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Improving teaching integration between academic and nursing practice: The roles of clinical educators

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The integration between didactic teaching and clinical practice is an important task in nursing profession. It is expected that nursing students would be prepared as a clinical nurse upon their graduation from a nursing program. The challenge for nursing faculty is to bridge the classroom teaching and clinical works. This paper is to present a model of using clinical educators for the integration teaching and learning among nursing students. Nursing students often faced problems with practical performance when taking their practicum in a hospital setting. They have learned didactic courses in classroom teaching. To integrate their knowledge at clinical setting, students may often need help by staff nurses. However, not all staff nurse learnt how to teach novice students. The roles of clinical educator were created and implemented to help students to learn. A series of training program was designed and implemented upon the development of the roles of clinical educators. Staff nurses who are interested in clinical teaching were recruited to the training program. The program included knowing the students characteristics, how to guide college students in clinical setting, assignments, communication, and evaluation. The program lasts for two years. Meanwhile, a mentor with didactic and clinical teaching experience guided the trainee through the training courses. Evaluations were done by multi-perspective, from students, coworkers, and the administrators. The results indicated that the roles of clinical instructors would facilitate the integration between academic and clinical for nursing students.

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