

Guide to Being an Effective Preceptor

Nutrition and Dietetic Educators and Preceptors Professional Development Committee

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Webinar Objectives

- Differentiate effective versus ineffective preceptors.
- Identify characteristics of effective preceptors.
- Demonstrate how to be an effective preceptor and mentor.

Differentiate Effective versus Ineffective Preceptors

Effective vs. Ineffective Preceptors

EFFECTIVE PRECEPTORS

- Provide appropriate feedback for students' improvement.
- Make dietetic practice a fulfilling experience.

INEFFECTIVE PRECEPTORS

- Lack skills in providing feedback; judgmental
- Demonstrate a negative attitude toward students and their career

Sarcona, Burrowes, and Fornari (2015), *Journal of Allied Health*

Identify Characteristics of Effective Preceptors

Characteristics of an Effective Preceptor

Survey of 351 Dietetic Interns

Has sufficient professional knowledge

Is a skillful dietitian/practitioner

Patient; treats students sincerely and objectively, and with respect


Encourages student to think and learn independently

Sarcona, Burrowes, and Fornari (2015), *Journal of Allied Health*

Characteristics of an Effective Preceptor

Poll of dietetic interns (n = 16)


Knowledgeable, dedicated,
motivated, confident, passionate



Good communication/
constructive feedback



Supportive, encouraging,
understanding, compassionate



Organized, approachable,
foster independence

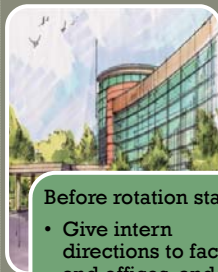
Source: Purdue University

How to be an Effective Preceptor and Mentor

Role of an Effective Preceptor

- Build a relationship with the intern.
 - Provide a complete orientation.
 - Supervise the intern throughout the rotation.
- Recognize uniqueness of each intern.
- Identify any barriers the intern may have to learning.
- Provide effective teaching strategies.

Orientation: Build a relationship with the intern



Before rotation starts

- Give intern directions to facility and offices, and where to park
- Explain what to wear (i.e., lab coat), about lunch, and what resources/supplies to bring



Introductions

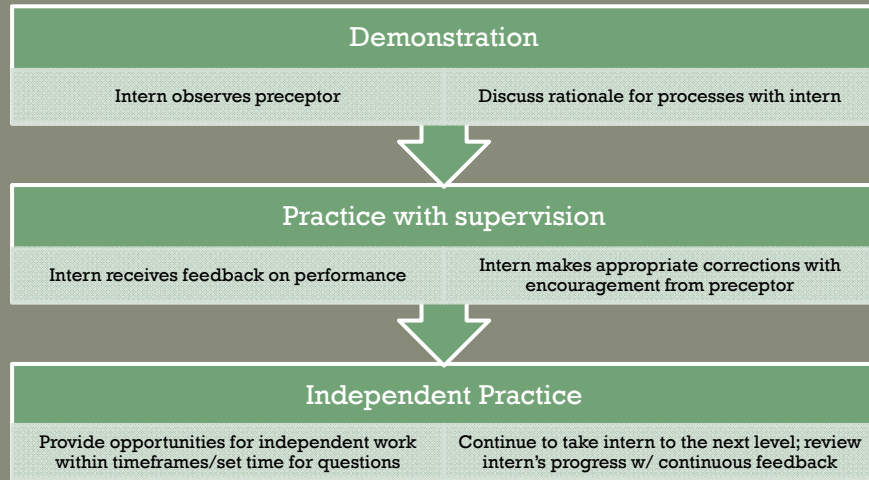
- Introduce intern to significant people and use his/her name
- Provide a tour of the facility and explain where the intern will have workspace



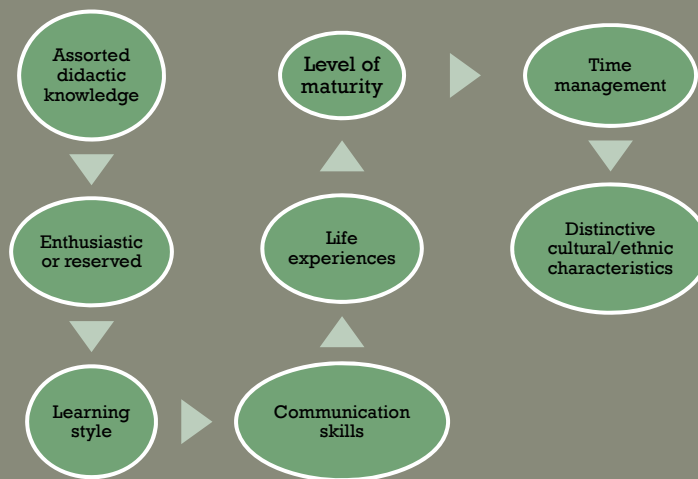
Policies & Procedures (P & P)

- Review P & P with intern; set clear rules & expectations
- Provide time for intern to ask questions/share information; help him/her feel comfortable

Getting started /progressing in the rotation



Recognize uniqueness of each intern



Barriers to learning

- Help interns identify learning barriers.
- Provide interns with strategies to overcome barriers.
- For severe problems/barriers seek professional assistance.

