

Essential Competencies and Capabilities for Paramedic Preceptors. A Scoping Review.

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Paramedic preceptors are vitally important to a learner's successful development. Learners in paramedicine often begin their role with little clinical experience and a preceptor ensures the learner is safe and competent to practice. However, many paramedic preceptors have insufficient training or education in how to perform the role. Identifying paramedic preceptor competencies and capabilities may help to inform an education program specifically for the role.

Preceptor

An experienced clinician who works with a learner in a clinical setting and undertakes the formal one-on-one training and assessment of the learner over a set period.^{1,2}

Competencies

The individual skills and knowledge required for a role.³

Capabilities

A combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes that are used to work effectively with others and make appropriate decisions.³

Research Question

“What are the essential competencies and capabilities for paramedic preceptors?”

Methods

The JBI Methodology⁴ was used in this review.

Databases:

MEDLINE, CINAHL, ERIC, Web of Science and Scopus. Plus, manual searches of Trove, Google Scholar, paramedicine journals and citation lists.

Search terms:*

Population: Paramedic preceptors

Concept: Competencies and capabilities

Context: Role

Inclusion criteria:

All types of study design and grey literature written in English over the past 20 years from countries with ‘Anglo-American’ models of prehospital care.

Results

Data Analysis and Presentation

Competencies and capabilities were mapped, tabled and grouped into categories using a content analysis method.⁵ Frequency counting was used to determine the most commonly occurring competencies and capabilities. These were then deemed the most essential.

