

# Preceptor Virtual Journal Club Facilitator's Guide

**Goal:** To provide preceptors with an opportunity to critically engage with information provided by peer-reviewed journal articles and discuss implications of practice with others.

**Estimated time:** 1 hour

**Recommended Group Size:** 12 or less (Breakout rooms for groups of 4-6 encouraged for discussions)

## Outcome Objectives:

1. Preceptors will assess their current attitudes, knowledge, and skills towards precepting.
2. Preceptors will analyze how their attitudes, knowledge, and skills toward precepting are affected by the information provided in the journal club.
3. Preceptors will identify new strategies to implement for student support and learning.
4. Preceptors will analyze how their confidence in precepting is affected by the information provided in the journal club.

## Ground Rules for Dialogue:

- All participants should be given an opportunity to participate in the discussion.
- Respect others' rights to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from your own. Challenge or criticize the idea, not the person.
- Listen carefully to what others are saying even when you disagree with what is being said. Comments that you make (asking for clarification, sharing critiques, expanding on a point, etc.) should reflect that you have paid attention to the speaker's comments.
- Be courteous. Don't interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking.
- Allow everyone the chance to talk. If you have much to say, try to hold back a bit; if you are hesitant to speak, look for opportunities to contribute to the discussion.

## Zoom Guidelines:

- Have cameras on
- Be mindful of background noise when speaking
- Limit distractions and avoid multitasking
- Please do not use the chat box for discussion participation

## Role of the Facilitator:

- Create a positive, open, and respectful learning environment. People learn best in an atmosphere where they can interact with others, are encouraged to ask questions, take risks, exchange ideas honestly, and feel supported. Facilitators play an important role by modeling behaviors that create a learning environment.

## Role of Moderator:

- Add your name and email address to the chat - send CEU certificate
- Add the discussion questions to the chat
- Set up breakout rooms

## NDEP Preceptor Resource

### Preparation:

- Journal articles are selected by the virtual journal club committee based on the literature identifying training opportunities for preceptors or by needs assessment data from preceptors.
- Develop discussion questions that focus on attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed for effectively precepting dietetic interns.
- Distributed journal article to participants at least 1 week in advance, through a shared drive that houses all journal articles and discussion questions documents for the virtual journal club Series.

### Framework:

1. Introductions (5 min)
2. Provide a brief summary of article. (5-10 min)
3. Present discussion questions (30 min)
  - a. Utilize breakout rooms for groups larger than 5 (at discretion of facilitator)
  - b. If breakout rooms used, provide discussion questions to groups and have them discuss each question for approximately 5 minutes, then return to session by the time established by the virtual journal club facilitator, each small group will select a point person to share main points from each group.
4. Summarize and wrap up, have participants share at least one actionable item they took away from discussion to help with student learning (15-20 min)

### Privacy Statement to Attendees:

- All participant dialogue shared in the Journal Club session should be kept confidential by participants and should only be shared with permission of the participant. Facilitator's may share student-learning strategies discussed in the Journal Club session with other preceptors in the spirit of learning and improving preceptor and student experiences. If you do not wish to have your experiences shared, please inform the facilitator.

## Preceptor Virtual Journal Club: Articles and Discussion Questions

Topic	Article Citation	Discussion Questions
<b>Inclusive Excellence: How to Adapt to Differences in Individual Interns</b>	Alston GD, Hansman CA. Embracing diversity and inclusive mentoring practices for leadership development. <i>New Dir Adult Contin Educ.</i> 2020;(168):83-94.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have you thought about or changed how you precept due to considering diversity or inclusiveness? If yes, please describe.</li> <li>2. The article discussed cultural respectfulness. How do you or could you see yourself acknowledge unique cultural experiences of your interns?</li> <li>3. The article discussed courage and how it takes courage to commit to embracing diversity and demonstrate equitable and inclusive practices, thus being vulnerable. Does anyone have a past mistake they made regarding diversity and inclusion, and then want to discuss what you would do differently now?</li> <li>4. How have each of us been privileged in getting to where we are today? How can we help those who do not have these privileges succeed?</li> <li>5. Affirming, being open, having grace, showing kinship, and being accountable are all ways to show empathy and connect with others different than ourselves. What are some ways you do this or might do this in the future?</li> </ol>
<b>Reflective Practice: How to use reflection in the learning process</b>	Mahon P, O'Neill M. Through the looking glass: The rabbit hole of reflective practice. <i>Br J Nurs.</i> 2020;29(13), 777-783.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is reflective practice a new concept for you?</li> <li>2. Given the biases outlined in Table 2 on pp. 779-780, do you identify with any of those biases in yourself that may have impacted your learning? How about when working with others – have you recognized one or more of these biases? If so, how did you address it?</li> <li>3. Table 1 provides examples of models you can use for reflective practice. Have you tried either of these models (in any variation)? If so, what do you find most helpful? If not, which one resonates with you the most?</li> <li>4. Consider the quote from Aronson (2011), “True reflection requires time, efforts, and a willingness to question our actions, underlying beliefs, and values, which may be challenging to our internal consistencies” – do you find this to be consistent with your experiences? What other barriers may be causing limited reflective practice?</li> <li>5. How might you use reflective practice to increase your own knowledge? How might you encourage this in a student or co-worker?</li> </ol>

