Stressors and Satisfactions in the Clinical Preceptor Role

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The Purpose of the Clinical Preceptor

• Clinical preceptors are the educators needed for students to fulfill the required clinical practice hours in NP education.

• Recognition that clinical precepting fosters not only skill mastery, but models positive role concept, socialization of the role and autonomy of the N.P., the challenges of the role must be identified and supported by academic faculty.

• Heightened awareness of the clinical preceptor-student- faculty relationship can help integrate classroom content with evidence based clinical problem-solving skills.
Demographics of Sample

• Age: 36 – 72 years  (mean: 53.3 years)

• Highest Degree Attained: DNP: 2
  Post Master: 1
  MSN: 13 (3 in doctoral programs)

• Credentialed Specialty: Geriatric: 2
  Adult: 4
  Family: 6
  Pediatric: 3
  Acute Care: 1
Demographics

• Years of practice: range: 3-33 years
  mean: 20.1 years

• Years as a Clinical Preceptor: range: 1-26 years
  mean: 9.8 years

• Academic programs precepted: DNP: 1
  Post Master: 1
  MSN: 16
  Non traditional RN-APRN: 8
What Were They Asked?

• What has been your experience as a clinical preceptor for Nurse Practitioner students?

• What has influenced your experience, both positively and negatively, as a clinical preceptor for nurse practitioner students?

• What newly emerging clinical factors impact your ability to precept in the clinical environment?
Data Collection

Setting:
• a location mutually agreed upon by the participant and the researcher.
• Ability to freely speak undisturbed and without fear of retribution.

Collection:
• Securement of a consent form
• Demographic Profile Sheet
• Confidential, individual audio recorded interviews, conducted only by the researcher, which used three research questions designed to explore the lived experiences of the preceptor role; and relevant follow up questions per individual interview.
Themes

I. The Decision to Become a Clinical Preceptor

II. Communication Between the Clinical Preceptor and Academic Nursing Faculty

III. Extraneous Factors Impacting the Role of Clinical Preceptor

IV. Stressors Impacting the Clinical Preceptor Role

V. Personal and Professional Gain from Clinical Precepting

VI. Acknowledgement for Clinical Precepting
I. Decision to Become a Clinical Preceptor

• Strong responsibility of giving back to the profession, specifically the N.P. role.

• Appreciation of the N.P. role, and the desire to share this.

• The ability to model the specific nature of a specialty practice.

• Their own experiences of having excellent preceptors.
II. Communication Between the Clinical Preceptor and Academic Nursing Faculty

• Imperative to the preceptor role.

• Site visits not being implemented by academic faculty, yet viewed as very important by the preceptor.

• The importance of monitoring the progress of the student as the major rationale for ongoing communication.
III. Extraneous Factors Impacting the Role

• Electronic Medical Records

• Time Allotment

• Coding and Billing
IV. Stressors Impacting the Clinical Preceptor Role

• Negative student behaviors and attitudes.

• Failing a student.

• Loss of productivity and increased workload.
V. Personal and Professional Satisfaction From Clinical Precepting

- Intrinsic satisfaction of self as a nurse practitioner.
- Infusion of enthusiasm and excitement into the practice.
- Opportunity of self reflection of practice.
- Student infusion of current knowledge into the preceptor’s frame of reference.
- Credentialing credit for continuing certification.
VI. Acknowledgement for Clinical Precepting

• From Student to Preceptor

• Academic faculty and university acknowledgement.

• Suggested acknowledgements by the clinical preceptors.
What Did the Preceptors Teach Us?

• Teaching the skill of making sound clinical decisions based on theory, as knowledge and understanding evolve, is the primary task that challenges the clinical preceptor.

• The role is perceived as very rewarding, yet challenging, as it contains both satisfactions and stressors.

• The expressed desire to continue the profession with the modelling of N.P.s as clinical preceptors leads to the desired outcome of autonomy and integration of the role into medical society.
...and also

• Most N.P.s hold the belief their clinical practice is a valuable teaching experience, and they can impart the needed respect and compassion to their specific population.

• Communication between academic and clinical faculty must be strengthened through the sharing of information and expertise specific to both roles.
They strongly stated……..

• Formal guidance and education of the preceptor role should be provided by the supporting department/school of nursing.

• Negative student behaviors influence the preceptor role and more support by academic faculty is needed to handle such behaviors.

• Having to fail a student impacted the clinical preceptor, with faculty support reported as necessary but variable. Support with this experience impacted the decision to continue precepting with the particular program.
Surprised us with......

• The non-traditional N.P. student presents specific challenges. The motivation and intelligence was not problematic, it was the lack of professional intuition needed to master diagnostic tasks at the advanced level that was difficult in the clinical setting.

• Extraneous factors (i.e. EMR, time allotment and coding and billing) do impact the precepting experience, but are handled per preceptor.
And concluded that........

• Personal and professional gains are experienced by clinical preceptors and encompass both intrinsic and objective gains for themselves and their clinical practice.

• Acknowledgement for the preceptor role came from students and academic faculty, primarily consisting of thank you notes and small gifts. These acknowledgements were sporadic and never anticipated.

• Monetary acknowledgement was not expected, suggestions consisted of auditing courses, university privileges and joint appointments as a clinical faculty member.
How Academic Faculty Can Support This Role

• Academic faculty must increase their understanding of the challenges of the preceptor role along with their awareness of the clinical sites their students are being educated in.

• In order to develop the preceptor role for future N.P.s, the desire to become a preceptor must be cultivated. Through exploration of how satisfaction in the preceptor role can be maintained, implications for positive continuation of the role is increased.
Realize that clinical preceptors want to be recognized as the integral component they are to the universities and colleges they support.

They want to feel included in decision making regarding the students they precept and be a member of the team that is educating them.

They want to be recognized, in some way, by the school of nursing or the department faculty as a professional engaged in the role of clinical preceptor.
Going Forward Together

This research study was conducted with the hope that it will be of value to academic nursing faculty and clinical preceptors, who through the sharing of their expertise, are motivated to develop and support the future of the profession through the students they teach.

It is only through the sharing of knowledge that we truly demonstrate that we are professionally vested in the future and support the purpose of advanced practice nursing.