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Utilizing educational theory and evidence in support of an unconventional mental health professional placement experience for student nurses.

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Abstract-

Professional placement, also known as workplace experience, clinical placement, professional experience and work integrated learning, is an essential component of all nursing education. The importance of the professional placement experience is undisputed as a key to professional competence and confidence, yet quality placements are in high demand, and indeed some placements have negative impacts on student learning. To that end, Bjørk et al (2014) suggest that most studies exploring the quality of clinical placements have only really targeted students' experience in traditional hospital settings and there are no professional placement experiences that have longitudinal, empirical data that measures placement efficacy from multiple perspectives. In addition, no research could be found that embeds an educational pedagogical framework. This paper describes how an unconventional clinical placement has utilized educational theory to examine its efficacy. The paper will illustrate how research can provide evidence about a clinical placement in terms of clinical confidence, competence and attitudes.