages. Increased adverse patient events have been linked with nursing shortages (World Health Organization 2011; Gore, Rickards, Fray, Holmes & Smith, 2017) with McLaughlin, Moutray and Moore (2010) recommending the introduction of policies to decrease attrition from nursing programs as one strategy to tackle this dilemma.

The reasons for the attrition of students from nursing programs is often unclear (Laming & Kelly, 2013). However the impact this attrition has is potentially significant, particularly when it is predicted internationally that there will be large nursing workforce shortfalls into the future (Health Workforce Australia, 2014; Liu, Goryakin, Maeda, Bruckner & Scheffler, 2017). One recommendation to increase the nursing workforce in Australia has been to encourage ENs to upgrade their qualifications to RN (Kenny & Duckett, 2005; Rapley, Nathan & Davidson, 2006). While this strategy can make a valuable contribution to the RN workforce, there are a wide range of motivating factors that influence ENs to want to make the transition to RN, and a broad range of transition experiences (Wall, 2016). Despite ENs commencing programs to achieve this transition, the evidence indicates that they may struggle to succeed in the tertiary environment when compared to traditional entry students (Doggrell & Schaffer, 2016). Synthesising an understanding of their experiences is integral to providing the resources, support and educational strategies needed to inform a positive and successful transition and address any potential attrition from these programs. To inform knowledge around how to improve the ENs’ and EN equivalents’ experiences as they study to become RNs, and potentially reduce attrition in this area, this paper uses the Transition Theory of Schlossberg, Waters and Goodman (1995) to guide a synthesis of the relevant
research. This synthesis has then been represented in a model that describes the various stages of that transition.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The suitability for the use of Schlossberg’s Transition Theory as a guide for examining EN’s experiences is illustrated in her seminal article where she discusses the development of a model “in which transitions of all kinds . . . can be analysed, and possible interventions formulated” (Schlossberg, 1981, p. 3). The model has evolved since its original development (Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg et al., 1995; Anderson, Goodman & Schlossberg, 2012) and now contains three major components related to stage of transition, identification of coping resources and methods for strengthening those resources.

The first component, ‘Approaching Transitions’, involves the identification of the individual’s perspective of where they are placed within the transition and whether they are ‘moving in’, ‘moving through’ or ‘moving out’ (Schlossberg et al., 1995). The second component of Transition Theory, ‘Taking stock of coping resources: The 4 S system’, involves identifying the transitioning individual’s perspective of their coping resources and places them into categories of ‘situation’, ‘self’, ‘support’ and ‘strategies’. The third and final component of Transition Theory, ‘Taking charge: strengthening resources’ (Schlossberg et al., 1995), integrates several counselling techniques with the focus on developing the transitioning individual’s coping resources. Applying the various transitional stages and the 4 S System to the synthesis of relevant literature has enabled the development of an ‘EN to RN Transition model’. This model encapsulates the ENs’ transition experiences and provides an overview of their journey from their planning for their enrolment in the Bachelor of Nursing (BN) program through to their final preparation to enter the RN workforce.

**SEARCH STRATEGIES AND SEARCH RESULTS**

The literature search for this review was conducted by the first author and sought knowledge related to the experiences of ENs undertaking RN programs in Australia, New
Zealand and the UK. Studies conducted in the North America were also included as, despite their variations in nursing career structure and education, it was found that the shared pathway of study of the LPNs (EN equivalent) to RN was similar enough to provide information that enriched the findings from an international perspective.

The search was confined to those studies published between 1987 and 2016. These parameters were chosen as the year 1986 was significant for ENs in the United Kingdom (UK) as the Central Council of Nursing announced the imminent cessation of EN training (Hembrough & Sheehan, 1989; Milligan, 2007). This decision then led to the development of many EN to RN conversion courses in the UK along with associated discussion and research into the scope of practice and future of ENs, which increased from this time throughout other countries, including New Zealand and Australia.