## NDEP Preceptor Resources

<b>Authentic Leadership to Foster Self-Efficacy and Job Satisfaction in Dietetic Interns</b>	<p>Bryan V, Vitello-Cicciu J. Perceptions of preceptors' authentic leadership and final year nursing students' self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and job performance. <i>J Prof Nurs.</i> 2022;41:81-87. doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2022.04.003</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Authentic leadership theory posits “leaders who demonstrate authenticity utilize life experiences and psychological capacities such as hope, optimism, and self-efficacy to bring about positive [outcomes]” among those they lead. Have you thought about how your own feelings of “hope, optimism, and self-efficacy” influence how you precept? In what ways might these have positive or negative consequences for interns?</li> <li>2. Authentic leaders have three foundational characteristics of self-awareness, balanced processing, and relational transparency. Which of these is a strength for you? Where are your opportunities for growth?</li> <li>3. One finding of this study was that even though authentic leadership affected self-efficacy and job satisfaction independently, it did not affect job performance except as mediated by self-efficacy. Should authentic leadership still be a priority if it does not lead to better performance for dietetic interns? Why or why not?</li> <li>4. Thinking back to your own experiences as an intern, how did your preceptors show traits of authentic leadership? How did that influence your self-efficacy and early job satisfaction?</li> <li>5. Researchers listed four factors as contributors to self-efficacy: successful attempts at accomplishing tasks, watching others achieve the same goal, receiving positive feedback, and conducting self-evaluations of feelings during the experience. How do you, or will you, incorporate some of these practices into the experiences of your interns?</li> </ol>
<b>Giving Constructive and Effective Feedback</b>	<p>Wilkinson S, Whetherly J, Perry C, et al. Preceptor development: Providing effective feedback. <i>Hosp Pharm.</i> 2013;48(1): 26-32. doi: 10.1310/hpj4810-26</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How regularly do you provide students with constructive feedback? What form does that feedback take?</li> <li>2. Consider a time you received feedback on your performance. What was your experience? How did you feel about the way feedback was provided? What could have improved the experience?</li> <li>3. What are the biggest challenges you face in giving feedback to students?</li> <li>4. Reflect on the last time you gave constructive feedback to a student. How did you feel about giving that feedback? Is there anything you could have done differently?</li> </ol>

## NDEP Preceptor Resources

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. Do you have a success story where providing feedback to a student strengthened their performance or perhaps strengthened the mentoring relationship between preceptor and intern?</li><li>6. The article lists strategies and factors for providing feedback: environment (setting), timing, individualization, content, specificity, and preparation. After a quick self-assessment, are there any of these strategies you currently practice? Are there any you find difficult? Are there any that are new for you that you had not considered previously?</li><li>7. Consider the “Preceptor Pearls” section of the article – have you used any of these strategies and care to share your experiences? If not, do any stand out to you that you believe would be helpful in establishing a positive preceptor-intern professional relationship?</li></ol>
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# Impact of Virtual Journal Club on Dietetic Preceptor Self-Efficacy and Perceived Support

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In the nutrition and dietetics profession, having a preceptor—and serving as one—are valuable and necessary experiences. Health professionals choose to mentor interns for a myriad of reasons, including increasing job satisfaction, earning required continuing professional education units (CPEUs), and strengthening leadership skills.<sup>1,2</sup> Evidence, in particular, shows dietetic preceptors have a desire to reinvest in their profession and find precepting personally rewarding.<sup>3-6</sup>

Despite these benefits, there are demonstrated barriers to precepting dietetic students. When these barriers are not identified and addressed, preceptor recruitment and retention may decrease.<sup>7</sup> Non-preceptors may feel a lack of confidence in their experience level and teaching or mentoring skills which can prevent them from precepting. Even current preceptors can struggle with self-efficacy in these areas, paradoxically, while actively mentoring interns.<sup>4,6,7</sup> Precepting requires a wide-range of skills to effectively mentor students; however, preceptors report knowing very little about adult education principles and express a desire for training to improve their teaching abilities.<sup>7,8</sup> Current preceptors, former preceptors, and non-preceptors alike report a perceived lack of support both in the workplace and through their institutions, although current preceptors were more likely to report having support.<sup>3,4,6,9</sup>

