

# To Pay or Not to Pay: Perceptions of Students' Preceptorship Experience

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## Introduction

- A **pilot project** was initiated with a local health organization to offer all 4<sup>th</sup> year baccalaureate program students an opportunity to complete their final nurse **supervised preceptorship** as an undergraduate (unregulated) **paid nursing employee**.
- RESEARCH QUESTION: *What are the perceived benefits and challenges for 4<sup>th</sup> year baccalaureate nursing students completing a paid preceptorship in partnership with a local health authority?*

## Methodology

- A **cross-sectional exploratory survey design** method was used to explore student and faculty perceptions of the initiative.
- A **23 Likert and short-answer item survey** was offered to all students and faculty in the applicable course.
- The resultant sample consisted of 7 faculty members and 17 students, all of whom took part in the initiative.



## Student Results

- The main factor for participation was **money / finances / compensation** (n=12). Other reasons included **helping with shortage** of nurses in the health settings and **learning to learn** as both a student and employee while building **confidence**.

*“Financially it reduces a lot of stress”*

Using a Likert scale: (1 is strongly disagree, 2 disagree; 3 agree; 4 strongly agree) the following results pertain to student survey responses:  
(n=17; 13 of whom were aged 20-29)

**I felt supported by my preceptor:  $\bar{x}$  = 3.24**

**I felt supported by my instructor:  $\bar{x}$  = 3.76**

**I felt prepared for the experience:  $\bar{x}$  = 2.88**

**The experience prepared me for practice:  
 $\bar{x}$  = 3.47**

- Specific challenges: **confusion** as the initiative rolled out; **negative perceptions by staff nurses** about the initiative; and **limited orientation** to the staff role.
- Overall, student participants indicated the experience was **predominantly positive** with 16 of 17 indicating they would choose it again.

*“Being paid, increased opportunities and potential for future employment.”*

*“Not getting to fully be a student, different expectations, unit cultures, negative responses from other nurses.”*



## Faculty Results



- 4 of 7 (of 12 possible) faculty members indicated they would not choose to teach using this approach.
- Faculty perceived the initiative **provided less consolidation** of knowledge and skills for the students versus the unpaid traditional approach.
- Respondents perceived **varied benefits** of the paid preceptorship experience. Some stated there was more **control over the student experience** in the traditional unpaid approach.
- When comparing traditional preceptorship versus the paid initiative, faculty respondents indicated there were **similar challenges** encountered with both but the **process to address challenges** was notably different with students in an employed role.
- Faculty would have liked **more time to prepare** and **more communication** before the initiative was implemented.

## Conclusion

- The COVID-19 pandemic may have influenced perceptions of this initiative.
- Student responses were more positive than faculty responses in this sample.
- Research exploring the impact of paid clinical experiences, and the perceptions of, students, faculty and nurses, is needed.
- Exploration of innovative clinical experience delivery methods would be beneficial to meet the needs of students, education, and practice settings in the future.