

Preceptor Responsibilities

“Evaluator of Job Performance”

The preceptor's fourth subrole is to serve as an evaluator of the preceptee's job performance. This subrole involves providing evaluation and feedback to orientees regarding the quality of their performance in relation to the expected outcomes for the orientation/preceptor program.

The evaluator role is often the least familiar and the most anxiety-provoking of the preceptor's roles, especially for new preceptors.

Performance Criteria

- Describes each of the 4 steps in the evaluation process.
- Demonstrates how to use each of the orientation evaluation tools to appraise and to document preceptee performance.
- Demonstrates how to provide effective and constructive feedback on performance.

Learning is defined as a change in behavior. Evaluation of learning requires an observable and measurable behavior because learning cannot be directly observed.

In order for the evaluator to judge whether the observed behavior is acceptable, some basis for comparison of the behavior must exist.

Without consistent standards for evaluation of performance, each preceptor might judge performances differently because each could be using different standards to rate the performance.

The preceptorship outcomes should be written so that the standard for satisfactory performance of that behavior is evident.

Demonstrates how to use each of the orientation evaluation tools to appraise and to document preceptee performance

Use the 90 Day Competency and Preceptor Pathway to evaluate preceptee's performance.

Demonstrates how to provide effective and constructive feedback on performance

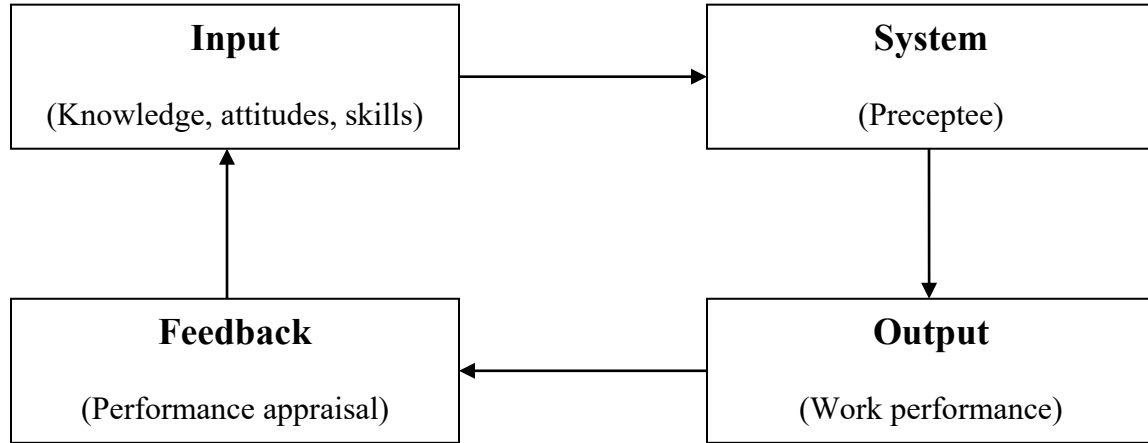
The concept of feedback is borrowed from the field of engineering. Feedback is the process by which part of the output of a system is returned (fed back) to the system as input for controlling the system.

Feedback provides evaluative or corrective information on the performance of that system.

Feedback may be positive or negative.

- ***Positive feedback*** affirms or reinforces the existing output of the system; it is intended to perpetuate or to continue existing output.
- ***Negative feedback*** inhibits or modifies the existing output of the system; it is intended to stop or to discontinue existing output.

Feedback System



Preceptors observe preceptees' performance and provide feedback that evaluates preceptees' behavior so that they can achieve the level of performance described in the expected outcomes.

An example of positive feedback

Preceptor observes that the preceptee admits a new patient in accordance with the established policy and procedure. The preceptor says the following to the preceptee: “Your patient admission was done perfectly. Congratulations!”

The benefits of positive feedback:

- Affords feelings of success for learners
- Enhances motivation for learning
- Reinforces desired performance
- Enhances the learner’s self-esteem and confidence

An example of negative feedback

Preceptor observes that the preceptee's admission documentation is incomplete. The preceptor says, "You did not fully document that admission information."

The drawbacks of negative feedback:

- Produces feelings of failure in learners
- Limits or reduces motivation for learning
- Tends to focus on what not to do
- Tends to discourage and demoralize learners by diminishing their self-esteem and confidence

Preceptors are often uncomfortable when they must tell preceptees that their performance is unacceptable or incorrect. Therefore, it is important that they gain experience in offering a third type of feedback called *constructive feedback*. Like negative feedback, constructive feedback is intended to modify (correct or improve) performance, but, like positive feedback, constructive feedback is conveyed with supportive language.

An example of constructive feedback

“I reviewed your admission documentation for Mr. Carter and found that the sections covering current medications and allergies were left blank. Because all the other admission data were so thoroughly documented, I was surprised to find that these areas lacked notations. Could you tell me why these sections were not included in your assessment documentation?”

The benefits of constructive feedback:

- Produces feelings of at least partial success in learners
- Maintains motivation for learning
- Reinforces desired performance and corrects unsatisfactory aspects of performance
- Maintains self-esteem and confidence in learners

The attributes of effective feedback:

- Specific rather than general
- Factual rather than opinionated
- Descriptive rather than judgmental
- Clearly understood by the receiver
- Times when it will be most useful
- Sensitive to the learner's feelings
- Constructive rather than destructive
- Directed at the learner's behavior rather than at the learner

Four elements of feedback:

- Describe what was observed: who, what, when, where, and how.
- Be as specific as possible: avoid judging and generalizing.
- Relate how the observed behavior made you feel.
- Suggest an alternate behavior (when indicated).

Summary:

- Whenever possible, provide *positive* feedback.
- Whenever necessary, provide *constructive* feedback.
- Unless an emergency arises, avoid giving *negative* feedback.

Alspach, JoAnn. "Chapter 9." *From Staff Nurse to Preceptor: A Preceptor Development Program*. Aliso Viejo, CA: AACN Critical Care Publication, 2000. N. pag. Print.