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## 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.



## METHODOLOGY

- Interpretive hermeneutic phenomenology was used to explore the views of the nursing students and the nursing faculty who 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. Numerous themes emerged from all four of the groups of participants.

## 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:



Who is my LL?

- Check progress and practice documentation



- 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



- + influence on learning, support & encouragement when needed, increases my confidence

## RESULTS

### Findings of Link Lecturers in the UK:



- Bridge between theory and practice
- no influence/heavy workload



- Problem-solver
- support



help make links

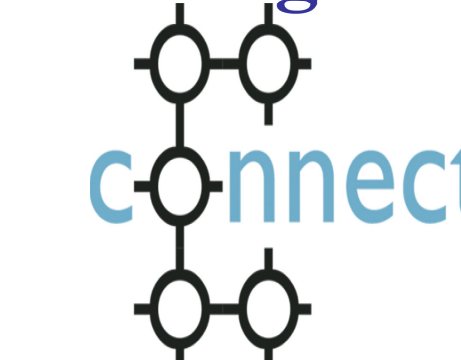
- Findings of USCA Clinical Professors: connect the dots, encouragement, increasing knowledge base and critical thinking skills



- Juggle many things
- wear many hats



- Help them race TM against the clock
- take advantage of



- 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)

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