Saturation of the literature related to the search inquiry was achieved through using several strategies. The first included electronic database searches of CINAHL, Scopus, ProQuest Central and Health Collection. A review of primary sources from these databases then resulted in the location of several relevant secondary sources and manual searches also uncovered both Masters and Doctoral theses related to this topic. The key words used for the literature search included truncations reflecting the terms: ‘enrolled nurse’, ‘licensed practical nurse’, ‘transition’, ‘conversion’, ‘experience’. Though peer reviewed journal articles are predominant in this review, non-peer reviewed articles, or grey literature, were included, as it was determined their relevance added depth to the review’s narrative.

The search resulted in a total of 843 articles and literature. Abstracts were examined for relevance to the search inquiry and 33 full-text articles were retrieved that met the inclusion criteria. (see Figure 1).

**Method**

Following the three stage thematic synthesis approach outlined by Thomas and Harden, (2008) the findings of the qualitative studies that met the search criteria were read line-by-
line, resulting in the development of frequently occurring codes that were then merged into
sub-themes. Findings from quantitative articles that met the search parameters were also used
to support the sub-themes synthesised from the qualitative literature. The sub-themes were
then considered in light of Schlossberg et al.’s (1995) Transition theory, which resulted in the
formation of the four stages of the EN to RN Transition model (see Figure 2).

EN to RN TRANSITION MODEL
The synthesis of the experiences of transitioning former ENs described in Table 1 are
reflected in a model developed from the first component of Schlossberg’s Transition Theory,
which describes the stages of transition. The EN to RN model (see Figure 2) has expanded
the original three stages outlined in Schlossberg et al.’s (1995) Transition theory to four, to
acknowledge the importance of the preparatory phase for the EN about to enter the program.
Additionally, modification of the final phase of the model signifies how the former ENs
prepare for their approaching professional role.

STAGES WITHIN THE TRANSITION MODEL
Preparing to move in
The EN to RN Transition model commences with the ENs anticipating their journey and
‘preparing to move in’ to the transition. This stage involves the ENs recognising their
motivations and personal goals that, when examined through the lens of Transition Theory
(Schlossberg et al., 1995), may be interpreted as either positive or negative.

A positive or optimistic attitude is considered essential to overcoming challenges
inherent in a transition (Schlossberg et al., 1995) and as such it is important for those
involved in the transition process to identify the motivating factors involved. For instance,
those ENs who enter with aspirations to, and expectations of, the rewards associated with
increased challenges and a higher professional status are consequently more likely to succeed
(Boelen & Kenny, 2009; Wall, 2016). Whereas negative motivations for undertaking the
conversion such as those reported predominantly in the UK literature from the late 1980s and
1990s (Boot, Hurst, McGeorge & Smith, 1988; Foong & MacKay, 1996; Dowswell, Hewison & Millar, 1998; Allan & McCafferty, 1999; Webb, 2000) may adversely impact a successful transition. These studies’ findings reported some ENs felt forced into the transition to RN as a result of the cessation of EN training and associated expectations of the imminent devaluation of their role as an EN.

Planning for potential personal and work related changes are also important during the ‘preparing to move in’ stage (Kenny & Duckett, 2005; Rapley et al., 2008; Suttle & McMillan, 2009). Exampling this is a deliberation by some students as to whether the design of the conversion to RN program would require them to leave their paid employment (Schultz, 1992; Adelman, 2002; Claywell, 2003; Cook, Dover, Dickson & Engh, 2010). Many of the participants in the North American studies reported students needed to maintain income to pay their usual cost of living expenses as well as the fees associated with undertaking the conversion courses. Similarly, financial concerns have been discussed in Australian studies as some students considered both the cost of tertiary education and the difficulties of continuing work while studying to be obstacles to undertaking higher education (Kenny & Duckett, 2005; Rapley et al., 2008). Likewise, domestic responsibilities have been described in the international and Australian literature as barriers to ENs considering undertaking tertiary education (Adelman, 2002; Kenny & Duckett, 2005; Cook et al., 2010). Identifying the transitional steps associated with the stage ‘preparing to move in’ is an important component in assisting students to prepare for the next ‘moving in’ stage.

