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Clinical liaison nurse model in a community hospital: A unique academic-practice partnership that strengthens clinical nursing education

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Abstract

The necessity to help baccalaureate nursing students' transition to clinical practice in a health care environment governed by change has compelled nurse educators to investigate alternative clinical instruction models that nurture academic-practice partnerships and facilitate student clinical learning. The purpose of this paper is twofold: 1) to describe an academic-practice partnership in a community hospital utilizing Clinical Liaison Nurses (CLNs) as a link between students and clinical faculty; 2) to provide results of a quasi-experimental study that compared perceptions of the clinical learning environment between students participating in the CLN model (experimental) and those in a traditional instructor led clinical model (control). Students assigned to the CLN model had statistically significantly higher individualization (p = .03), satisfaction (p = .001), and task orientation (p < .001) scores on the Clinical Learning Environment Inventory than those in a traditional instructor led model. The item that showed the greatest difference between the groups was, "clinical placement is disorganized" with the control group having a higher mean score (p< .001). The findings provide evidence that academic-practice partnerships can be successfully implemented in community hospital settings and improve students' perceptions of the clinical learning environment.

Biography

Catherine P. Lovecchio is an Assistant Nursing Professor at the University of Scranton in Scranton, Pennsylvania. She has conducted transformational service learning trips to Appalachia, Los Angeles and Uganda. She coordinates the Nursing Service Trips for the Nursing Department. Catherine teaches medical-surgical nursing, advanced clinical concepts and leadership and management for senior level nursing students. Her research interests are in the area of transformational learning experiences for students in the clinical setting and through service trips.

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