



“Practice Educators’ Academy”: A fundamental step to experiential training success in Qatar

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ABSTRACT

Background: Experiential learning is the backbone of many healthcare professional education programs¹, and the quality of experiential learning is dependent on the skills, experiences, and proficiency of the clinical preceptors who largely contribute to this experience². Preceptors should ideally possess both clinical practice and teaching skills; however, preceptors often do not possess formal training as educators³. This research was conducted at Qatar University with the aims of identifying preceptors’ educational needs and developing the skills by designing an educational professional development program called: “The Practice Educators’ Academy”.

Methods: A mixed-methods triangulation study design was applied to identify preceptors’ educational needs quantitatively through a validated survey sent to preceptors (n=325), and qualitatively by conducting 11 focus groups with preceptors (n=20), students (n=42), and clinical faculty members (n=7). Quantitative and qualitative data in addition to an extensive literature review were used in designing the academy by an inter-professional healthcare and educational team.

Results: Principles of learning theories, planning for experiential learning, teaching strategies, students’ assessment and feedback, and communication skills for effective preceptorship and conflict resolution were the key domains expressed as preceptors’ educational needs. A five-module program syllabus was designed to meet these needs while benchmarking it with international preceptors’ educational development programs to achieve generalizability. The designed syllabus was critically examined and validated by national and international health professional education scholars. Table 1 demonstrates the validated syllabus.

Conclusion: “The Practice Educators’ Academy” syllabus is the first intervention nationally and regionally for preceptors to be better equipped with skills and knowledge required for their role as clinical educators, which will enrich the internship experiences of students. With that, preceptors can better prepare competent health profession graduates that will advance healthcare outcomes and meet the healthcare needs of Qatar society and ultimately contribute to achieving Qatar National Vision 2030.

Keywords: education, preceptor, teacher training, experiential learning, syllabus

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Table 1. Validated syllabus of the "The Practice Educators' Academy".

Preceptors Needs	Learning Outcomes	Benchmark with other programs
Module 1: Principles of Learning and Teaching Duration: 2 hours		
Principles of education: (Adult Learning Principles)	Recognize the significance of developing yourself as a practitioner and an educator	The Australian Clinical Education Program
- Different styles of delivery: (Teaching, instructing, modelling, facilitating, coaching...)	Identify principles of learning Identify adult learning theories	The Australian Clinical Education Program An Interprofessional Web-Based Resource for Health Professions Preceptors
- Being enthusiastic and motivated in teaching	Recognize your role as a preceptor Comprehend the micro-skills and one-minute preceptor (OMP) approach Apply the micro-skills and OMP approach	Preceptor training; North Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) Preceptor Development Program, University of Virginia
	Recognize elements of professionalism in precepting	Towards an educational continuing professional development curriculum for Australian general practice supervisors
	Identify learning styles	Improving Preceptor Self-Efficacy Using an Online Educational Program
	Apply learning styles	Developing and Implementing an Academy of Preceptors
	Recognize effective delivery styles	
Module 2: Planning for the Experiential Learning Duration: 2 hours		
Different ways for planning	Identify learning objectives taxonomies	
- How to develop learning objectives	Explain the action verbs in learning objectives Use the action verbs in learning objectives	Teaching on the Run
- Understanding students' needs and strengths	Develop 'SMART' learning outcomes	Preceptor Education Program (PEP)
- Lack of proper skills to introduce students and students' roles to patients	Differentiate between good and bad learning outcomes Translate learning outcomes to activities applicable to specific sites (hands-on)	Towards an educational continuing professional development curriculum for Australian general practice supervisors
- Preceptors time management (allocate enough time to reflect on student performance)	Outline practice setting criteria (hands-on) Identify students' foundational level and needs	Mission possible CD ROM: Instructional tool for preceptors RWHC preceptor training program
	Recognize the role of preceptor in introducing and clarifying the students' role to healthcare team and patients	
	Recognize different strategies to manage your time	Preceptor training; NAIT
Module 3: Teaching and Instruction Strategies Duration: 3 hours		
Teaching and learning in clinical settings: (mentoring skills)	Recognize the effective teaching strategies Apply the effective teaching strategies	The impact of a blended learning approach on instructor and learner satisfaction with preceptor education An Interprofessional Web-Based Resource for Health Professions Preceptors
- When to let students observe and when to let them do	Recognize teachable moments and story-telling strategies	
- How to trigger critical thinking	Apply teachable moments and story-telling strategies	
- How to bridge the gap between the theory and practice	Identify concepts of critical thinking Facilitate and enhance critical thinking among learners	Effective preceptorship: A guide to best practice
	Identify concepts of clinical reasoning and reflective practice Facilitate and enhance clinical reasoning and reflective practice among learners	
	Identify gaps between theory and practice Resolve gaps between theory and practice	The Australian Clinical Education Program
	Facilitate inter-professional experiential learning Facilitate collaborative competencies	Partnerships for Learning Population-Based Public Health Nursing: Web-Delivered Continuing Education for Public Health Nurse Preceptors

Table 1. - Continued

Preceptors Needs	Learning Outcomes	Benchmark with other programs
Module 4: Students' Assessment and Feedback Duration: 2.5 hours		
Assessment and evaluation skills in clinical settings: Fair, individualized, objectivity, non-judgmental evaluation	Differentiate between summative and formative assessment	Supporting preceptors: a three-pronged approach for success
- Being aware of assessment tools	Create a formal assessment plan	Teaching on the Run
- Activity-specific assessment	Recognize what can go wrong in assessment	Preceptor Development Program, University of Virginia
- Recognition of the purpose and the importance of feedback provision to students	Deal with what can go wrong in assessment	
- Discuss evaluation with students and provide clear, fair and comprehensive feedback	Design rubric effectively Use rubric effectively	Developing and Implementing an Academy of Preceptors
- How to communicate the feedback to different students' personalities (sensitive students)	Recognize the basic principles of assessment in standard setting	Towards an educational continuing professional development curriculum for Australian general practice supervisors
- Feedback frequency	Provide effective feedback	Supporting preceptors: a three-pronged approach for success
- Mode of feedback delivery (written, verbal, mixed)	Recognize 'sandwich method' in providing feedback	
- Receiving feedback from students	Apply 'sandwich method' in providing feedback	
	Apply communication skills in providing the feedback	
	Consider students constructive feedback and use it for improvement	Effective preceptorship: A guide to best practice
	Comprehend concepts of self-assessment	
	Apply concepts of self-assessment	
Module 5: Communication Skills for Effective Preceptorship and Conflict Resolution Duration: 2 hours		
Lack of proper communication skills	Apply communication skills in precepting students	Development of an Online, Evidence-Based CRNA Preceptor Training Tutorial (CPITT): A Quality Improvement Project
- Dealing with different and difficult kinds of personalities and situations	Identify barriers to effective communication	
- Right reactions to students' misconduct	Recognize and elevate students' anxiety	
- Responding to students' questions	Identify different sources of conflicts	Towards an educational continuing professional development curriculum for Australian general practice supervisors
- Cultural competencies and teaching culturally sensitive topics	Manage and resolve conflicts	Preceptor training, NAIT
	Recognize multi-generational workplace and learners	
	Deal with multi-generational workplace and learners	
	Recognize cultural factors and variables affecting communication and learning	Partnerships for Learning Population-Based Public Health Nursing: Web-Delivered Continuing Education for Public Health Nurse Preceptors
	Demonstrate the skills of cultural competency in training students	

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