Moving in
The ‘moving in’ stage was found to involve orientation to new roles, routines and relationships in what was reported to be an unfamiliar environment, particularly in relation to university teaching and learning approaches. The differences between the former ENs training and the academic demands experienced at university have been identified as being due to the different pedagogical approaches and learning outcomes associated with studying
for each qualification (Allan & McCafferty, 1999; Cubit & Leeson, 2009; Ralph, Birks, Chapman, Muldoon & McPherson, 2013; Jacob, McKenna & D’Amore, 2014). This is manifested by EN students being provided more teacher-directed learning opportunities, whereas RN students are expected to be more self-directed (Crampton, 1992; Claywell, 2003; McGuire, 2004; Dearnley, 2006; Cook et al., 2010; Laming & Kelly, 2013; Jacob et al., 2014).

The development of both critical thinking and academic writing skills (Hylton, 2005; Rapley et al., 2006; Hutchinson, Mitchell & St John, 2011; Laming & Kelly, 2013; Ralph et al., 2013; Wall, 2016) was also consistently reported as higher education requirements that ENs struggled with. An additional challenge was the requirement to use information technologies (IT) in ways that were new to them (McGuire, 2004; Rapley et al., 2006; Laming & Kelly, 2013) and this was particularly so if the former EN was studying externally (Hylton, 2005; Milligan, 2007; Boelen & Kenny, 2009).

The capacity of the former ENs to overcome any academic challenges encountered can be considered using the 4 S system of Transition Theory (Schlossberg et al., 1995). The unfamiliar nature of the learning approaches being encountered often meant the former ENs either did not possess the personal resources needed to manage these specific challenges or found their resources significantly challenged. The provision of targeted support at this stage of the transition is important to address these challenges and assist movement through to the next stage. ‘Support’, as a coping resource, has been reported as involving several different types, including intimate, friends, group and institutional; with transition described as having the potential to disrupt any or all components of an individual’s usual support system (Schlossberg et al., 1995). Demonstrating evidence of the potential disruptive effects of a transition, both Schultz (1992) and Dowswell et al. (1998) discussed how participants in their studies held the unanticipated academic demands of the conversion program responsible for
their personal relationship breakdowns. In contrast, other studies (Claywell, 2003; Rapley et al., 2006) have described the importance of the support that family and friends provided.

Institutional support has been identified as “key to the handling of stress” (Schlossberg et al., 1995, p. 67) that may be associated with all types of transitions and is acknowledged across a range of the literature (Schultz, 1992; Rapley et al., 2008; Boelen & Kenny, 2009; Melrose & Gordon, 2011). Therefore, as reflected in the EN to RN Transition model, support from academics and tertiary support staff make a significant contribution to the ability of the EN to orientate to the demands of the new environment, particularly for those who may not have more stable forms of personal support.

Another learning issue identified at the ‘moving in’ stage related to the EN’s receipt of recognition of prior learning (RPL), awarded as credit for completion of their training. Whereas non-EN students, who have not received RPL, had the opportunity to acclimatise to the tertiary environment, develop an academic foundation and make friends in the first year of the BN, the former ENs had not. Therefore most non-EN students may have completed their ‘moving in’ stage and progressed into the ‘moving through’ stage of the course by the time the former ENs commence the program. Using Transition Theory (Schlossberg et al., 1995) educators can therefore conceptualise how the former ENs may be in a different stage of the transition to the majority of their fellow students who did not receive RPL. The implications that the transitioning ENs may have distinct teaching and learning needs as a result of receiving RPL are substantiated by research (Ralph et al., 2013; Wall, 2016), which reported that specific academic and pastoral resources were required to support these students.

Further complication of the issues associated with RPL relates to the struggle of the former ENs to form connections with the non-EN students. The perception developed by the EN participants in one study (Wall, 2016) was that some non-EN students considered them intimidating and different, and therefore some ENs actively concealed their professional
identity in an effort to decrease the resentment they sensed from the other students. This supported similar findings in an earlier study (Hutchinson et al., 2011).

