

# The Impact of Preceptor Training on Nursing Students

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## Opinion

In nursing education, preceptorship serves as a vital link between classroom instruction and hands-on clinical experience. A preceptor, an experienced registered nurse, guides, mentors, and supports nursing students during clinical rotations. Their influence spans clinical competency, professional socialization, confidence building, role-modeling, and preparedness for practice. This paper discusses the multifaceted impact of preceptorship on nursing students' learning in the clinical setting.

### Knowledge, skills, and clinical teaching behavior

Preceptors play a vital role and contribute significantly to the development of students' clinical skills and judgment. Evidence shows that training designed specifically for preceptors strengthens their teaching behaviors and effectiveness, particularly when interactive strategies such as role-play are used. For example, Hong [1] found that trained preceptors demonstrate improved abilities in supporting student learning and facilitating interprofessional communication.

The broader use of structured preceptorship models has also been recognized to enhance student learning. These models encourage the application of classroom knowledge in clinical contexts, support professional growth, and build confidence. They also ease the transition from student to practicing nurse, ensuring that learners are better prepared for the realities of professional nursing [2].

### Professional socialization and confidence

Professional identity and confidence are nurtured through preceptorship. Through role modeling and reflection, preceptors help students assimilate into the nursing profession. Peer learning approaches, where students work and reflect together under preceptor facilitation, foster independence, critical thinking, and communicative skills [1]. This dual focus on mentorship and peer collaboration builds both confidence and competence in clinical environments.

### Preparedness for practice & transition

One of the most important outcomes of preceptorship is the reduction of "reality shock" as students enter the workforce. By gradually assuming responsibility under the guidance of a preceptor, students gain confidence in their abilities and develop readiness for independent practice. Studies link preceptorship with greater student satisfaction, a sense of accountability and smoother entry into the nursing profession [2]. In addition, Mashayekh [3] report that structured preceptor training improves nurses' willingness and confidence in supervising students, ultimately strengthening the student transition to practice.

## Preceptor development and support

Effective preceptorship depends on proper support and preparation for preceptors. Development programs significantly improve preceptors' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and confidence [4]. Comprehensive reviews also indicate that preceptor development boosts their ability to facilitate students' cognitive, psychomotor and affective competencies [5]. However, gaps in support and recognition can undermine quality of preceptorship. A 2024 study highlighted how lack of preparation and institutional support adversely affects preceptors' wellbeing and effectiveness, ultimately impacting students' learning [6].

## Training needs for preceptors

Although preceptors are highly skilled clinicians, many report feeling underprepared for the teaching role. The dual responsibilities of patient care and student supervision require specialized training in educational strategies, evaluation, and feedback delivery. Warren [7] literature review on preceptor orientation concluded that such programs should address teaching strategies, evaluation, and conflict management skills, although these are often insufficiently included in such programs. Ongoing refresher courses and institutional recognition further enhance preceptor confidence and reduce stress. When training and support are prioritized, preceptors are more effective, which directly improves student learning outcomes and satisfaction [6].

## Challenges and considerations

While peer learning can enhance confidence and independence, it requires careful planning and adequate support. Preceptors may feel inadequate in facilitating student learning without support from colleagues and institutional backing [8]. Further, the shortage of qualified preceptors, heavy workloads, and lack of incentives pose persistent challenges. Many preceptors take on the role out of dedication, often without additional compensation or recognition.

## Conclusion

Preceptors significantly influence nursing students' development by enhancing clinical skills, professional identity, confidence, and readiness for practice. These benefits are amplified when preceptors receive structured training and institutional support. To sustain these positive outcomes, nursing programs must invest in preceptor development, provide resources, and recognize preceptor contributions, ensuring effective mentorship and preparation of future nurses.

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