Address unprofessional behavior or inadequate performance*

- Discuss with the intern and be specific.
- Communicate consequences of actions or deficiencies (e.g., if they are late every day, they must make up a full day).
- Reevaluate that expectations are realistic.
- For knowledge deficiencies, give intern extra reading outside the rotation.

*All significant problems should be discussed with the Dietetics Program Director.

Provide Effective Teaching Strategies

Effective teaching strategies

- Use the “one minute preceptor” approach.
- Use effective feedback.
- Treat students as adult learners.
- Encourage self-reflection.



The “one minute preceptor”

1. Get commitment from the student about what he/she thinks is going on.
2. Probe for reasoning and/or supporting evidence.
3. Teach important principles.
4. Provide positive, constructive feedback.
5. Correct mistakes in reasoning.

One minute preceptor examples

- “What do you think is going on with this patient? How would you prioritize this case?”
- “What leads you to believe that this formula is the best choice for this patient’s tube feeding?”
- “It takes experience to learn how to prioritize clinical problems. This is what I usually do.”

Use effective feedback

Feedback

Helps intern change behavior or reinforces behavior

Provides information about how he/she affects others

Encouragement

Show your interest and concern

Can create an intern's willingness slightly in excess of ability (brings them to the next level)

Direction

Provides intention of teaching – intern achieves competencies

Preceptor explains best way to accomplish tasks

Criteria for feedback

- **Provide specific feedback, not general.**
 - “When you are in the kitchen, you need to wear a hairnet”
 - NOT: “You are not prepared to work in the kitchen.”
- **Describe intern’s behavior rather than judge them.**
 - “I noticed you texting while you were writing your note. Remember to keep your phone away during clinical time and focus on your tasks.”
 - NOT: “Don’t use your cell phone while at work.”
- **Acknowledge needs of both yourself & the intern.**
 - “I am really busy right now, but will be happy to meet with you in 30 minutes and we can have a discussion.”
 - NOT: “Don’t bother me now.”

Criteria for feedback, continued

- Balance positive feedback with constructive criticism that includes direction for change.
 - “Your assessment included all of the appropriate information, but I think your nutrition diagnosis could be more specific to the patient’s food intake. Why don’t you review some of the other diagnoses and then choose one that will tie in more closely with your intervention strategies.”

Praise is a form of feedback that can enhance motivation; but has to be given correctly

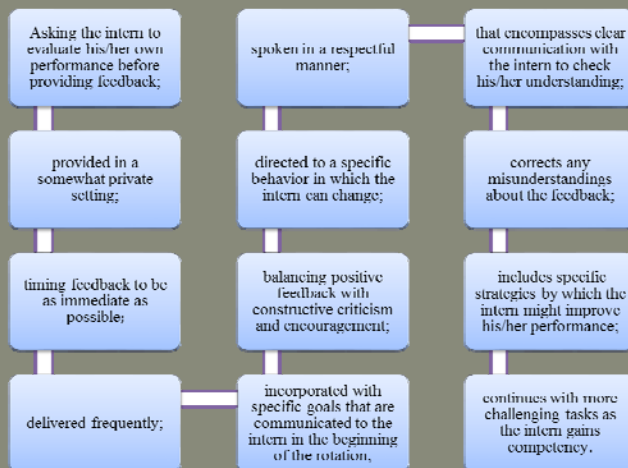
Use effort/process praise versus ability praise

For example: “I appreciated that you came well-prepared today.”

Versus

“You are really smart or you are the best intern I have ever had!”

DIETETIC INTERNS WILL GAIN COMPETENCY WHEN FEEDBACK FROM PRECEPTORS INCLUDES...



Treat interns as adult learners

- Confer with interns about their prior experience.
- Have interns observe and come up with their own strategies.
- Discuss feasibility of their ideas/plans.
- Guide interns as they practice; ask for their opinion.



Encourage self-reflection

- Self-reflection \Leftrightarrow self-evaluation \Leftrightarrow self-assessment \Leftrightarrow self-analysis
- Allows assimilation or re-working of concepts, skills, knowledge and/or values into pre-existing knowledge.
- Can lead to moral, personal, and emotional growth during clinical training.

Techniques for intern self-reflection

PART OF THE FEEDBACK PROCESS

- Before giving feedback/evaluation, begin with an intern's self-evaluation.
 - "Before I share my evaluation, how did you view your performance?"
- Have the intern write a self-analysis on a performance evaluation.
- Encourage the intern to list/discuss what was done well, along with what could be improved.

Techniques for intern self-reflection

JOURNALING

Interns keep a daily journal/log that helps them reflect on their experiences.



Being competent and knowledgeable in dietetics

- Stay current with professional development portfolio.
- Be a part of professional groups:
 - Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and its practice groups, local dietetic groups, and other professional groups.
- Learn from the interns!



Preceptor Perspective

A clinical experience is not really about the facility, but more about the preceptors who create an environment for a successful rotation.

Q & A

Type your questions into the chat section and we will answer in the order it is received.

Thank you for being a preceptor!