Comparison of Theory-Practice Link in US and UK Student Nurses

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## Purpose
- The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate first year student nurses’ view of the influence Link Lecturers* at a university in England and academic professors at a southern university in the United States have on their theory-practice link. The study also investigated the Link Lecturers’ and academic professors’ perspectives of their influence on the theory-practice link with their students.

*Link Lecturers is the term given to nursing professors in England

## Objectives
- To attempt to capture participants’ (student nurses and professors) views of self, support, practice, and the theory-practice link
- To understand first year nursing students experiences of applying theory in practice settings
- To understand academic professors’ and link lecturers’ experiences of enabling student nurses to make the theory-practice link.

## Guiding Questions
- As a student nurse, what do you feel your Clinical Professor / Link Lecturer does with you in the practice setting?
- How do you see your role as a Clinical Professor / Link Lecturer with your student nurses in the practice setting?

## Results

### Findings of UK Student Nurses:
- Check progress and practice documentation
- Nothing-email and telephone conversation
- Who is my LL?

### Findings of USCA Student Nurses:
- Helps put pieces of puzzle together
- Helps with mounds of paperwork
- Learning may hands-on skills
- + influence on learning, support & encouragement when needed, increases my confidence

### Findings of Link Lecturers in the UK:
- Bridge between no influence/heavy theory and practice workload
- Problem-solver support help make links
- Findings of USCA Clinical Professors: connect the dots, encouragement, increasing knowledge base and critical thinking skills

### Findings of USCA Clinical Professors:
- Sponge-wear many hats
- Juggle many things
- Help them race
- TM against the clock
- + influence on learning, support & encouragement when needed, increases my confidence
- Help them connect dots/help lightbulb go off in their heads/encourage

## Implications for Practice
- Ensuring all faculty (FT & PT) receive comprehensive orientation to course, including course objectives and clinical expectations
- Ensuring faculty teaching first semester students are aware of the students’ anxiety and take the opportunity to introduce them to nursing in a supporting, appropriately challenging, and positive way
- Face-to-face support, encouragement, and role modeling are as important as the actual teaching of theory and demonstration of skills. This is what student nurses, Clinical Professors, and Link Lecturers feel will “connect the dots” (i.e. theory and practice connection)

## References