Preceptor Utilization of Learning Style Assessment: Perception Versus Reality

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Background

When learning preferences are used, orientation objectives are completed in less time. Learning style assessment instruments are often used in organizations to identify learner's preference and facilitate the exchange of information during the orientation process. Cognitive learning style assessment instruction is part of the study hospital's preceptor education. Researchers sought to explore the "perception versus reality" of learning style assessment use among nurse preceptors.

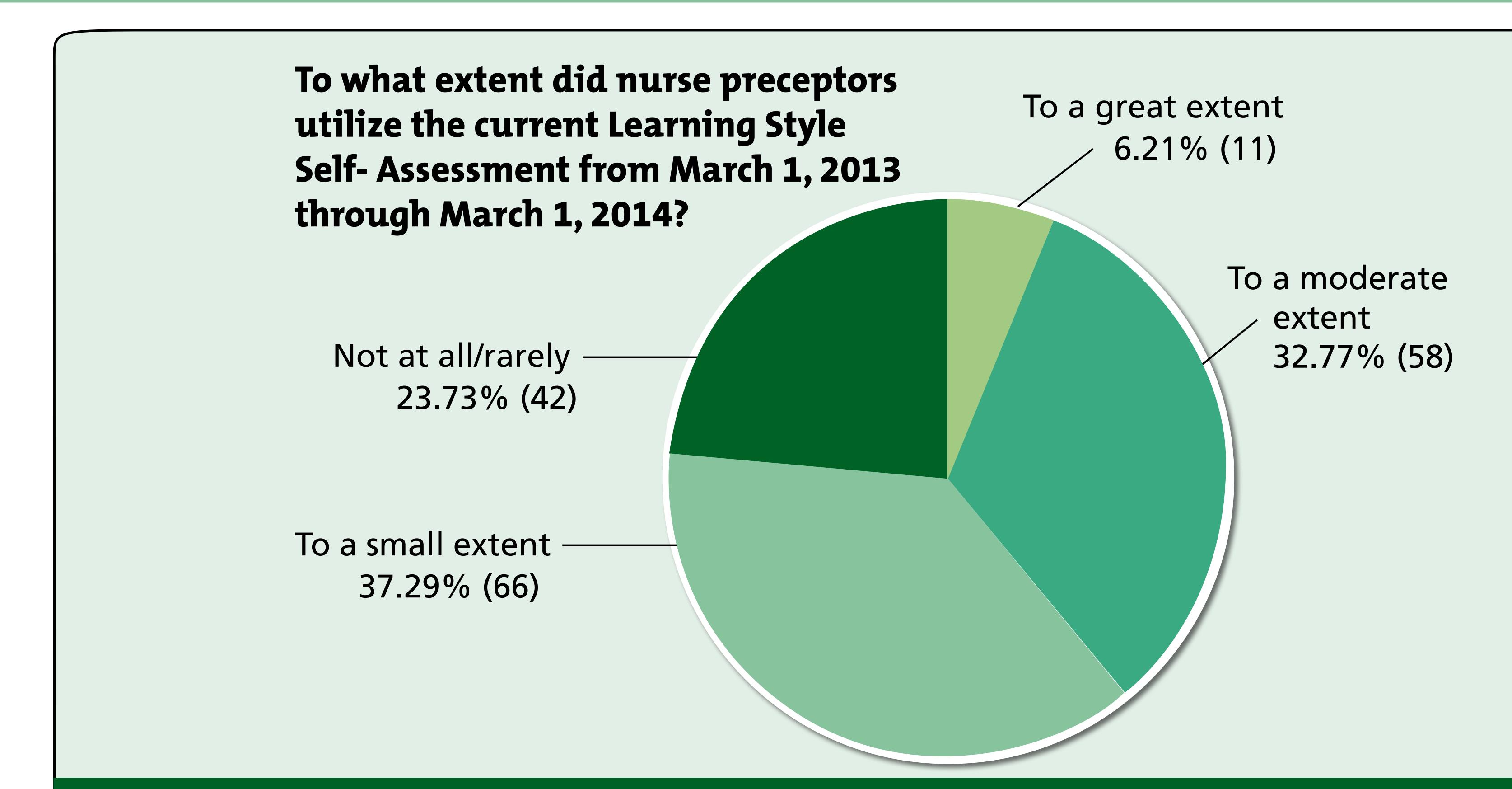
Assumptions

- Preceptors were not consistently using the results of the cognitive learning assessment
- Preceptors wanted to know the orientee's instructional preference instead of their cognitive learning style