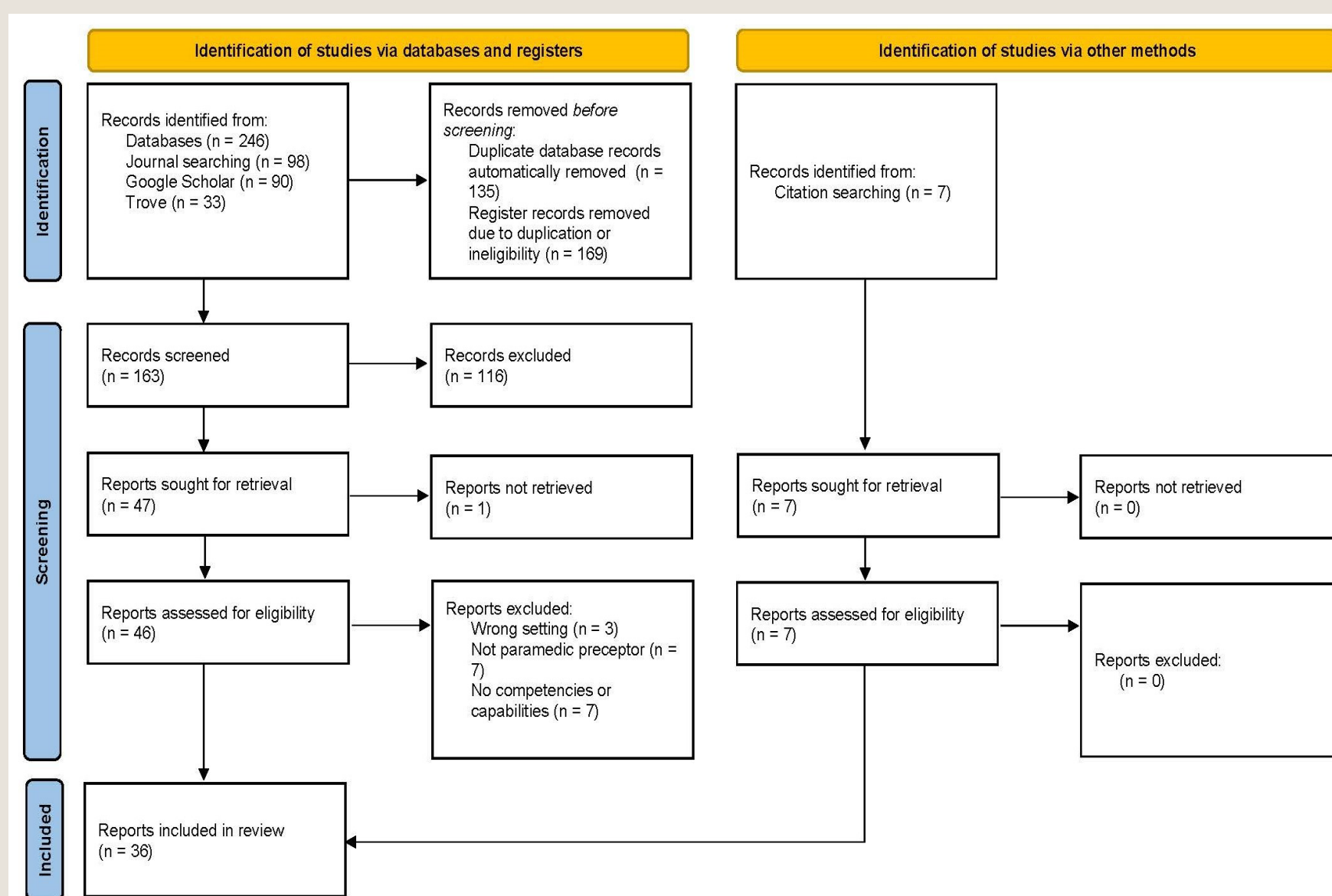
Results

Thirty-six articles were included in this review. Most articles were written in Australia (n = 13) or the United Kingdom (n = 13) and were either opinion pieces (n = 13) or qualitative studies (n = 12).

Review Findings

Nine competencies and five capabilities were identified as essential.

Competencies	n articles (%)
1. Learning and teaching competencies	35 (97%)
1.1 Providing appropriate feedback	18 (50%)
1.2 Assessing the learner effectively	14 (39%)
1.3 Assisting the development of critical thinking	14 (39%)
1.4 Coaching to facilitate learning	12 (33%)
1.5 Understanding adult learning theory	11 (31%)
2. Interpersonal skills competencies	26 (72%)
2.1 Communicating effectively	18 (50%)
2.2 Building positive relationships	17 (47%)
2.3 Supporting socialisation	10 (29%)
3. Clinical competence	13 (36%)
Capabilities	
1. Being a role model	18 (50%)
2. Acting as a counsellor	14 (39%)
3. Providing psychological safety	12 (33%)
4. Having intrinsic desire	12 (33%)
5. Being a critical thinker	12 (33%)



*Additional, relevant search and MeSH Terms were used in the full search

Discussion, Implications and Future Research

1. Learning and teaching competencies overlap with preceptor competencies identified in other health disciplines.
2. Interpersonal competencies are imperative to support the learners integration to the workplace.
3. A level of clinical competence and experience is required to be an effective preceptor. Benner's⁶ *Novice to expert theory* states clinical competence typically develops after two to three years of clinical experience.
4. 'Acting as a counsellor' is a unique capability essential to paramedic preceptors.
5. Paramedics require the opportunity to learn these competencies and capabilities to be effective in their role.
6. This review's findings can inform the design of a learning program for preceptors and the selection and identification of appropriate preceptors.
7. Further research is needed to identify which competencies and capabilities preceptors view as the most important for each learner group (students, graduates etc).

WE WANT YOU!

Tell us what skills preceptors need and what motivates you to do preceptor education!

Are you an Ahpra registered paramedic? Volunteers are being recruited for research purposes. You are invited to complete the Paramedic Preceptor Education Assessment.

This 10-minute survey will help us improve preceptor education!

Please contact Andrew Van Noordenburg, who is the student researcher via andrew.vannoordenburg@acu.edu.au if you have any questions about the research
 This study has been approved by ACU's Human Research Ethics Committee. Application No: 2024 - 3701



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