The challenges for the transitioning EN to balance study demands with personal responsibilities (Schultz, 1992; Wade, 2001; Hylton, 2005; Rapley et al., 2008;) as well as paid work (Dowswell et al., 1998; Adelman, 2002; Suttle & McMillan, 2009) are well documented. However, even though these students may commence the RN program with expectations that they can balance their study with other responsibilities, unexpected financial impacts (Melrose & Gordon, 2011) and relationship demands (Schultz, 1992; Dowswell et al., 1998) may increase the obstacles experienced. The challenge for the former ENs to balance the variations in the range of demands that they encounter is represented in the EN to RN Transition model. As the ENs prepare to commence the program they establish balance between the various domestic and paid work obligations, and their study responsibilities. However changes in priorities may unexpectedly occur, resulting in the ENs needing to make readjustments. The impacts from these unanticipated responsibilities can result in the former ENs decreasing their enrolments to part time or withdrawing from the program altogether (Melrose & Gordon, 2011; Wall, 2016).

The requirement for individuals to adapt existing roles while forming new ones during a transition is significant because “role changes are an important aspect in determining the impact of a transition” (Schlossberg et al., 1995, p. 55). Therefore, balancing multiple roles, such as parent, partner and ‘breadwinner’ with study requirements, as well as proving logistically challenging, can place stress on ENs adopting the student role. Once these ‘moving in’ transitional steps are negotiated the former ENs continue onto the ‘moving through’ stage.

Moving through
The ‘moving through’ stage of the transition represents the former EN’s adaptation to the tertiary environment. The EN to RN Transition model reflects how robust personal attributes
and psychological resources are required by transitioning ENs to continue to overcome the challenges that they encounter.

The individual’s strong characteristic of ‘self’ is an important consideration when negotiating a transition, as it enables the development of ‘strategies’ as coping resources to overcome obstacles (Schlossberg et al., 1995). Additionally, strong personal attributes such as optimism and resilience are required to manage the various challenges. These were demonstrated by the EN participants in one study (Wall, 2016) who exhibited their determination to succeed in the BN program, using terms such as “I refuse to be beaten” and “I got to prove (my doubters) wrong”. These findings support Milligan (2007) who described the importance of a high degree of self-efficacy in transitioning former ENs overcoming challenges.

Initial socialisation difficulties experienced by ENs when first entering a BN program were overcome as they were able to form relationships both within the former EN group and also with some non-ENs. The ability of some individuals to succeed in situations where others may fail can in part be explained by the psychological resource of self-efficacy, which plays an important role in individuals remaining optimistic about achieving goals in challenging environments (Schlossberg et al., 1995). Possessing a strong self-efficacy may explain why some transitioning students have the additional resources to access institutional support and to develop wider social networks, whereas other students may not have the ‘self’ resources to form these important connections.

The former ENs have adapted to the requirements of the transition and are now preparing to enter the final stage of the BN program. However, they may still encounter some final challenges to overcome.

Preparing to move out

The final stage of the EN to RN Transition model, ‘preparing to move out’ represents the former ENs preparation to complete the program. Approaching a new transition as an RN, the
ENs positively anticipate what the future holds for them as they move ever closer to completing their journey and achieving their goal.

The complexities around the development of a new RN identity, while simultaneously discarding the old professional identity, may prove challenging for some former ENs. Increasing this challenge for these students may be their lack of clear understanding of what the RN role entailed (Boot et al., 1988; Kilstoff & Rochester, 2004; Hutchinson et al., 2011; Tower, Cooke, Watson, Buys & Wilson, 2015). Two Australian studies (Kenny & Duckett, 2005; Rapley et al., 2006) have added complexity to this issue as they have argued how the scopes of practice of the two roles had evolved to become very similar. Clarifying the differences in the two roles for ENs as they enter into BN programs may assist these students to facilitate the adoption of the RN identity with more ease.

Registered Nurse role models are an additional strategy that can assist transitioning ENs to adopt the new professional identity. The formation of professional relationships with RNs in their workplaces has been discussed by working ENs as assisting them to understand the requirements of the RN role (Melrose & Gordon, 2011; Wall, 2016). This strategy is also supported by Schlossberg et al. (1995) who identified how important a positive role model can be in supporting an individual through a transition.

