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Nursing Education: Supporting a Clinical Instructor is the Foundation of Clinical Experiences

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To ensure the best possible clinical experiences for nursing students, the clinical instructor (CI) must be well prepared. A literature search was performed, university clinical coordinators across the Midwest were consulted and students were surveyed to determine the best preparation needed. Clinical Instructor preparation needs to include three areas: university support of the CI, CI support of the students and CI partnership with the facility. University support of the CI is found in the college of nursing's teaching philosophy and objectives. The principles of adult learning need to be applied to clinical interactions between student and CI. Support from faculty and clinical coordinators is paramount and must be available in real time. Support of the student requires the CI to be a role model and to establish professional relationships with individual students in the facility. CI partnership with the facility requires proficiency in related clinical skills, advocacy for the students and professional relationships with the nurse manager. Full support of the clinical instructor throughout the semester is the foundation for the best student clinical experiences.

Biography:

Cynthia Felton is from MSN – Indiana University, BSN – Valparaíso University. After becoming clinically competent in critical care nursing, she started teaching critical care concepts as a hospital educator in an Associated Degree program and then as a clinical instructor at Valparaíso University. In 2006, she established the clinical coordinator role and have since developed an education model for our Clinical Instructors.