Enhancing Preceptor and Student Experience

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Disclosure

- I have no financial interest or other relationships with any commercial product
- No specific commercial products are discussed during this presentation
Objectives

- Describe challenges in providing a meaningful and reciprocally beneficial student-preceptor clinical experience
- Identify strategies to optimize the clinical experience of nursing students at all educational levels
- List potential organizational approaches that can be taken to recognize and reward clinical preceptors
Being a new nurse or student . . .

Think back to some of your experiences as a student nurse or new nurse graduate. What comes to mind?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qeo3UmfCPuk
Visual images
Visual images
Preceptor

- Definition: “An experienced practitioner who teaches, instructs, supervises, and serves as a role model for student or graduate nurse, for a set period of time, in a formalized program” (Usher, Nolan, Reser, Owens & Tollefson, 1999, p. 507)

- A nurse who provides valuable teaching and learning experiences and who role models safe patient care using evidence-based practice. A preceptor is much more than a teacher or mentor. A preceptor provides new nurses or students with a toolbox of resources and guides new nurses in adapting to the unit culture (Dusaj, 2014)
Significance of Preceptor

- Are often the most significant link in the orientation of new nurses (Speers et al., 2004)
- Play a dual role as both educator and practitioner for student nurses (Younge et al., 2008)
- Build the bridge that takes new graduates from the educational environment to the clinical workforce (Dziedzic, 2010)
- First role model that new nurses see (Hautala et al., 2007)
This study was undertaken to examine whether staff nurses experience stress when they are precepting, and the sources of the stress. Another purpose was to describe preceptors’ perceptions of support from others, such as coworkers and managers. A convenience sample of 65 registered nurse preceptors completed an investigator-developed questionnaire asking for their views on stress and support in the preceptor role. Most respondents (89%) reported that precepting is stressful to some degree, with the most common reasons being workload, skill level of the preceptee, organizational support, and preceptor confidence. Despite the high levels of stress reported, most subjects described adequate support as preceptors from coworkers and managers. Preceptors are critical for the training and retention of new nurses. It is important that stressors related to precepting be acknowledged and strategies be employed to reduce stress. Recommendations for support and strategies are included.
Preceptor stressors

- Insufficient time to complete one’s assignment successfully
- Dual assignments, sometimes with a larger patient load
- Lack of support and/or guidance from management / administration
- No formalized preceptor program
Preceptor stressors

- Attitude that the new nurse or student is a ‘hidden worker’
- Students who aren’t prepared or motivated to work on assigned unit
- Lack of formal recognition or acknowledgement of the preceptor's value
- Preceptor confidence
Burnout
Optimizing clinical experiences: Retaining preceptors

- Create a structured orientation and preceptor program
- Resist the urge to give the precept-student an increased patient assignment
- Collaborate with colleges and universities to provide classes for preceptors
Optimizing clinical experiences: Retaining preceptors

- Work with education department and universities/colleges to assure suitability of students for a particular placement
- Ensure sufficient feedback and guidance from nursing faculty
- Provide written guidelines of student, preceptor, and faculty expectations
Preceptor, Faculty, and Student Orientation materials for graduate clinical practicums

Role of the Faculty:

a. Assist student with identification of learning outcomes for the course
b. Provide preceptor with appropriate course materials
c. Provide preceptor with information and expectations for student performance
d. Facilitate student orientation with the agency
e. Initiate interactions with preceptors regarding student progress in practicum
f. Monitor student progress in achieving learning outcomes and providing ongoing feedback
g. Evaluate student’s achievement and progress in relation to practicum learning outcomes with input from the preceptor, student journal, and clinical log (if applicable)
h. Make at least one contact to each preceptor/student pair during the practicum. Contact may include but it not limited to telephone consultation, in-person, or technology-supported site visits
i. Identify and evaluate practicum sites for appropriateness of learning experiences

Role of the Preceptor:

a. Complete all required documents related to the preceptorship including preceptor fillable PDF with license number, experience, etc.
b. Orient student to the practicum setting, organizational policies, and key personnel
c. Discuss learning needs related to learning outcomes of the course with faculty and student
d. Provide teaching and supervision during the practicum for the student
e. Serve as a role model and guide
f. Assist student in professional development with opportunities to assume an expanded nursing role
g. Demonstrate collaboration in the practicum setting
h. Provide feedback to the student throughout the practicum regarding the student’s performance
i. Provide student the opportunity to integrate evidence-based practice in the practicum experience
j. Complete student evaluation form and submit at mid-semester and at end of semester