An individual’s self-esteem, and hence their self-efficacy, has been documented as increasing in transitioning ENs as they achieved success in the BN program (Hill & MacGregor, 1998; Paech, 2002; Hylton, 2005; Dearnley, 2006; Milligan, 2007; Wall, 2016). Achieving success has been associated with the self-belief that the individual has coping resources that can overcome obstacles throughout their transition (Schlossberg et al., 1995). Conversely, initial failure may result in damaged self-belief (Milligan, 2007) and potentially withdrawal from the program (Wall, 2016).

The Transition model demonstrates that once the former ENs commence the ‘moving in’ stage, through to ‘preparing to move out’ there can be some movement back and forward
between the stages according to their individual experiences. Furthermore, an inability to overcome challenges within certain stages may result in the former ENs needing to re-orient themselves within the transition process, resulting in either a movement backwards or an exit from the EN to RN Transition model.

**LIMITATIONS**

The search and selection of the literature was conducted solely by the principal investigator (first author) and search results were not confirmed through verification by the other authors. Consequently it is possible some relevant literature may not have been included. However this possibility has been mitigated by clearly outlining the search strategies undertaken. Additionally, the wide year range of the search parameters may have impacted the results of this study as healthcare and tertiary education have evolved and changed over 30 years. However the authors felt this time range was justified as implementing a narrower range without a clear rationale for an earlier cut-off may result in their missing important experiences that are still relevant to today’s context.

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE THE EN TO RN TRANSITION EXPERIENCE**

Recommendations can be developed through application of the EN to RN Transition model. These recommendations may enhance the students’ coping resources of ‘situation’, ‘self’, ‘support’ and ‘strategies’ (Schlossberg et al., 1995) and therefore potentially improve the likelihood of the successful transition of former ENs into and through the program of study.

**Preparing to move in**

A purpose developed orientation or bridging program should be made available for ENs to complete prior to commencing the program. Foundational teaching in areas such academic writing, critical thinking and self-directed learning skills should be considered to assist these students to overcome any differences in the teaching and learning approaches between their EN training and the BN program. Additionally, an orientation program that allows reflection on personal motivations, and explores and compares the students’
expectations of the program with the actual academic demands they are likely to encounter may help in the balancing of work, personal and expected study responsibilities.

**Moving in**

The introduction of individualised, rather than standardised, advanced standing that recognises their prior training and level of experience is required for all ENs enrolling in BN programs. Though applied prior to program commencement, accurate individualised application of RPL may decrease the academic disadvantages associated with standardised RPL as well as the frustration experienced when revision of familiar content occurs.

**Moving through**

An academic staff member whose focus is to mentor former ENs and to provide academic and pastoral assistance throughout the program should be introduced. The mentor may be able to assist the ENs in various ways, including in the successful adoption of the student role, accessing institutional support, and aiding in the development of personal strategies to overcome the various challenges that they experience.

**Preparing to move out**

Educational strategies to assist the converting EN construct their new RN identity may be required. The sourcing and introduction of RN role models to support ENs on clinical placement may assist these students in developing their RN identity and improve their readiness to take on the RN role.

**CONCLUSION**

This synthesis of the literature has explored the experiences of former ENs transitioning to RN through the lens of Schlossberg et al.’s Transition Theory (1995), and resulted in the development of a four stage EN to RN Transition model. Recognising the elements within each stage can assist educators to provide, and students to access, the required support and resources needed to negotiate a successful transition. Movement back and forth between stages may result as students learn to overcome the challenges they encounter at each stage.
The completion of the transition is demonstrated by ENs finally letting go of their EN identity to initially adopt the role of RN student, and finally the professional RN identity.

