A “How to” Guide for Precepting Graduate Nursing Students

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The book *Precepting Graduate Students in the Clinical Setting* is designed to teach preceptors how to create successful learning environments and experiences with graduate-level nursing students. The book provides the preceptor with tools and tips for use while supporting the graduate nurses through their clinical experience. The authors classify the graduate experience into the roles of the clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, and health systems management student and provide recommendations for each role throughout the book.

The authors provide a brief summary of the chapters, with an overview of the content in each. This “guided tour” was helpful in allowing the reader to have a quick snap shot of the content. Each chapter included a list of references for further information. Strengths of the book included success characteristics for effective preceptors and preceptor self-assessments and a strong focus on principles of adult learning. Each chapter had the potential to be used as a stand-alone presentation for groups.

The reviewers found 2 areas distracting: (1) the flow of the chapters and (2) the extensive use of graphics. The chapter organization was sometimes difficult to follow. The authors began with the preceptor role in chapter 1, followed by principles of adult learning, getting started, and then evaluation in chapter 4. It was confusing for the reader to learn about the role of the preceptor before learning about theory and principles. Likewise, the placement of evaluation in chapter 4 seemed out of order, as it is the last component of a precepted relationship. It might have flowed more smoothly if the authors started with adult learning principles, followed by the preceptor role, getting started, and ending with evaluation.

The authors go on to discuss diversity and generational differences, coaching, distance learning, and teaching with undergraduates and then finish the book with creating a win-win precepting experience. A better approach might have been to place a few of these chapters earlier. For example, chapter 8 defines roles and how the role of the preceptor is different when precepting graduate versus undergraduate nurses. This information sets the foundation of the relationship and might have been better placed earlier in the text. Page 134 begins with the statement “Get off to a good start.” This information should be included in the beginning of the book, as it provides vital information necessary to start the relationship with clear role expectations. Absent from the book was information and guidance about reflective practice, a key developmental strategy.

In the “Ask the Preceptor’s Preceptor” section, the reviewers found a number of examples that appeared to be geared to the younger student. The adult learner may find more value in more sophisticated professional examples. In Appendix A, the authors provide a thorough listing of learning domains organized into the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor although the source is not included in the chapter references. The authors also include the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator in Appendix B and provide the reader with the Web site to learn about the tool.
more about their results. Readers may have found the addition of the Web site helpful in the search for additional information on this instrument. The last appendix provides the reader with Kolb’s learning style in table format and includes a reference for further learning.

All in all, this book is a good resource for precepting nurses, not just in graduate student roles but also in new and experienced nurse. It represents a collection from many sources of information that are rarely found in one location, and since effective precepting is essential to the success of professional nursing development and high-quality patient care, this book can provide an important resource for those who are the translational guides supporting others into advanced and new practice settings.

REFERENCE

1. Di Leonard BC, Gulanick M. Precepting Graduate Students in the Clinical Setting. Chicago, IL: Loyola University Chicago; 2008.