Role of the Graduate Student:

a. Provide preceptor with the evaluation form at the beginning of the rotation
b. Clearly identify learning needs and outcomes with faculty and preceptor
c. Maintain professional appearance and behavior throughout practicum experience
d. Establish mutually agreeable schedule for the practicum time with the preceptor
e. Arrive at practicum prepared to perform in accordance with the assigned course learning outcomes
f. Follow all policies and procedures established at the practicum site and the College of Nursing Student Handbook
g. Keep the preceptor informed about learning activities
h. Ask assistance with new or unfamiliar procedures / learning activities
i. Communicate appropriate learning experiences with faculty and preceptor on a regular basis
j. Seek feedback regarding practicum progression
k. Maintain accurate records of practicum time and experiences
l. Complete the clinical log and/or student journal at designated intervals.
Optimizing clinical experiences: Retaining preceptors

Consider best practices for preceptor education:

1. Situated learning
2. Reflection on action
3. Outcomes measurement

(Lim, F., Weiss, K. A., & Herrera-Capoziello, I. 2016)
Optimizing clinical experiences for students

- Team leader who is enthusiastic about students
- Welcoming, democratic team which encourages questions
- Safe environment
- Learning resources readily available
Optimizing clinical experiences for students

- Close clinical supervision
- Learning needs of the student are identified and regularly reviewed
- Feedback is frequent and assessment is ongoing
- Student feedback is collected and acted upon
Optimizing clinical experiences for students

- Students are given time to reflect
- Students made to feel a part of the team – respected
- Students are given responsibility
- Consistency
Effective preceptor:

- Listens to the student
- Identifies placement-specific outcomes and the student’s individual learning goals
- Encourages students to self-assess
- Asks students to analyze their own performance
- Provides support and reassurance
Effective preceptor:

- Meets with the student regularly (summative and formative evaluation)
- Provides feedback that is:
  - Timely
  - Thorough
  - Clear and specific
  - Open, honest, and objective
  - Balanced
What does a bad preceptor look like?

- Put students in difficult unsupervised positions
- Don’t facilitate learning experiences
- Take no responsibility for student learning
- Unfamiliar with student’s goals, paperwork, or course expectations
- Reluctant to embrace change
What does a bad preceptor look like?

- Display unprofessional behavior, such as gossiping, eye-rolling, or sarcasm
- Are not aware of the evidence behind their own practice
- Does not work well with interprofessional team or other units
10 Golden Rules for Preceptors:

1. Thou shalt be approachable
2. Thou shalt be patient and encouraging
3. Thou shalt use ‘what if’ questions to encourage critical thinking in students
4. Thou shalt provide a good clinical learning environment for students and new nurses
10 Golden Rules for Preceptors:

5. Thou shalt listen to understand
6. Thou shalt provide timely and constructive feedback
7. Thou shalt be supportive and non-judgmental
8. Thou shalt identify the student’s learning needs and clinical objectives
10 Golden Rules for Preceptors:

9. Thou shalt huddle with the student frequently throughout the shift to review plan of care and appraise student’s progress

10. Thou shalt inspire life-long learning by using evidence based guidelines and reputable sources
Organizational approaches to recognize & reward preceptors

- Offer tuition support for preceptors seeking advanced degrees
- Show appreciation for preceptors by offering them free lunches, parking, snacks, small gifts, etc.
- Honor the preceptors by holding ceremonies or other formal means to acknowledge their efforts
Organizational approaches to recognize & reward preceptors

- Rotate the preceptor role among nurses on the unit
- Implement pay adjustment or other compensation for serving as a preceptor (differential / bonus)
- Provide access to professional development programs, conferences, continuing education opportunities
Organizational approaches to recognize & reward preceptors

- Consider career advancement (clinical ladders component)
- Offer preceptor support groups / luncheons to providing ongoing leadership development and preceptor training
- Provide frequent and sincere recognition and thanks
THANK

https://cloud.collegeofnursing.org:5001/sharing/PcQNwgMJp