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Dissertation Topic:
Dietetic Students’ Lived Experience Working with Preceptors: A Phenomenology

The majority of the research conducted on the preceptor model has focused on Allied Health professions other than dietetics. This phenomenological study sought to understand the preceptor experience in dietetics education as revealed by the individuals who had the experience. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the preceptor experience from the perspective of dietetic education graduates in order to understand the impact of the preceptor experience component of the educational process on the professional growth of dietetics education graduates. The August 2016 ACEND Update reveals no significant progress in the match rate for applicants into supervised practice experiences. The match rate has decreased from 52% in 2011 to 49% in 2015. Efforts have resulted in the number of available openings for supervised practice in dietetic internships increasing by 15.6% since 2004, but the number of applicants has skyrocketed by a disproportional 112.5% since 2001 (Gulotta, 2016). The preceptor shortage in dietetics is a significant concern for preparing future dietetics professionals. Through narrative inquiry, six key themes emerged that highlighted the unparalleled experience provided by the preceptor model in dietetics education.