Providing ongoing training to address the needs and barriers to precepting is a beneficial practice. Virtual journal clubs (VJCs) may offer an opportunity to meet specific training needs of preceptors and cover a wide variety of topics for discussion and development, while simultaneously improving self-efficacy and perceived support. Evidence shows that asynchronous, online journal clubs can provide professional development, continuing education, and networking opportunities while removing time barriers.<sup>10,11</sup> VJCs have been successfully used to provide professional development, continuing education, networking opportunities, and strengthen relationships between preceptors and interns, as well as mentors and mentees across healthcare professions, including occupational therapy, pharmacy, and others.<sup>10-13</sup> Despite the growing evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of VJCs for education in healthcare, few studies have focused on their use for dietetic preceptor development.

The purpose of this study was to assess changes in self-efficacy and perceived support among current dietetic preceptors, former dietetic preceptors, and non-preceptor dietitians after participating in a VJC.

## Methods

This study was approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (#IRB-FY2024-157) and was reviewed in accordance with federal regulations governing human subject research. Following IRB approval, participants were recruited via email through a State Affiliate of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) electronic newsletter, a Regional AND State Affiliate member contact list, and dietetic preceptor contact list from a nutrition and dietetics

graduate program at a midwestern, public university. There were no exclusions: participants could be current preceptors, former preceptors, or non-preceptors. Participants were invited to attend four, one-hour VJC sessions offering CPEU credit, hosted by the research team weekly via the web conferencing platform, Zoom. VJC sessions were structured from a facilitator guide developed during a previous pilot study.<sup>14</sup> Before each session, participants received via email an evidence-based journal article to explore along with discussion questions. Topics consisted of inclusive excellence, reflective practice, authentic leadership, and meaningful feedback.

Inclusion in the study was not a prerequisite to attend VJC, but informed consent was required prior to online pre- and post-surveys administered via Qualtrics. Pre-survey links were distributed prior to each VJC session and provided in the online chat feature on Zoom at the beginning of each VJC. Post-survey links were distributed following the final session via the online chat feature on Zoom and emailed to former participants who did not attend the final VJC.

**Table 1.** Survey Questions on Self-Efficacy and Perceived Support for the Preceptor Role

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Response Options</b>
I feel that I have appropriate skills and knowledge to address the needs of interns.	1 (Totally Disagree) – 5 (Totally Agree)
I am confident about my capacities to support the autonomy of interns.	1 (Totally Disagree) – 5 (Totally Agree)
I feel comfortable addressing most issues raised by interns.	1 (Totally Disagree) – 5 (Totally Agree)
I feel that I know how to foster the feelings of competence of interns.	1 (Totally Disagree) – 5 (Totally Agree)
I am confident about my capabilities to provide good feedback.	1 (Totally Disagree) – 5 (Totally Agree)
I feel adequately supported to precept interns.	1 (Totally Disagree) – 5 (Totally Agree)
How likely are you to continue serving as a preceptor in the future?	1 (Extremely Unlikely) – 5 (Extremely Likely)
Did you find the virtual journal club discussions helpful in your role?	1 (Very Helpful) – 3 (Not Helpful)
How has your self-efficacy improved since attending journal club, if at all?	Free text response
Describe a time when you felt most supported during journal club.	Free text response

Survey questions included demographics and self-reported current levels of self-efficacy and perceived support for the preceptor role (Table 1). Survey questions were adapted from the Mentors' Perceived Self-Efficacy Measure.<sup>15</sup> Quantitative data were evaluated with descriptive statistics whereas qualitative data were evaluated using thematic analysis.

## Results

Ten individuals opted in the research study, with six completing both pre- and post-surveys ( $n = 6$ , 100% White, 83% female, mean age = 36.17, SD = 7.43). Participants represented a wide variety of professional expertise with clinical, community, food service and academic backgrounds; 83% identified as current preceptors or have precepted within the last 12

months. The majority (66.7%) reported five or more years of experience with precepting. Most (66.7%) reported having completed preceptor training in the past. Participants attended an average of 1.8 sessions (SD = 0.898).

Pre-survey results indicated most participants “agree” with self-efficacy and support statements (e.g., I feel I know how to foster competence of interns.; I am confident of my capabilities to provide good feedback.). Post-survey results indicated many participants “strongly agree” with self-efficacy and support statements following engagement with journal club. All participants reported they were “extremely likely” to serve as a dietetic preceptor in the future. Additionally, 83% of participants reported journal club was “very helpful”.

