

# Graduate study: challenges and strategies for personal success

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Running head: GRADUATE STUDY: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR PERSONAL SUCCESS Graduate Study: Challenges and Strategies for Personal Success fjazon HCS/504 October 24, 2011 Elwanda Whitaker Introduction Why go out of my comfort zone and take up graduate school, knowing the hardship and sacrifices that goes with it? This paper will attempt to answer this question by laying out the reasons and benefits of pursuing graduate studies. It will explore my goals, the challenges and the strategies that I will implore to attain these goals.

It will also touch some of the strengths, weaknesses, and the methods of improving my personal communications. Graduate Study: Challenges and Strategies for Personal Success According to Rovaris Sr. (2006),” Graduate school is fast becoming an entry-level requirement for many of the more desirable academic and other professional positions” (para 2). I noticed that health care facilities are hiring more entry level nurses who completed certain form of advanced studies. Nursing recruiters are constantly asking potential applicants if they have a masters degree.

Is this becoming the norm? Reasons for pursuing graduate school Working at the health care setting for almost two decades made me feel complacent and sometimes work seems so tedious and routine. Then one day, I noticed, some of the younger and newly hired nurses had completed certain advanced degrees in nursing. I said, “ Wow, I wanted to do that to. ” But the other side of my brain is saying, “ It has been twenty years since the last time you step inside an academic school, you have a full time job, three kids that needs constant guidance and you’re getting old. Are you sure you want

to do this? ” Listed below are the reasons I’m pursuing graduate school even with the dreaded thought of going back to school.

- Career advancement (something to brag about)
- I enjoy learning Advance my career without significantly disrupting my work and family commitments. I found that University of Phoenix has this online learning system designed for busy professionals. Because I’m relatively good at computers, I think I can do this.
- Better pay (now that is motivation)
- Today is the opportune time. According to Goldman (2009), president-elect Barack Obama has proposed massive effort to computerize health care by making health record standardized and electronic within five years (para 2).

This is an opportunity to contribute something that would be helpful in the advancement of health care. I will be taking up Master in Nursing Informatics. Long term goal My goal is to complete my graduate studies in approximately two years from now, which is October 2013. On this field, I will be able to use my skills and abilities to develop software program geared toward the improvement of patient delivery system. Short term goals These lists of short term goals will assist me in achieving my ultimate goal.

? I will dedicate at least two hours on the weekdays and at least eight hours on the weekend for study. ? I will work with my learning team through constant communication (reading and commenting on team post, asking/discussing team projects, filling out learning team charter and coordinating team projects). Steps in achieving my long term and short term goals To achieve my long term and short term goals, I need to break it down into small definable steps. These steps include: 1. At the beginning of each

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class, I will print the course syllabus making sure to take note on reading materials, assignments, and their corresponding due dates. 2.

I will also make a copy of my facilitator's policies. I will make sure that I understand and strive to conform with his or her instructions. 3. I will purchase a yearly and a monthly calendar and I would plot the important dates like examination, assignment, participation, and presentation due dates. 4. I would set up online discussion participation sessions around work and family commitments.

o During lunchtime at work, I will use my iPhone to access the main forum of my class to post comments/discussions that would count toward my participation. o At my children's swimming and string instrument practices, I will use this opportunity to work on my team projects and to communicate with them. At night time, around 9: 30 p. m. till 11: 30 p. m.

when everybody are asleep, I will use this as my course material reading time. Challenges This career endeavor is not going to be a walk in the park. It will entail hardships and lots of sacrifices. The demands that I would foresee are: 1) no time to study. I work 40-hour a week sometimes more because we are also required to take calls after work. 2) Family commitments are compromised.

My children go to swimming practices every afternoon, and they also goes to their string instrument practice every Saturday. ) Financial difficulties. This endeavor is definitely will cost money. Strategies to meet challenges

According to Kramer (2007), there are three solutions for success in meeting the challenges for graduate studies. 1) Choose the right school.

Choosing University of Phoenix, especially with their online learning system will definitely help me. 2) Time management. Having a yearly and monthly calendar with plotted due dates of important academic events, having a “to-do” list and using my iPhone application to remind me of upcoming due dates. 3) Stress management. I will be using some enjoyable activities like singing, jogging, meditation, and massages for relieving stress. In regard to financial difficulty, I will be seeking financial aid and grants from work and through federal loan.

Analysis of my personal communication strengths and weaknesses According to “Communication Quotes” (n. d. ), “Communication works for those who work at it” by John Powell (para 4). Communication is not innate in a person but rather learned throughout life. Likewise, I don’t consider myself an eloquent communicator but I do love to talk just to anybody on interesting topic.

I love to converse with people, especially when they have different views on a certain topic. I found it very educating and interesting at the same time. That is probably one of my strengths in personal communication. Talking in front of a large group of people or in a class is my Achilles heel.

I got so nervous, my palms sweaty whenever I present something in front of a group. Strategies for improving methods of communication According to Klein (2009), communication is not only about speaking, but to be an

effective in communication, one must be good at listening (para 3). She endorses these strategies to improve communication skills:

- Taking a breath before responding.
- o It is one way to show that you are internalizing what was said, and you are formulating some thoughts before answering.
- Listening with the intent of understanding.
- o Trying to put oneself to the other person's shoes.

- Summarize what the other person is saying would convey an attempt has made to listen.
- Asking questions.
- o This will convey your interest to the other person's point of view.

Conclusion Pursuing a graduate study has many benefits both professionally and personally. Achieving this, entails enormous hardships and sacrifices, but with proper time management, stress relieving activities, financial help and unwavering support coupled with the online learning system (OLS) format of University of Phoenix, anybody can do it.

Even an old man can! References Communication Quotes. (n. d. ). Retrieved from <http://www.essentiallifekills.net/communicationquotes.html>

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