

Creating a positive culture of teaching and learning in the practice

1. I try to make the students feel welcome, I am lucky we are a team of only 12 all together so they get to see the same admin staff etc and we have a dedicated room for them which I think helps them feel safe.
2. We let the whole practice know in the monthly team meeting before the 5th year students are due to start at the practice because the 5th years have most contact with the whole team, particularly for their team work presentation and they also interview the staff. Being a smallish team allows the 5th years to become part of the team. We invited them to our practice half day shopping trip at Westfield a few weeks ago. They also bond very well with the GP trainees and get a lot of advice.
3. For 2nd years, the receptionists expect them and lead them to the coffee room for their sessions.
4. We know adults learn best when the learning is relevant to them (Knowles, 1990) so I like to put it into context. For example, are my current 5th years facing finals, in which case they may be more interested in developing their knowledge base and clinical skills rather than focussing on psychosocial agendas. Alternatively, have the 2nd years got assessments coming up which may take their mind off learning today.
5. A learning needs assessment is invaluable and doesn't have to take a lot of time, e.g. for 2nd years, have you had a PBL on this topic? if not a few questions around say cardiovascular risk factors rather than "telling" the facts, is surprisingly positive. Students always know more than they think they do and are logical intelligent beings
6. It's worth doing a quick lesson plan and keep it fast and furious, e.g. for a 3 hour session:
 - a. 30mins on theory
 - b. 60mins to put this into practice with a patient doing different skills such as history taking and clinical skills
 - c. 10min break
 - d. Spend the rest of the session summing up what was learned and asking for feedback to see what we could do better next time in terms of teacher planning
7. It's important, I find, not take the feedback as criticism. What suits one group may not suit another. Some 2nd years like to see patients themselves by the end of the year and some like me in the room throughout the year.
8. It's always worth trying new things. In our practice we have GP trainees and our ST3 taught our 5th years for a tutorial this time. This helped her teaching skills and helped them learn from a less dinosaur colleague!
9. It's always nice to build up a relationship whether the placement is for a few weeks or for a year and this can lead to wider help rather than just teaching the curriculum such as careers advice giving.

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KNOWLES, M. 1990. *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*, Houston, Gulf Publishing.