HESI Exit Exam helps predict student success on ARRT boards

Background: West Kentucky Community & Technical College in Paducah offers an Associate Degree in Applied Science Radiography, and in 2012 was named as one of 10 finalists for the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. Over the past five years, 80% to 85% of graduates of the Radiography program were employed 6 months after graduation.

Issue: For a number of years, HESI testing has been successfully used to prepare nursing students to for their board exam. In addition, performance on the HESI Exit Exam strongly correlates with performance on the board. To determine if HESI testing could achieve similar results in radiography education, Elsevier developed tests specific to radiography content. Radiography HESI tests contain questions that are based on the content outline for the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) exam.

To test the effectiveness of the exams and their correlation with passing the board, Elsevier developed a pilot study. The Radiography Program at West Kentucky Community & Technical College participated in the pilot study starting in 2010.

Approach: During the pilot study, students took HESI exams, and faculty reviewed the results. When testing identified weaknesses in particular concepts, faculty worked directly with individual students and encouraged them to complete remediation activities. Overall results assisted faculty with identifying potential gaps in the curriculum. Subsequently, each student’s performance on the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) exam was tracked.

Results: Results from the HESI Radiography Exit Exam correlated with results from the ARRT exam. Faculty in the Radiography Program at West Kentucky Community & Technical College believe that HESI testing helped prepare students for the exam.

Benefits: HESI testing helps prepare students for the board by providing a computerized test that is similar to the one that they will be taking. Success on the test builds their self-confidence, and test results identify areas where students may need more preparation. Test results can also be used to identify areas where the program may need to adjust content. The radiography faculty members find HESI exams easy to use, and test security is high. HESI testing complements their use of Pageburst eBooks, and the combination of the two contribute to student success as measured by passing the boards. Support from Elsevier has been excellent, with the company being highly responsive to questions.