

Preceptorship: A Concept Analysis

By

Christine Senior

Nurse Anesthesia Student at the
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

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Preceptorship has the potential to be one of the most influential forces in the growth and professional development of nursing students and novice nurses. A preceptorship experience provides real world experiences under the protection and support of a guide. Preceptors provide the opportunity for inexperienced nurses and students to try out new skills and to gain confidence, thus bridging the gap between the theory and actual professional practice. Nurturing novices is a developmentally appropriate professional responsibility of mature clinicians (Hayes, 1994).

Although there is a plethora of literature describing precepting and preceptorship, the concept of preceptorship is often used interchangeably with such terms as mentoring, coaching and role -modeling. In order to accurately study the phenomenon of preceptorship, a clearly explicated definition of the concept is needed.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the concept of preceptorship using the format of Walker and Avant (1988). A review of general and nursing literature revealed different contextual uses of the concept across various disciplines. Related concepts were examined and differentiated from preceptorship. A precise definition was formulated using the critical elements gleaned from the literature search. Antecedents and consequences were identified, and case studies were developed.

This lays the groundwork for a qualitative study of the Meaning of Preceptorship.