

Coaching CNL Students to Certification Success: Reaching a 97.5% Exam Pass Rate

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Traditionally, the Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) Certification exam has lower pass rates than other graduate nursing level certification exams. The National pass rate for the CNL exam began at 68% in 2010 with a current average rate of 70% from 2010-2015. The highest rate experienced within this time was in 2014 when the rate reached 75%. The pass rates up until 2015 for ANCC certification exams such as the Nurse Practitioner, Clinical Nurse Specialist and Advanced Nurse Executive all averaged at 79% or higher. A Practice Partner CNL Coordinator began individual and group coaching sessions for students in preparation for the exam. The sessions include open question and answer sessions, power-point instruction and practice quiz sessions to help students prepare for the exam. At the 2016 Fall CNLA Conference, the CNL Coordinator and faculty hosted the conference's first two-day CNL Certification review course for 30 attendees. Handouts and resources were provided to registered attendees. Feedback received from the review course attendees was overwhelmingly positive. Biannual CNL classes are also held for students to learn from presenters that impact clinical care. Speakers include the CNE, AVP of the CNL program, CMO, CNL Coordinator and the Academic Partner's CNL Coordinator, a patient experience representative, coordinator of the OT and PT department, and a panel of CNL's provides education on the vision of the local and national CNL role. Students are also offered a shadowing experience to provide witness of the role at the bedside. The current pass rate for the local cohorts is 97.5%, which is remarkably higher than the national exam pass rate. Future plans for this group includes providing the review course to other schools and at the annual Fall CNLA Conference. These initiatives taken have proven to be successful in preparing CNL students for the CNL certification exam.