Good morning. I’m Georgina Neville and I teach in the first year 1801 NRS Effective Communication course at Logan Campus. And I also teach in second semester second year clinical courses. I’m also a first year advisor at Logan Campus.

What I’d like to talk to you about today is just some of the things that I do in my practice. It’s not one strategy individually, it’s just a whole lot of different things. It’s worth noticing that the stats, when we look at our student demographic at Logan. And the stats I’m talking about today are specifically Logan, BN, Bachelor of Nursing students.

We have a cohort that has a 73% rate of students who are first in family. So that they’re the first people in their family to study at university or at tertiary level. It’s also worth noticing that 45% of our students are from lower SES backgrounds. In comparison to Nathan and Gold Coast in the same course, these stats are significantly lower.

Our students also report that they have the lowest self academic, academic self confidence. And that they’re least likely to ask for help when they need it. They also spend the greatest time, the greatest number of hours in paid employment and are least likely to feel confident about succeeding at university. So as you can see, this presents quite a significant challenge to us.

Another point worth noting at this point, is that personal difficulties are cited as being the number one reason for attrition at universities. Not just quality of teaching and workload and managing assessment items. It’s actually personal difficulties. So if we can address some of that, and make it a little bit easier for them, surely we can go a little bit of the way to retaining students.

We had an opportunity with the new curriculum coming in. 1801 is a new course, so we've been able to really look at the assessment items. And we did this with a learning advisor and a lot of assessment help. One of the things that we did, which I’ll draw your attention to, is the development of an on-line tutorial package that is comprised of five on-line tutorials the students need to do. It’s due early in semester, week four, and it’s worth 10 percent of the grade.

What does this do? It gives them the ability to achieve early in the semester, a little sweetener, if you like. Something that says hey, I can actually do this. But most importantly, it draws them to really important resources that they’re going to need across their program. Not just in our course, but across the program. So it’s made up of five on-line tutorials such as the academic integrity tutorial, library research tutorial, academic writing integrity, a library too and all that kind of thing. It can be submitted on-line, it’s
marked on-line. We can download the stats through Learning At Griffith and they’re
given really quick feedback.

I use this little success or sweetener as a motivator. Because that is one of the things that
I like to embody in my own teaching philosophy. A few of the other things we do are
common time program or orientation time program. So we have a really comprehensive
common time which runs for 10 weeks of the semester and we get everyone in there.
Anyone that can, that can be of assistance. So not just the academic staff. We also have
learning advisors, student welfare, student services and some rest and relaxation.

Some of the other things that we do is, I’ve been giving away text books as prizes.
Because this is a significant issue for our students. So whenever I can get my hands on
course related texts and hopefully mandatory books, I use those as my prizes. I also use
stethoscopes, nursing fob watches, all these kinds of things, to help them identify in the
role of being a nurse. And there’s a little sweetener again to come to common time.

We also have a two day orientation program. Whereas other programs in the BN just do
one day. So it’s the longest one. And this has elicited some really good results for us.

What I like to do in my classroom is some of these things, all of these things up here,
actually. I try to make sure my assessment is always valid, but authentic, as is my
content and delivery of content. I also ensure the course is well organised. My course, I
open on time, my assessment’s all up there. My marking criteria’s ready. Everything’s
ready to go, from week one. It’s organised, it’s constructed, it’s there. The students like
that.

Students are asked what they prefer to be called. Not just what their name is. I ask them
what would you like me to call you and I use that name regularly. I value add to their
learning at every opportunity. So if I can see them having a discussion about something I
do that. I model professional behaviour for them. In the way that I undertake, not only
nursing tasks, but also my teaching tasks.

I remind the students that time on task if the most specific predictor of success. And I
level the playing field at the beginning so it doesn’t matter where you’ve come from. I
don’t care, that’s okay. What is going to make a difference here for you is time on task.
And I think that’s really important to acknowledge, the fact that everybody has the same
chance of succeeding. And in my personal teaching philosophy, facilitation of success is
one of my factors, as is clinical relevance. I provide a lot of clinical relevant scenarios
and emotive experience. I like to make the students feel. If I can use gory pictures, as
long as it’s related, I do that. If I can tell them really gory stories I do that. Real life case
scenarios and funny, funny stories about the things I’ve done as a nurse or as a nursing
student.

I always ensure my feedback has specific directions of where to go next time. Not just
what you did wrong this time, how are you going to improve this next time? It’s very
goal orientated.
I also have a rapid e-mail response. I try to respond to student e-mails within 24 hours where possible. If not, 72. And I tell them that I will achieve that for them.

Impact and results. So far what we’ve elicited is that 61% of our students do feel valued this year in our program. Eighty three percent have felt that staff have made meaningful connections with them. Seventy four percent of them have stated that the assessment tasks have clear relevance and purpose. And 64% have stated that the orientation they received was adequate preparation for university. This is the highest across the BN program.

Also, they’ve reported some really good stats about our 1801 course has been the easiest to understand. And that they’ve thoroughly enjoyed. Thank you.

<ENDS>