

Title:

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

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Session Title:

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practice, qualitative and theory

References:

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Abstract Summary:

A collaborative, qualitative research project was undertaken between the University of South Carolina Aiken, USA and University of Hertfordshire, UK to explore, compare and evaluate the influence of Academic Professors/ Link Lecturers* in enabling 1st year student nurses to make the connection between theory and practice.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
1. Compare the perceptions of nursing students in the US and UK related to the link faculty help them make between theory and practice.	Among the common emerging themes from the academics were connecting the dots, encouragement, increasing knowledge and critical thinking.
2. Compare the perceptions of nursing faculty in the US and UK related to how they believe they help students make the theory to practice link.	Among the common emerging themes from the students were support and encouragement, increasing confidence and decreasing anxiety, challenging and positive influence on learning, building knowledge and critical thinking

Abstract Text:

Nurse education in Higher Education aims to prepare student nurses to develop their abilities to integrate theory taught within the classroom into their clinical or practice placement. A collaborative, qualitative research project was undertaken between the University of South Carolina Aiken, USA and University of Hertfordshire, UK to explore, compare and evaluate the influence of Academic Professors/Link Lecturers* in enabling 1st year student nurses to make the connection between theory and practice. The study was informed by current literature on theory-practice, Academic Professors/ Link Lecturers and student nurses' experiences and perspectives.

(*faculty in the US are called academic professors, and faculty in UK are called Link Lecturers.)

Interpretive hermeneutic phenomenology and the ethnographic principle of cultural interpretation was used to explore the views of student nurses and academic nursing professors at USC Aiken and student nurses and link lecturers in the University of Hertfordshire. They were recruited via convenience sampling methods to enable data saturation. Semi-structured interviews using the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) were conducted with student nurses and academics. ZMET is an eleven-step in-depth interview technique that elicits both conscious and unconscious thoughts by exploring metaphoric expressions. It enables the participants to define, describe and evaluate their experiences. Data was analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Emerging themes from students and faculty were identified from both universities and compared for similarities and differences.

Among the common emerging themes from the academics were connecting the dots, encouragement, increasing knowledge and critical thinking. Among the common emerging themes from the students were support and encouragement, increasing confidence and decreasing anxiety, challenging and positive influence on learning, building knowledge and critical thinking.

Results from this study indicate that first year nursing students have a lot of excitement about beginning their career, but along with that comes anxiety and fear of the unknown. Faculty support, encouragement and role modeling are as important as the actual teaching of theory and demonstration of skills. It helps pull it all together for students.