2018

Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing
Role Delineation Study Executive Summary

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The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) contracted with PSI Services LLC to perform the role delineation study (RDS) for the ANCC Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing examination in 2017. An RDS (sometimes referred to as a job analysis, practice analysis, or work analysis) is a scientific inquiry conducted to identify the tasks and work activities performed, the context in which those tasks and activities are carried out, and the competencies (knowledge areas, skills, and abilities) required to perform a job role successfully[1]. The RDS results become the basis of a variety of human resource management initiatives. For certification, the results are used to create a validated assessment of required job competencies. This report introduces the methods and results of the RDS for the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing certification examination.

Methods

ANCC assembled 10 clinicians certified in Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing to serve on the content expert panel (CEP) in fall 2017. The panel members feature a wide variety of work-related characteristics, such as years of experience, work setting, geographical location, and areas of expertise. This diversity helps develop a scope of practice reflective of the roles and responsibilities of the job and relatively free from bias.

The RDS process used in this study yields examination specifications that accurately reflect the scope of practice, allowing for the development of fair, accurate, and realistic assessments of candidates' readiness for certification. The process comprises three major activities, including:

1. ***Content Expert Panel (CEP) Meeting*** – A gathering of subject matter experts to discuss and develop a description of the scope of practice in terms of tasks, skills, and knowledge
2. ***RDS Survey*** – A large-scale survey of clinicians not involved with the CEP to validate the tasks, skills, and knowledge developed during the CEP meeting
3. ***Development of Examination Specifications*** – The development of the examination specifications by the CEP on the basis of the survey results

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[1] Sackett, P. R., & Laczo, R. M. (2003). Job and work analysis: Industrial and Organizational Psychology. In Borman, W. C., Ilgen, D. R. & Klimoski, R. J. (eds.), *Comprehensive Handbook of Psychology, Volume 12, Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.

The CEP meeting included a two-day, web-based meeting conducted Sept.13-14, 2017, and a three-hour follow-up meeting held by conference call on Nov. 30, 2017. The CEP discussed the scope of practice; developed a list of task, skill, and knowledge statements that reflect the job role; organized the statements into a domain and subdomain structure; reviewed rating scales to be used on the subsequent survey; and developed demographic questions for the survey. The current ANCC Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing test content outline, the *Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice (2014)*[2] *and Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice (2015)*[3] served as resources when developing the task, skill, and knowledge statements.

The RDS survey included the task, skill, and knowledge statements, as well as demographic questions developed by the CEP. ANCC programmed, administered, monitored, and analyzed the survey. Respondents provided ratings on the importance and frequency of each task and the importance of each skill and knowledge area.

A pilot test of the survey, conducted Dec. 8, 2017 to Jan. 2, 2018, included six psychiatric-mental health nurses who reviewed the survey for functionality and clarity. On a follow-up telephone call (conducted Jan. 5, 2018), the CEP discussed comments from the pilot survey but made no modifications to the survey.

The live survey was administered Jan. 9, 2018 to Feb. 26, 2018. The invitation was sent using online survey software to 2,100 individuals. All invitees were active ANCC certified psychiatric-mental health nurses. Of the 2,010 individuals who received the survey invitation, 251 (12.49%) completed the survey.

Examination specifications were developed during a two-day, in-person meeting on March 12-13, 2018. With PSI facilitating, the CEP reviewed the survey results; finalized the tasks, skills, and knowledge that would comprise the next examination content outline; conducted a linkage activity; and finalized the item allocations for the examination. For the linkage activity, the CEP identified links between the tasks and knowledge/skill statements to ensure that each task was covered by at least one relevant skill or knowledge area and that each skill and knowledge area had at least one associated relevant task. Linkages provide evidence that the knowledge and skills are applicable to the job. Item allocations were determined through content weighting (mean importance of the skill and knowledge statements) and CEP discussion of the results.

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[2] American Nurses Association, American Psychiatric Nurses Association, ISPN (2014). *Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 2nd Edition*. Silver Spring, MD: ANA.
[3] American Nurses Association (2015). *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*, 3rd Edition. Silver Spring, MD: ANA.

Results

The resultant examination specifications include 12 knowledge areas and 11 skills across the following four competency areas (content domain level):

1. Assessment and Diagnosis
2. Planning
3. Implementation
4. Evaluation

The mission of the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association (ANA), is to promote excellence in nursing and health care globally through credentialing programs. ANCC's internationally renowned credentialing programs certify and recognize individual nurses in various practice areas. It recognizes health care organizations that promote nursing excellence and quality patient outcomes, while providing safe, positive work environments. In addition, ANCC accredits health care organizations that provide and approve continuing nursing education. It also offers educational materials to support nurses and organizations as they work toward their credentials.

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