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Three Reasons Why ... Cardiothoracic PAs Need to Precept PA Students

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You are medicine's version of a fighter pilot. You calmly walk towards patients that require high levels of knowledge and skill. Your team needs to work together seamlessly or people will die. Why would you want to slow your process by bringing students into the mix? Here are three reasons why you need to do it.

It will make you better.

"If you can't explain it simply. You don't understand it well enough." -Albert Einstein. Taking time to explain how and why you do what you do is an exercise that helps you consider parts of the process that you may not stop to think about otherwise. Reviewing the literature with students refreshes your knowledge. Teaching skills makes your technique cleaner and more efficient.

If you don't train the next generation then you might be the last.

PAs bask in the glow of good press and attention from medical recruiters that our profession is enjoying in present day. However, behind the strength of the demand for PA professionals is the weakness of the supply of experienced PAs to fill clinical positions. While an individual experienced PA may benefit from this dynamic the profession is hurt when clinical positions go unfilled because employers may eventually look elsewhere for their needs. It's great to have an excellent PA staff but if that can't be achieved then the show goes on without us. If you don't train new PAs then this profession stops with you.

Someone did it for you.

There was a time when you had none of the tools in which you depend to make a living and support your family. Someone helped you rise from beginner to mastery. Yes, you worked hard, but you had help. You need to give back to the profession and tradition that has taken you so far to express your gratitude. Your mentors gave to you so this work can live on beyond their time. Not passing this forward is disrespectful to those who invested in you.

Bonus. It is a great way to see if someone fits with your team

The idea that you need to hire for attitude and train for skill is so often repeated that it is difficult to know who should be attributed for the quote. Bringing someone into your space for some time is a great way to assess attitude and gain insight into aptitude for the skills that are required.