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the frequency with which preceptors were using the Learning Style Self-Assessment during orientation. The research questions included:

- To what extent did nurse preceptors utilize the current Learning Style Self-Assessment from March 1, 2013 through March 1, 2014?
- What is the correlation between nurse preceptors' demographic factors and use of the Learning Style Self-Assessment?



Method

Design: Retrospective-descriptive research method

Setting: Tertiary, mid-size, acute care, Magnet® and teaching hospital

Framework: Andragogical model for adult learning (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2005)

Instrument: Electronic questionnaire via Survey Monkey[©]
Sample: Active nurse preceptors

- 180 responses from the 245 possible participants
- 73.5% return rate (attained adequate power)

Procedure: Pearson's Chi Square, Cramer's V, and phi were used to measure correlation

Results

The study indicated 61 percent of preceptors use the results of the learning style assessment "Not at all" or "To a small extent." In comparison, 98 percent of orientees perceived their learning style was used by their preceptor.

Significant correlation existed between the use of the orientees' cognitive learning style and:

- Number of years practicing as a registered nurse
- Number of years working at the facility
- Years of precepting

Survey responses revealed that as nursing, organization, and preceptor experience increase, there was less use of learning style preference.



Discussion/Recommendation

Practiced preceptors draw upon their experiences and relevance to drive their facilitation of orientation, rather than using the orientees learning style.

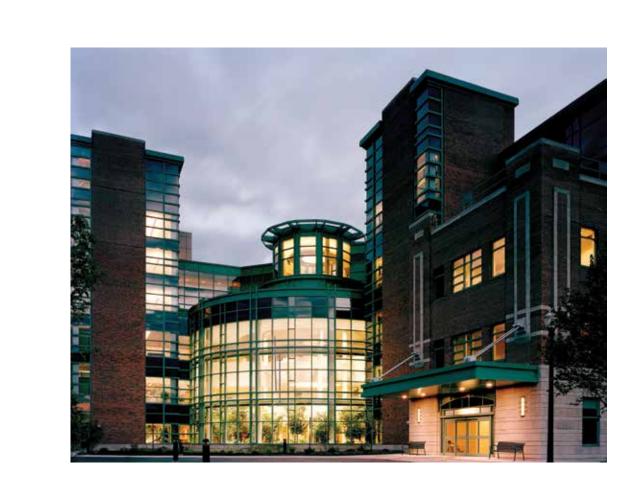
The study hospital will:

- Explore reliable and valid learning style assessment instruments in partnership with preceptors
- Use a reliable, valid and relevant learning style instrument to provide a meaningful learning experience

Study Limitations

The retrospective survey design of this study may have presented limitations:

- Recollection of past experiences with orientees
- Use of fixed questions and responses
- Reluctance to truthfully answer the questions



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References

1) Knowles, M. S., Holton III, E.F., & Swanson, R.A., (2005). The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education Technologies, 8(3), 65-81. doi:10.4018/ jdet.2010070105 3) Coffield, F., Moseley, D., Hall, E., & Ecclestone, K. (2004). Learning styles and pedagogy in post-16 learning a systematic and critical review. Learning and Skills Research Centre. Retrieved from http://elibrary.kiu.ac.ug:8080/jspui/bitstream/1/273/1/15567514-Learning-Styles-Pedagogy.pdf 4) Billings, D.M. & Halstead, J.A. (2016). Teaching in Nursing (5th edition).