

# Linking University and Community: An Innovative Teaching Approach to Transform Learning in Community Health Nursing

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## Abstract

Community health nursing plays a key role in health promotion and disease prevention; however, it is often perceived by undergraduate nursing students as less attractive than other clinical fields. This teaching innovation project aimed to bridge the gap between university education and real community nursing practice through an active, immersive, and experiencebased learning model. The project was implemented within the Nursing Degree at the University of La Rioja and combined project-based learning and service-learning approaches, simulated community clinical scenarios, mentoring by practicing community nurses, and patient narratives. A transversal emphasis was placed on health promotion from a holistic and psychosocial perspective, integrating psychological understanding of health-related behaviors. Activities were organized into progressive learning stages addressing community orientation, group health education, community action, and professional specialization. The project received very positive feedback from students, who reported increased motivation, engagement, and a more realistic and meaningful understanding of the role of community nurses. Evaluation tools included rubrics, learning portfolios, and satisfaction questionnaires, which indicated improvements in competency acquisition and vocational interest in community health nursing. The results suggest that experiential and community-linked teaching strategies enhance learning quality, strengthen university–community partnerships, and contribute to the development of transferable competencies relevant to professional practice. This model offers a replicable framework for innovation in undergraduate health education.

**Keywords:** community health nursing; experiential learning; health promotion; higher education; teaching innovation.