The recommendations developed from the EN to RN Transition model will be of interest to tertiary education providers who offer BN, or EN to RN conversion, programs. The introduction of strategies and resources to improve the former ENs’ journey through the tertiary environment will not only make the learning experience more enjoyable and effective for the transitioning student, but also increase the capacity for ENs to successfully complete their transition to Registered Nurse.
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Figure 1.
*Narrative Literature Search Process*

Figure 2.
*EN to RN Transition model based on the theory by Schlossberg et al. (1995, p. 44)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Aim and Design</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boot, Hurst, McGeorge &amp; Smith (1988) UK</td>
<td>Explore the experiences of ENs within a conversion to RN program. Survey questionnaire (number of participants unclear, n&gt;250). Descriptive statistical analysis of quantitative data.</td>
<td>Barriers to enrolling in programs include conflicting domestic responsibilities and doubts of academic ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hembrough &amp; Sheehan (1989) UK</td>
<td>Evaluate self-reported changes in ENs during conversion to RN program. Student diary entries and focus group (n=8) at seven stages over 12 month program. Qualitative data analysed using approach of Eisner (1985).</td>
<td>Difficulty adapting to academic demands including adopting student role. Self-esteem grew from academic success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schultz (1992) Ed.D thesis. USA</td>
<td>Explore the experiences of LPNs within several conversion to RN programs. RN graduate interviews (n=11). Descriptive analysis of qualitative data guided by phenomenological approach.</td>
<td>Struggle to balance study-work-domestic responsibilities. Support from work colleagues, fellow students and academics important. Self-esteem grew from academic success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crampton (1992) UK</td>
<td>Discussion of a personal experience of an EN within a conversion to RN program. Opinion piece.</td>
<td>Difficulty adapting to academic demands. Perceived lack of institutional support. Reported damaged self-esteem due to academic difficulties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fooong &amp; McKay (1996) UK</td>
<td>Discuss the issues expressed by ENs in response to the cessation of their training. EN interviews (n=30). Interpretive analysis of qualitative data.</td>
<td>Feelings of disillusion and frustration in response to cessation of EN training. Reports of feeling forced or coerced into undertaking conversion to RN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dowswell, Hewison &amp; Millar (1998) UK</td>
<td>Explore the experiences of ENs within a conversion to RN program. Student interviews (n=16). Interpretive analysis of qualitative data.</td>
<td>Struggle to balance study-work-domestic responsibilities. Expressions of feeling forced or coerced into undertaking conversion to RN. Self-esteem grew from academic success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill &amp; MacGregor (1998) UK</td>
<td>Evaluate self-reported changes in ENs during conversion to RN program. Survey questionnaire (n=100) distributed at four stages over two years of program. Interpretive analysis of qualitative data.</td>
<td>Struggle to balance study and domestic responsibilities. Self-esteem grew from academic success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webb (2000) UK</td>
<td>Critically explore the cessation of EN training and the conversion to RN process. Narrative review of the literature, exact dates unknown (n=11).</td>
<td>Difficulty balancing study and work responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wade (2001) New Zealand</td>
<td>Discuss the need for ENs to have access to tailored conversion to RN programs. Opinion piece.</td>
<td>ENs require a conversion to RN program that meets their unique needs including; flexibility to balance study, work, domestic and social responsibilities, and specialised support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelman (2002) Ph.D thesis. USA</td>
<td>Explore the experiences of LPNs within a conversion to RN program. Survey questionnaire (n=1000). Quantitative data analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics.</td>
<td>Struggle to balance finances, and work and study responsibilities. Affirmation of previous professional role enhanced academic performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paech (2002) Australia</td>
<td>Explore the experiences of former ENs transitioning to graduate RN. Student interviews (n=9). Interpretive analysis of qualitative data guided by phenomenological approach of van Manen (1990).</td>
<td>Sorrow at loss of contact with their former EN colleagues. Importance of having role models identified. Self-esteem grew from academic success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claywell (2003) Ph.D thesis. USA</td>
<td>Explore the experiences of LPNs within a conversion to RN program. Student (n=6), significant others (n=4) and faculty interviews (n=3). Descriptive analysis of qualitative data guided by phenomenological approach of van Manen (1990).</td>
<td>Struggle to balance study, work and domestic responsibilities. Difficulty adapting to academic demands including academic writing and self-directed learning requirements. Challenges adopting student role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iley (2004)</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Deliberate on the increasing professionalisation of the nurse role, including the EN to RN conversion. Secondary analysis of data from 1992-1994 (n=2968). Quantitative data underwent statistical analysis, including bivariate analysis, chi-squared tests and multivariate logistic regression model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilstuff &amp; Rochester (2004)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Explore the experiences of former ENs transitioning to graduate RN. Student interviews (n=60). Interpretive analysis of qualitative data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McGuire (2004)</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Explore an EN’s experience of a study skills course prior to enrolling in a conversion to RN program. Editorial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hylton (2005)</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Explore the experiences of (predominantly Maori) ENs within a tailored conversion to RN program. Initially separate student (n=10) and educator (n=6) focus groups, second student (n=10) focus group. Constant comparative analysis of qualitative data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenny &amp; Duckett (2005)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Report why rural based ENs undergo the conversion to RN. Online focus group (n=38). Interpretive analysis of qualitative data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deamley (2006)</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Explore the experiences of ENs within a conversion to RN program. Student interviews (n=18) conducted at five stages over two years of program. Constant comparative analysis of qualitative data.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rapley, Nathan &amp; Davidson (2006)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Explore the experiences of former ENs recently graduated from an external conversion to RN program. Student interviews (n=10). Qualitative data analysed using grounded theory approach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milligan (2007)</td>
<td>Ed.D thesis. UK</td>
<td>Explore the experiences of ENs within an open learning conversion to RN program. Student interviews (n=30) conducted at three stages over 15 months. Qualitative data analysed using grounded theory approach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rapley, Davidson, Nathan &amp; Dhaliwal (2008)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Investigate the link between initial EN training and conversion to RN program completion. Secondary analysis of data from 2000-2003 (n=112). Descriptive statistical analysis of quantitative data.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boelen &amp; Kenny (2009)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Evaluate the impact of a one week bridging course for ENs converting to RN. Survey questionnaire (n=70). Descriptive statistical analysis of quantitative data.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cubit &amp; Leeson (2009)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Examine graduate programs tailored for RNs with prior EN experience.</td>
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<td>Suttle &amp; McMillan (2009) USA</td>
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<td>Cook, Dover, Dickson &amp; Engh (2010) USA</td>
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<td>Hutchinson, Mitchell &amp; St John (2011) Australia</td>
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<td>Melrose &amp; Gordon (2011) Canada</td>
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<td>Laming &amp; Kelly (2013) Australia</td>
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<td>Ralph, Birks, Chapman, Muldoon &amp; McPherson (2013) Australia</td>
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<td>Jacob, McKenna &amp; D’Amore (2014) Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wall (2016) Masters thesis. Australia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Highlights:

