**Objective:** To understand first year nursing students’ view of the theory-practice link.

**Link Lecturers:** The term given to nursing professors in England.

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**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.

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**INTERPRETIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

- **Findings of UK Student Nurses:**
  - 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

- **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

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**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?

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

- + help them race TM against the clock

- TM against the clock

- + help them connect dots/help lightbulb go off in their heads/encourage

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**REFERENCES**


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**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).