

One on One Teaching

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Tips for Teaching

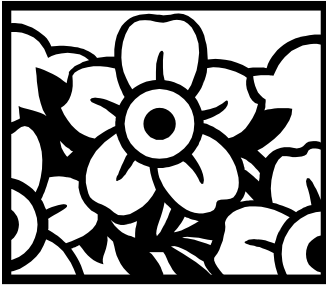
When you have a student-intern, you do need to take the time to explain things to them to give the experience clarity. To create a viable learning experience, the student-intern needs to talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate and apply it to hands-on experience.

The following are some basic principles that are relevant to teaching one on one that may assist you at combining the day-to-day activities on the farm with an educational component.

1. First offer a demonstration of the technique you use to meet the desired outcome. Positive examples are more helpful than examples of what not to do.
2. Think about the basics of what is truly important of getting your point across. Verbal hints that identify key features of the skill will help student-interns understand the desired outcome of the task. They are likely to be distracted by irrelevant details. Keep it simple! You can add details later.
3. 'Bare bones', simplified demonstrations are more useful as starting points than complex situations that may overwhelm the intern with too many details.
4. Permit student-interns the maximum freedom to experience successful completion of a task or a part of a task, but give enough guidance so that they will not get bogged down in a rut of errors. This implies that the learning experiences of student-interns go from the simple to the complex, with the steps so ordered that each new problem can be successfully solved. There are no 'stupid questions', and it is good to let them know this.
5. Student-interns need practice with feedback.
6. Don't try to correct everything on the first trial of a project! Feedback from the farmer-instructor or from peers may provide more information that the student can assimilate.
7. Try to provide some encouraging feedback as well as identification of mistakes. Of course it is important to point out errors, but be aware of how you make your point so that mistakes are taken constructively.
8. Feedback that identifies errors won't help if the learner doesn't know what to do to avoid the errors. Give guidance about what to try next.
9. Practice with varied examples is likely to be both more motivating than is simple drill and repetition.
10. Coaching is not simply one-way telling and criticizing. Asking the learners about their perceptions of what they are doing and helping them evaluate their own performance is also important. As you evaluate work, verbalize the process you are using and the basis for your evaluation. Like other skills, self-evaluation is learned by practice with feedback. Thus student-interns need many opportunities for self-evaluation with feedback about their evaluation as well as about the work being evaluated.
11. Peers can help one another. You don't need to monitor everyone all of the time.

One on One Teaching

How can you get your work done and teach?



This is a subject that most of the farmers interested in becoming instructors have asked.

I believe that we need to look at some of the basic principles used in one on one teaching to offer perspectives of how to meet this task as effectively as possible.

Initially, with a new intern on the farm, it is going to take more time to explain things and show them how to do specific projects. There are always tasks that take extra care and expertise to accomplish, and these are the tasks that you need to be near by to offer demonstration of the technique. Ideally, the best learning takes place when you first demonstrate the technique, allow the student to show you what they perceive to be the appropriate action; and then work side by side for a period of time to make observations, suggestions, and offer encouragement.

It is important to permit student-interns the maximum freedom to experience successful completion of a task or a part of a task. At the same time, we need to give enough guidance so that they will not get bogged down in a rut of errors. This means that once a task has been given, that you allow time for the intern to have the experience without 'hovering'. Staying nearby in case they have questions can be helpful as well.

As farmers, most of us are very used to doing everything. If you do not take the time to line out several tasks with your interns, they will be returning to ask you "what do I do next?" over and over again.

One way to encourage a self-motivated intern is to have an ongoing list of projects or tasks that are clearly defined and outlined for them to do. This will help you utilize your time more productively and provide alternative projects for your interns without your having to stop so often to show them the way. Granted, at the start up of the season; you are definitely going to spend more time explaining things. By planning ahead, you can give reading assignments that are relative to the next days project. This will give them a better understanding of the tasks at hand.

There are always daily, basic tasks that need to be accomplished. These are things that may not need close supervision to be accomplished. By making a list of ongoing tasks for your intern to work on, they will be given the opportunity to work independently at times when you simply cannot take the time to stop and explain.

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Example: Daily Task List

By taking the time to line out some basic plans for each day ahead of time, you will be more effective as an instructor, be able to better meet the challenge of teaching and get your work done. We will keep this list handy where students can find it.

For Greentree Naturals, Daily Tasks may include the following:

Natural Pest Control – A lesson in observation; walk through the gardens and hand pick any pests. If uncertain of identification, save pest in jar; use reference books and document location of infestations on garden maps.

Weed Control - Hand weed or use hoe between rows; hand weed within established beds or rows only if planted crop is easily identifiable.

Dead Head Patrol – Flowers and herbs need old flowers removed assure continued flower blossoms and increased production of herbs.

Seed Saving – Throughout the garden season, flowers & herbs are maturing for seed collection. Seeds that are harvested need to be collected in paper bags, labeled and dated during collection.

Compost – The compost pile can always use a turn; check the temperature and make note of it in daily records. Add materials as needed or available.

Collect Eggs – Collect from nests in chicken yard and place basket in refrigerator for storage.

Culinary Herb Harvest – Most of the culinary herbs are placed in bunches and hung to dry. Specific instruction is required for different species of herbs.

Preparing for Market - After the harvest, produce needs to be cleaned; sorted; weighed and prepared for whichever market it is going to.

Garlic – Harvesting garlic umbels as needed; chop and freeze for garlic scape pesto.

Mulching – Use chopped up straw and/or grass clippings where needed.

Goat pen / Chicken coop – Clean out poop, replenish straw as needed.

Tool sharpening & cleaning– As needed, sharpen edges and oil metal and wood handles.