

The profession of auxiliary nurse and the recognition of the gained work experience

Mrs GROFF and I represent the Nurse Training studies Institute, subservient to Strasbourg's public hospital.

Our Institute offers two routes of training :

- one leads to the National Diploma "Nurse"
- the other one leads to the Professional Diploma "Auxiliary Nurse" (called D.P.A.S. in France).

And this is the one which interests us today.

The Auxiliary nurse studies are ruled by legislation.

The decree of January 25th 2005 defines the profession and accurately describes the tasks that are to be done by an auxiliary : that is the "work reference book".

Definition of the profession :

The auxiliary nurse dispenses prevention, maintenance, relation and health educational cares, in order to prevent and restore the life's continuance, the well-being and the autonomy of the person.

These duties are done within the nurse's framework of whom the auxiliary is subservient to, and in the nurse's charge.

The training :

No previous diplomas are required to participate in the entrance examination, however we presently have 45 % of our 70 pupils who have passed their high school diploma.

The training period is 10 months (= 1435 hours)

→ 17 weeks (595 hours) : theory lessons and practical teaching at the Institute (divided in 8 sections)

→ 24 weeks (840 hours) : 6, 4 week practical training courses.

The main purpose of the contents of the course is to acquire skills.

The professional diploma of auxiliary nurse can be obtained in 3 ways :

The first one : by attending and achieving the whole training course

The second one : by attending and achieving one or several parts of the training (theory lessons and practical training course).

Indeed, some sections or practical training courses are not required for some diploma holders.

The last one is by recognition of the gained work experience (called V.A.E. in french).

The V.A.E.

The decree of January 25 th 2005 the VAE for the obtainment of auxiliary nurse diploma : that is the first medical section's diploma which is accessible by this way.

The applicants have to follow several stages :

- to bring in a first booklet (agreement booklet)
- if agreement : to follow a training section of 70 hours
- to bring in a second booklet (VAE booklet)
- then comes the panel decision :
 - validation of the 8 requirements – which means obtaining D.P.A.S.
 - validation of some requirements – which means complementary training or complementary professional experience

In association with the DAVA and the GRETA we mode up and applied a training project about the 70 hours obligatory training section.

This program began in the first half of year 2006.

Ten days of 7 hours each, all of them having a specific theme, were planned.

Each day is organised that way :

- theory lessons : about 1 hour
- Analysis of practical cases : about 2 hours
- Group work, criticising discussions with the help of theory knowledge : about 2 hours
- Personal writing and reading work under the instructor's supervision : about 2 hours.

(this time is used by a DAVA councillor for 2 days)

We wished a flexible organisation (no day's chronology) so a specific course with the alternation between training and individual accompaniment became possible.

The accompaniment is the task of the DAVA throughout the 70 hour's training.

The enrolement fee for the applicants is 800 euros per person for the 70 hours training, in 2006 and 2007.

39 applicants were trained in 2006

8 applicants were trained in 2007

The number of applicants has decreased in 2007 in most of Alsace region.

Applicant's balance – sheet :

The program we proposed gave satisfaction. The pupils felt fulfilled ; they felt able to criticise this own daily work ; they said having a better know ledge of this profession's requirements.

Results in Alsace :

Have been presented to the jury

. 60 candidates in 2006
7 obtained the diploma (D.P.A.S.)

. 70 candidates in 2007
11 obtained the diploma

The other candidates had a partial validation.

The section not obtained by most of the applicants is the number 3 called "the health cares"

Difficulties of the VAE course to get the D.P.A.S. :

- The responsibilities that the auxiliary nurse has to support in hospital area, creates the fear that without a complete training the candidate can be dangerous. The danger being the consequence of a professional experience only limited to old people's homes or convalescents. There is a lack of knowledge and experience related to medical and surgical cares which was confirmed by the juries.
- Nurses usually trust more the auxiliaries who have obtained their diploma after an official training course than the certificate obtained by the work experience's acquisitions.

Indeed very few or no element of the folder indicates the demanded skills.

- In case of partial validation, the additional training is hence individual.

Exemples : Module 3 = 5 weeks of theorie lessons
+
8 weeks of practical training course

Module 1 = 4 weeks of theorie lessons
+
4 weeks of practical training course

Many questions remain : how to finance the training ?

How to replace the absent student during the training ? What is the future in case of failure in examinations ?...