

## A Primer for the Clinician Educator: Supporting Excellence and Promoting Change Through Storytelling

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**Book Title:** A Primer for the Clinician Educator: Supporting Excellence and Promoting Change Through Storytelling

**Author:** Larrie Greenberg, MD

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*A Primer for the Clinician Educator: Supporting Excellence and Promoting Change Through Storytelling* is written by Larrie Greenberg, MD, a retired pediatric clinician educator with 45 years of practice. To build rapport with the readers, Dr Greenberg begins by describing his experiences. He portrays a clinician educator (CE), the target audience of this book, as a hybrid professional between clinical physician and academician. CEs encompass physicians in charge of patient care, teaching, and educational scholarship in academic institutions across the country. Though he is of pediatric training and practice, the focus and application of his writing is applicable to family medicine and other primary care specialties. The main goal of this book is to help CEs increase career satisfaction, better connect with learners, become effective teachers, and progress professionally. Dr Greenberg clarifies that this book is meant to be an adjunct to other references for CEs. He recommends other references throughout for readers to consider and expand their professional palette.

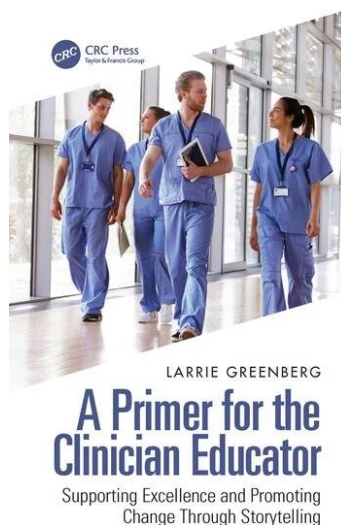
In an effort to show readers his expertise and vast experiences in clinical education, Dr Greenberg opens the writing with an introduction about himself. At times, though, the beginning seems overly self-referential and creates a convoluted beginning that digresses from the main objective of the book.

Through several stories and references, he describes how success at teaching medicine requires CEs to focus on changing toward evidence-based, learner-focused methods, rather than the traditional teaching and learning methods. He argues that academic medicine has a “theme of change,” with change being the “essence” of teaching (p. 5).

The next chapters have guidance specific to the “Junior Clinician Educator,” “Mid-Level Clinician Educator,” and “Senior Clinician Educator.” Dr Greenberg notes that the time line and career progression through these levels may not be the same for each CE. As the book’s foreword suggests, these sections are intended to be a fireside chat between Dr Greenberg and the reader. Dr Greenberg focuses the chapters on probable challenges for CEs at each career level. Each subsection seems to share a story or two from Dr Greenberg’s experience, with deeper dives into pertinent discussion points.

Much of the book is focused on Dr Greenberg’s experiences and storytelling. This makes sense given the title, and the anecdotal approach seems to work sometimes. However, at other times, the level of storytelling is counterproductive, with the deeper messages and discussion points getting lost. Overall, the goal of assisting CEs professionally seems to be met, but much of the writing is lengthy and verbose, with lots of *would*, *could*, and *should* statements and limited evidence-based discussion to support them. This tendency seems to contradict the author’s request to focus on evidence-based, learner-focused teaching methods.

The second half of the book is a list of 35 tips that Dr Greenberg offers CEs. The intention is to highlight common issues that CEs experience that may not be taught well through



traditional medical training. Similar to the previous sections, each tip seems to have one, two, or three anecdotes used as tools to highlight specific learning points. Readers can connect with each tip, but the tips are broad, and often the discussion becomes tangential. The organization of the tips seems to vary without a standardized format regarding how many stories there are, how the stories are listed, or how they are discussed. Periodically, the writing is redundant with previous topics discussed in the book. The penultimate section is a list of 10 books Dr Greenberg recommends all CEs read. In a brief epilogue, he tells readers he hopes his stories were educational and wishes readers luck with their careers.

This writing seems to fall into the self-help genre. With 132 pages, which seems fairly brief compared to other similar books, the text has a rather high price tag. The target audience is broad, focusing on CEs with an emphasis on primary care, though all clinicians may benefit from several of the lessons. Future editions may benefit from being less self-referential; improving overall organization; decreasing verbosity; reducing *would*, *could*, and *should* statements; and increasing evidence-based references and discussions.