At some point in your nursing career, you’ll find yourself working alongside nursing students. Are you ready? At first, working with a student might feel a little overwhelming, time consuming, and maybe even intimidating. But if you follow these 10 tips, the process can be a positive learning experience for both of you.

1. **Take a deep breath.** First, congratulate yourself on taking a step forward in promoting the profession and helping teach a student how to become a nurse. Students are eager to work with experienced nurses who realize the importance of sharing their experience and enjoy the profession. Be that nurse!

2. **Be honest.** The nursing student is in your facility to learn safe practices, so make sure her performance is technically correct. Correcting the student, gently but honestly, for her mistakes will provide an invaluable lesson. But don’t focus solely on her mistakes; encouragement goes a long way in retaining nursing students.

3. **Pick an encouraging phrase to use with your student.** Sometimes you may have trouble finding something positive to say when working with a student who’s still learning, but knowing that you could be an inspiration to her and affect the rest of her career can be motivating. She’ll look to you as a role model for future practice, and your words will have considerable impact. Encourage her with phrases such as “Nursing is such a great profession! There are so many options.” Or “Today is pretty hectic, but when I go home, I’ll know I’ve made a difference.” The student will most likely remember your phrase—and you—in the future.

4. **Practice patience.** Working with a student requires considerable time, patience, and understanding. She might not perform to your expectations, or she might do something differently than you’d do it. She’ll probably ask many questions. Expect to take time out of your regular routine to talk with her and help her learn.

5. **Be open to learning something new.** Teaching reinforces your own knowledge about a topic. Sometimes a student will ask questions that spark a discussion on something you might not otherwise have thought about—and you just might learn something new.

6. **Expect good communication.** Not only should you communicate with the nursing student as often as possible, but you should also let her know that you expect her to communicate with you about the patients she’s caring for. A student can feel reassured knowing that she has a point of contact other than her clinical instructor, and she’ll be more likely to ask you questions about her patients if her instructor is unavailable.

7. **Point out interesting clinical situations.** Students appreciate nurses who take enough interest in their learning experience to say, “Mrs. Jones in room 12 has a systolic murmur. She said it’d be okay if you listened, so let’s go.”

8. **Share personal stories.** Storytelling is a good way to break the ice. Besides letting you get to know the student in a personal way, stories often contain life lessons that people can learn from.

9. **Shed the “attitude” and be respectful.** Students will notice any insecurities or resentment you might have about working with them. If you set the tone for a respectful experience, most likely you’ll receive the same.

10. **Remember the past.** Remembering what it was like to be a nursing student does wonders in helping a student during her clinical experience. Not only will it make you appreciate how far you’ve come personally in the profession, but you’ll also be making an investment in a future nurse who may very well be working alongside you as a peer one day soon.

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