

Beliefs about Adult Learning

How do the following thoughts about learning impact you as a coach?

New coaches should consider the following assumptions about learning to enhance the learning experience of their preceptee:

- New employees of all ages have the potential to learn, with some learning faster than others.
- The new employee is in a change process (including the preceptorship program) and is likely to feel stress and confusion. Some anxiety often increases the motivation to learn, but too much anxiety may cause fatigue, inability to concentrate, resentment, and other barriers to learning. The preceptee will learn more when the conditions support an open exchange of opinions and problem-solving strategies.
- In the clinical area, the coach facilitates learning by incorporating the student's experiences, observations of others, and personal ideas and feelings. Exposure to varied behavior models and aptitudes helps the preceptee to refine his or her own actions and beliefs that will aid the preceptee in meeting his or her own learning goals.
- The depth of long-term learning for preceptees may depend on the extent to which they try to analyze, clarify, or articulate their experiences to others in their work group. The depth of learning increases when new concepts and skills are useful in meeting current needs or problems. This allows preceptees to immediately apply learning theory to a practical situation.
- The formal education program of the orientee provides only one step in his or her progress toward acquiring new behaviors. The adoption of a new behavior depends on many factors. Some conditions predispose an individual to take a particular action, such as practice settings. The goal of the coach is to reinforce the correct behavior changes.
- Learning improves when the learner is an active participant in the education process. The coach, when selecting among several teaching methods, should choose the one that involves the preceptee the most. Using varied methods of teaching helps the learner maintain interest and may help to reinforce concepts without being repetitious.