**Table 2.** Identified Themes from Coding Process

Research Question	Theme	Participant Responses	Explanation
How does a VJC improve self-efficacy in precepting?	Increased Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “I feel I gained some communication ideas to help with intern relationships.”</li> <li>– “The information shared gives me more tools to utilize as a preceptor.”</li> <li>– “It was helpful to learn about ways that preceptors support and provide feedback to dietetic interns.”</li> </ul>	Participants reported increased knowledge through tools and experiences shared by other participants.
How does a VJC improve perceived support in precepting?	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “...all ideas were welcomed, everyone has a voice.”</li> <li>– “I feel most supported during journal club when the presenter affirms my feelings on certain topics.”</li> <li>– “It [self-efficacy] improved due to hearing that other preceptor’s precept in a similar way to myself...”</li> </ul>	Participants experienced enhanced perceived support by affirmations provided and experiences shared by other participants.

Researchers analyzed the open-ended responses on the post-survey using consensus coding. Themes (Table 2) that emerged indicated self-efficacy in precepting improved due to an increase in knowledge of tools used for effective precepting such as providing feedback and communication. Participants also experienced improved perceived support as a preceptor through the collaborative nature of a VJC.

## Discussion

Results from this study support previous findings that journal clubs can improve the preceptor experience related to self-efficacy and perceived support within dietetics.<sup>8,11</sup> Evidence shows that for current preceptors, benefits are more likely to be salient than barriers—conversely, non-preceptors are more likely to report barriers.<sup>4</sup> In addition, preceptors with three or more years of experience have been shown to experience higher levels of self-efficacy.<sup>16</sup>



Perhaps because most of the participants were current preceptors with more than five years of experience, their pre-survey responses did not reflect previously reported attitudes on self-efficacy and perceived support as barriers to precepting.<sup>4,6,7</sup> However, despite entering the study with self-reported positive feelings related to self-efficacy and perceived support, results illustrated a strengthening of those feelings with demonstrated changes in response from “agree” to “totally agree.” Additionally, we found a reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy in precepting and perceived support in precepting: participants reported improved self-efficacy as they felt affirmed (i.e., supported) in the VJC, and they noted increased perceived support as their self-efficacy increased within the VJC.

Although there was little change in participants’ intentions to precept in the future, it is noteworthy that most (who primarily identified with the host program and perceived strong support within it) already had a high likelihood of continuing to precept (83% chose “extremely likely” on the pre-survey). This may be further evidence that when internship programs offer regular professional development experiences such as VJCs, they can enhance perceived support and promote preceptor retention.<sup>7</sup> This is significant because research indicates that intern enthusiasm and commitment to the profession are influenced by preceptor efficacy and attitude; this relationship is reciprocal, with preceptors positively influencing students, who, in turn, have a positive impact on their preceptors.<sup>2,17</sup>

Since challenges such as lack of confidence and support are among the most significant barriers to precepting, using evidence-based strategies to preemptively address these challenges may be crucial to preceptor recruitment, development, and retainment.<sup>3,4,6</sup> Overall, these findings support existing literature suggesting VJCs are a successful professional development tool in healthcare.<sup>10-13</sup>

### *Limitations*

A significant limitation to the generalizability of this study is a small, homogeneous sample size would likely influence outcomes. Ideas for widening the participant pool include conducting a needs assessment for choosing meeting times and discussion topics that appeal to a broader audience. Although there was a state-wide recruitment effort with free CPEUs offered, the majority who responded were preceptors with an existing relationship to the host institution. This may indicate that though online preceptor trainings with CPEUs exist, there is additional value in relationships that motivate preceptors beyond receiving CPEUs.<sup>4,6</sup> Therefore, individual institutions hosting professional development opportunities such as VJCs within their own sphere of influence may be indicated.

### *Future Directions*

Future directions include dissemination of a comprehensive toolkit for facilitating a successful journal club; preceptors may find it of use within their preceptor network, offering an opportunity for interns to shadow and improve in this skill. Indeed, research shows when interns participate in cohosting journal clubs for their mentors, it offers professional benefit to both parties.<sup>12</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the results support previous findings that VJCs can improve feelings of self-efficacy and perceived support in dietetic preceptors, who play a vital role in shaping the future of the profession. Evidence shows even if preceptors possess a wealth of experience and

knowledge, participation in the journal club can lead to a notable enhancement and provide a positive professional development opportunity—participation reaffirmed and strengthened preceptors' confidence in their abilities across the board. Despite this study's limitations, it provides valuable insights into the efficacy of evidence-based strategies like journals clubs to invest in the professional growth of dietetic preceptors and foster a culture of support and collaboration to strengthen the future of the nutrition and dietetics profession.

## References

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