

Preceptor News

Written by Kristine L'Ecuyer, Ph.D., R.N., CNL, Saint Louis University

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Preceptor Competency

The competencies described in each theme are listed below.

KNOWLEDGE

- expertise and knowledge*
- learning styles
- personality issues
- role preparation
- emotional intelligence

SKILLS

- communication*
- flexibility*
- feedback/evaluation*
- interpersonal skills
- organization
- role model
- open to improving skills
- critical thinking
- setting goals
- protector and safety

ATTITUDES

- patience*
- desire to be a preceptor
- understanding
- approachable
- kindness
- confidence
- trustworthy
- positive attitude

OTHER

- feeling supported
- having enough time

*top five competencies

Reference:

L'Ecuyer, K., Hyde, M. & Shatto, B. (2018). Preceptors' perception of role competency. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 49(5), 233-240.

Missouri Preceptors in the literature

Preceptors who attended the Missouri Hospital Association preceptor academy between 2008 and 2016 were asked the following question on their end-of-course evaluation: "In your opinion, what are the most critical skills necessary to ensure preceptor competency?"

A descriptive qualitative design with content analysis was used to study the data. A research team reviewed all 553 responses and divided them into 1,050 discrete statements of competency. Data was coded, and frequency of remarks was tabulated. Themes were created as groups, or categories of competencies emerged. Findings from this study have recently been published (L'Ecuyer, Hyde, Shatto, 2018).

Most responses were attributed to three categories: knowledge (26.3 percent), skills (45 percent) and attitudes (23 percent). Please see the article for a full description of the findings and distributions.

Definitions

The following definitions were used:

Knowledge: The cognitive process of what preceptors know.

Skills: The psychomotor process of what preceptors do.

Attitude: The interpersonal process of how preceptors behave.

Not all codes fit into the knowledge/skills/attitude schema. For example, 16 comments related to 'feeling supported' in terms of having adequate resources, and eight preceptors talked about having enough time to spend on precepting duties. These comments may have meaning for those managing or in charge of preceptor programs.

Implications

The findings from this study highlight the competencies that preceptors themselves deem significant to ensure preceptor competency. Analysis of these findings revealed that the top five competencies were: communication, expertise, patience, flexibility and feedback. These competencies contributed to 50 percent of all responses. Preceptors must continue to strive for competence in these areas and seek continuing education opportunities as needed to strengthen these attributes. Clinical educators and managers share responsibility to develop and provide preceptors with the needed support. Further research and discernment are required to better understand how these competencies can be nurtured in preceptors.

Thank you Missouri Preceptors for contributing to this research!