

NEST Overview

NEST (Nurturing Education through Structured Teaching) is a rapid-cycle clinical teaching framework designed to help educators translate established principles of adaptive learning and coaching into brief, structured teaching encounters.

Grounded in the Master Adaptive Learner (MAL) framework, NEST supports learner agency, critical thinking, reflection, targeted feedback, and collaborative goal setting within the flow of routine clinical care.

The Challenge

The Master Adaptive Learner cycle describes an iterative process of planning, learning, assessing, and adjusting that supports continued learner development.

In clinical environments, however, time constraints, workflow demands, and limited opportunities for private feedback can make these behaviors difficult to incorporate consistently.

NEST provides a practical structure for bringing them into everyday clinical teaching.

The NEST Cycle

N — Name the Need

Learner identifies what they most need to learn or improve.

E — Explore the Experience

Faculty observe the learner, explore their thinking, and prompt critical thinking around the identified need.

S — Self-Reflect & Receive Feedback

Learner reflects on performance; faculty provide targeted, actionable feedback.

T — Target the Next Step

Faculty and learner collaboratively identify a specific next step or goal.

Repeat the Cycle

Revisit, reflect, and refine during subsequent learning opportunities.

From Theory to Teaching

NEST does not introduce a new theory of learning. Rather, it provides a structured, point-of-care approach for translating established principles of adaptive learning and coaching into routine clinical teaching.

The framework is designed to move learning from:

Need → Experience → Reflection & Feedback → Next Step → New Learning Opportunity

Designed for Clinical Practice

NEST was initially piloted with medical student preceptors in a newborn nursery. Initial findings support the feasibility and acceptability of incorporating the framework into routine clinical teaching, with faculty reporting approximately 5–10 minutes for implementation.

Ongoing work will evaluate NEST across additional clinical settings and examine learner perspectives, observed teaching behaviors, and learner outcomes.