# Student-Preceptor Learning: Is There a Match?

## Requesting a Clinical Placement:
- **Student Role**
  - Select a site that meets objectives for clinical rotation
  - Know one’s strengths and limitations
  - Review computerized Agency/Preceptor list
  - Discuss site with faculty
  - Submit electronic clinical request to faculty for approval
  - Faculty approves and submits to clinical placement office
  - Letter sent seeking site and preceptor acceptance
  - Course, student objectives, student/faculty/preceptor role and other required documents submitted with letter
  - Interview may be requested by preceptor prior to acceptance

- **Faculty Role**
  - Discuss preceptor and site selection with student
  - Check that clinical objectives can be met
  - Review electronic clinical request form for accuracy
  - Submit to clinical placement department for processing

## Status of Clinical Placement:
- **STEP 1**
  - Select a site that meets objectives for clinical rotation
  - Know one’s strengths and limitations
  - Review computerized Agency/Preceptor list
  - Discuss site with faculty
  - Submit electronic clinical request to faculty for approval
  - Faculty approves and submits to clinical placement office
  - Letter sent seeking site and preceptor acceptance
  - Course, student objectives, student/faculty/preceptor role and other required documents submitted with letter
  - Interview may be requested by preceptor prior to acceptance

- **STEP 2**
  - Discuss preceptor and site selection with student
  - Check that clinical objectives can be met
  - Review electronic clinical request form for accuracy
  - Submit to clinical placement department for processing

- **STEP 3**
  - Send request to site and/or preceptor
  - Include all necessary documents
  - Preceptor form sent to preceptor to be completed
  - Preceptor submits current copies of licenses, certifications to be kept in school files and updated yearly
  - Acceptance or denial by preceptor/site entered on electronic request form
  - Student monitors status of requested placement
  - Student cannot go to site without receiving approval from clinical placement department

- **STEP 4**
  - Send request to site and/or preceptor
  - Include all necessary documents
  - Preceptor form sent to preceptor to be completed
  - Preceptor submits current copies of licenses, certifications to be kept in school files and updated yearly
  - Acceptance or denial by preceptor/site entered on electronic request form
  - Student monitors status of requested placement
  - Student cannot go to site without receiving approval from clinical placement department

## Challenges, Preceptors & the Nursing Shortage:
- Impacts securing appropriate student-preceptor match
- Less nurses → increased patient load → less time available to preceptor
- Preceptors often have students at different learning levels simultaneously
- Same preceptors continuously prevailed upon → burnout
- Liability issues increase

## Student-Preceptor Learning: Is There a Match?
- **CHALLENGES IN SELECTING CLINICAL SITES/PRECEPTORS**
  - Adhering to educational standards
  - Facilitating synthesis of theoretical knowledge in the clinical setting
  - Socializing students into the advanced practice role
  - Promoting professionalism
  - Acting as a role model

## Characteristics of a Good Preceptor:
- Commitment to preceptor role
- Clinical expert in their specialty
- Able to foster learning
- Understands student clinical objectives
- Provides experiences to meet clinical goals
- Facilitates knowledge acquisition
- Flexible
- Professional
- Provides constructive feedback
- Open communication between student/faculty/preceptor

## Good Student-Preceptor Match:
- Trusting relationship
- Enhances student learning
  - Facilities developing expertise in clinical decision-making
  - Student-preceptor relationship
  - Student has greater comfort asking questions
  - Student aware of limitations and actively seeks learning experiences/skills
  - Potential employment

## Ensuring a Student-Preceptor Relationship:
- Personal contact
- Good listener
- Skilled negotiator
- Good communicator

## Lessons Learned:
- Honest communication between the preceptor, site administrator and placement office helps secure clinical sites
- Honest communication between preceptor and faculty is imperative
- Honest evaluation of student performance is crucial
- Knowing how often preceptor wants to be contacted by faculty
- Providing students with the necessary information about preceptor/site expectations → to better outcomes
- Preceptor/student interview before acceptance → decreased misunderstandings
- Certificate of appreciation and signing for precepted hours helps the busy preceptor feel appreciated

## Problems Encountered with Students:
- Student’s lack of commitment
- Unprepared for clinical
- Personality conflict with preceptor
- Student’s self-evaluation differs from preceptor’s evaluation of student

## Problems Encountered with Preceptors:
- Preceptor’s expectations for student differ from student’s educational goals and professional experience
- Unable to meet student’s objectives/goals
- Preceptor and/or student do not report problems to faculty in a timely manner
- Unwillingness to work with a student who performs less optimally
- Preceptor change in role or position
- Non-HP preceptors lack of understanding of the HP role

**Stony Brook University**

**Arleen Steckel PhD, RN, CPNP**

**Clinical Associate Professor**

**REFERENCES**