



Three Key Approaches to Learning in Long-Term Care: Psychological Safety, Appreciative Inquiry and Active Learning

You can make your preceptorship more meaningful and engaging by using ideal learning approaches. Here are three approaches we can offer to guide you in encouraging positive and effective learning experiences in long-term care (LTC) clinical student placements.

Psychological safety

It is important that students feel safe to express themselves with their preceptor. The role of the preceptor is to create a psychologically safe learning environment for the student. This means helping them believe that they will not experience negative consequences for speaking up, or for sharing thoughts, concerns or questions. This also includes feeling safe to share mistakes they make. Preceptors can help create a psychologically safe learning environment for their students by:

- Letting students know that they are committed to their psychological safety and well-being.
- Clarifying expectations.
- Assisting students with any of their questions or concerns.

Appreciative inquiry

Appreciative approaches to learning focus on the strengths of individuals, teams or organizations, instead of their weaknesses. This encourages growth and learning that leads to positive change. Using appreciative practices in learning increases positive energy and motivation, which empowers you and others to realize the best outcome in a situation. Positive questions are a great way to practice appreciative inquiry in preceptor-student pairs, on teams and in organizations. Here are some examples of positive questions that help people to appreciate and value one another:

- What are your strengths, skills and abilities?
- How do you want to keep growing in your practice?
- What challenges are you facing that can offer you a chance to grow in your practice?

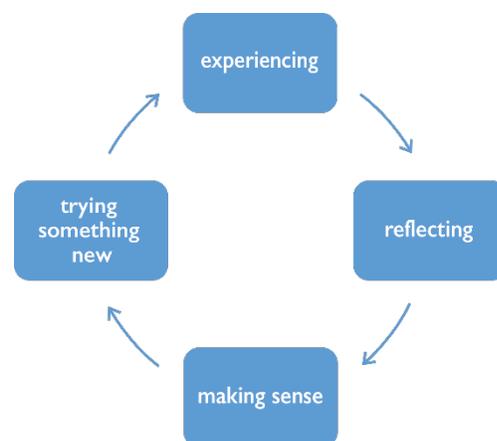
Active learning

Active learning (also known as experiential learning) refers to learning through experiences or activities. It is different from passive learning, such as memorizing facts, where learners don't have to engage with information. Examples of active learning include role-playing, taking part in a practical student internship, volunteering, trying an experiment or doing a case study.

During active learning, a preceptor acts as a student's guide, rather than as an expert with all the answers. Their role is to help the student develop new abilities based on learning experiences that they create *together with the student*. When preceptors invite students to be active learners, they invite them to move beyond their comfort zone to learn something new. Because trying new things often means making mistakes, active learning is more successful when preceptors help students to feel safe along the way.

Active learning focuses on improving learning by reflecting on experiences. Taking an active learning approach to the preceptor-student experience encourages both students and preceptors to become reflective learners and practitioners. Kolb (1984) created a model of this type of learning that involves a four-stage cycle:

1. The experience - doing something or having an experience
2. Reflection - thinking back to compare your experience with what you already know
3. Making sense of the experience - (guided by your preceptor) thinking about how to use your reflection in future situations
4. Trying out the new learning - using what you've learned in a new situation



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