Title of Research Study: Mentoring in Physical Therapy Residency Education: Assessment and Facilitation of Skills

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This study explored the teaching and learning process associated with the development of mentorship skills in residency education. Five resident mentors (3 neurologic and 2 geriatric) participated in 5 professional development opportunities and were assessed using a self-assessment, peer assessment, and resident assessment on their mentorship skills. Three of the 5 mentors engaged in a follow up focus group to gain additional insights to the results of the original study. Results from the self-assessment, peer assessment, and resident assessment were in agreement that mentorship skills improved with participation in structured professional development. Qualitative theming and analysis of narrative responses across all three perspectives found that mentors demonstrated strengths in building rapport, providing an organizational structure for mentoring, implementing a resident and patient-centered approach, and performing guided questioning skills. Common areas for mentors to continue to develop included: gaining insights into greater depth of skilled questioning, facilitating reflection-in-action, identifying appropriate timing of feedback, and maximizing opportunities for evidence-based practice. Mentors reported that both feedback from an experienced mentor (14/15 points) and observing a more experienced mentor in action (12 points) were more beneficial in developing their clinical teaching skills than video feedback (9 points), clinical narratives (5 points), and providing peer feedback to another mentor (5 points). Results of the focus group revealed that mentors continue to function under a teaching paradigm that is very pragmatic and emphasizes psychomotor skills over conceptual reasoning. Mentors reported benefiting the most from professional development experiences that provide opportunities for dialogue around the application of specific clinical teaching strategies. Additionally, a gap in the understanding of the learning sciences and key concepts applied to teaching and learning continues to exist among clinical mentors. Future efforts to support the development of resident mentors should include education to expand clinical educators’ knowledge of teaching and learning paradigms, creation of examples of teaching and learning strategies that are specific to physical therapy, and continued pursuit of mixed methods approach to assessing the teaching and learning process associated with the development of clinical teaching skills in residency mentors across practice settings and across specialty areas. This future work in residency education provides an opportunity for the Nebraska Chapter to engage in a unique model of collaboration across institutions and key clinical organizations across the state.