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 of Link Lecturers* at a university in England and academic professors at a southern university in the United States 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

Who is my LL?

Nothing-email and telephone conversation

Findings of USCA Student Nurses:

Helps put pieces of puzzle together

Helps with mounds of paperwork

Learning may hands-on skills

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

Learning may hands-on skills

Findings of Link Lecturers in the UK:

Bridge between no influence/heavy theory and practice workload

Problem-solver support

help make links

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


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