

FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER PRECEPTOR **TEACHING TIPS**

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1. Avoid using the same teaching-learning approach for everyone.

Students learn in many ways. Some are visual, oral or written learners, some concrete and some abstract, and others are multidimensional. Recognize that your style of learning may be very different from the student's.

2. Spend some time to know your student.

Find out your student's talents, prior experiences, and learning needs. This information helps you know how to best guide the student. Knowing the student's current knowledge base and readiness to learn helps both of you know how much work you have ahead of you. This is essential to help the student see the gap between where he is and where he needs to be.

3. Create a positive and safe learning environment.

Students are more likely to take risks when the teacher creates a safe environment. Admitting what one doesn't know or making a wrong decision is an uncomfortable feeling for anyone. Allow students the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Establish mutual trust, respect and support.

4. Give frequent feedback along the way, not just at the end.

Students need to have information about their behavior and performance as they are learning. Focus on the performance, not the person. Involve the learner in the self-evaluation process.



5. Share your passion.

If the teacher has passion for the art and science of nursing and health care, the student is likely to emulate it. You are teaching by example all of the time. Students learn as much from observing your behavior and communication of caring as they do from listening.

6. Repeat the important points.

State the most important points more than once and in various ways. The first time something is stated it is heard and will be recognized, but it takes repetition and application to be learned. Repeat the important points.

7. Ask questions.

Learning requires exploring the unknown and considering ideas from a different perspective. The preceptor guides the student to seek a deeper understanding. For example, "How does that work?" "What would have happened if we had done exactly opposite of what you suggested?" You are teaching the student how to think. Ask questions that encourage students to demonstrate the thinking process that led to the right answer.

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> **Family Nurse Practitioner Program**

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8. Talk through your decision-making process.

Share the process you go through in making decisions. Problem-solving skills can be learned. Point out the factors in the clinical situation that guided your thinking.

9. You don't have to be perfect.

Acknowledging that you don't know something shows you are still learning. The student expects you to know the answers to most questions, but does not expect you to be perfect.

10. Sometimes "less is more."

Making one or two teaching points in a case may be better than trying to have the learner focus in on all possible learning points.

11. Break larger tasks into step-by-step skills.

Give feedback on the performance of each step of the process. Give rationale during demonstration. Allow active practice and repetition.

12. Be punctual, present, presentable, professional and personable, NOT perfect.

PROGRESSION OF A NURSE PRACTITIONER STUDENT

BEGINNING STUDENT

- ▶ Student spends initial time observing preceptor.
- ▶ Student assessment skills should be validated by the preceptor.
- ▶ Student management plans need significant guidance.
- ▶ Student needs high level of direction, which decreases as skill level increases.
- ▶ As student progresses, preceptor allows student to take on more independent responsibilities.

INTERMEDIATE STUDENT

- ▶ Student becomes more proficient in analyzing data and is more skilled with assessing and formulating management plans.
- ▶ Student improves use of time and resources.
- ▶ Student may require assistance in prioritizing and coordinating care.
- ▶ Student requires support and assistance for complex cases.
- ▶ Student is ready to demonstrate other nurse practitioner functions such as patient/family teaching and participating in teams.

ADVANCED STUDENT

- ▶ Student is expected to perform all role functions in an organized, efficient, skillful and independent manner.
- ▶ Student is expected to engage in interdisciplinary role collaboration, consultation and referral.
- ▶ Student and preceptor develop a more collegial relationship.

Adapted From: The Geriatric Interdisciplinary Team Training Program (GITT) Nurse Practitioner Clinical Preceptor Guide

