

**Title:** An examination of the preceptor/mentor role within clinical practice settings

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Active in data collection for doctoral thesis. The abstract submitted represents a working manuscript from my comprehensive exam.

### **Abstract**

**Background:** The rationale for introducing programs that support nurses as they transition into practice settings has been identified as a vital strategy for knowledge and competence development for newly hired nurses to afford them time to adapt into their new work settings. A unique feature of transition programs within health care settings is their use of preceptors or mentors to provide practice support, apprenticeship, assistance with competence and knowledge building in a teaching-learning relationship. What remains unclear is an articulation of the processes involved with the preceptor/mentor role during teaching and learning, and a conceptualization of the preceptor/mentor role in supporting nurses as they transition into the workplace. Conceptual clarity of the preceptor/mentor role is vital to enhance their utilization in supporting nurses' knowledge and competence development.

**Objective:** the purpose of this scoping review of research literature is to examine the ways in which the preceptor/mentor role is conceptualized and enacted within transition programs to facilitate learning for newly hired nurses transitioning into acute care settings.

**Design:** Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) 5-steps of scoping review was utilized to explore the perception of the preceptor-mentor role, its perceived use and engagement within transition programs to summarize the existing evidence, identify gaps, and evaluate the need for future research. These questions framed the review: 1) How do preceptors and mentors perceive their role; 2) how is the preceptor/mentor role enacted within transition programs?

**Findings:** revealed ongoing ambiguity issues surrounding the conceptualization and utilization of the preceptor/mentor role used to support teaching and learning.

**Conclusion:** learning within complex work environments requires adequate planning and support beyond a reliance on the clinical expertise of nurses within a specific area of work. Also, the preceptorship/mentorship models of teaching and learning require corporate endorsement to ensure nurses themselves are supported educationally.