- Enrolled Nurses experience four stages as they transition through the study program
- Movement between stages may occur as students struggle to overcome challenges
- Targeted support enables the ENs’ progression through the stages of the transition
- Enhancing an EN’s self-efficacy empowers them to build strong coping resources
- Successful transition is marked by ENs adopting the professional RN identity
Total number of identified articles and grey literature - 843

Number remaining after title/abstract review and removal of duplicates - 103

Number of articles meeting inclusion criteria for narrative literature review - 27

‘Reference chaining’ conducted - 6

Number of articles meeting inclusion criteria for narrative literature review - 33

Australia (n=13)  New Zealand (n=2)  United Kingdom (n=12)  United States (n=5)  Canada (n=1)
Preparing to Move In
- Determining personal goals related to their new career as an RN
- Developing expectations of the program
- Establishing balance between work, personal and expected study responsibilities

Preparing to Move Out
- Constructing the RN roles and establishing an RN identity
- Identifying with RN mentors
- Positively anticipating and planning for the future as a graduate RN

Moving In
- Meeting the demands of new learning approaches
- Managing the frustrations of revision
- Coping with being different and feeling excluded by non EN students
- Accessing University resources and academic support
- Seeking balance between personal, work and student life

Moving Through
- Overcoming setbacks and experiencing success
- Demonstrating a high degree of self-efficacy and self-belief
- Developing personal strategies and individual resources to achieve success
- Building relationships
- Maintaining support structures