



## My Respiratory Care Journey: Jayesh John, RRT, RRT-ACCS

*Clinical Assistant Professor, Director - RRT to BSRC - Online Program at Texas State University*



Utilizing my innate passion for helping others, I embarked on a journey into respiratory care education, viewing it not just as a career path but as a means to fully realize my potential. My transition to this role was facilitated by my rich experience as a respiratory therapist within a robust hospital system, where I encountered diverse patient scenarios that honed my critical thinking and clinical judgment. The invaluable mentorship and camaraderie among fellow therapists significantly contributed to my growth, instilling in me a deep sense of gratitude and a desire to pay it forward. Immersed in an environment that fostered growth and curiosity, I found myself drawn to the idea of imparting knowledge and shaping future clinicians — an endeavor that I wholeheartedly embraced. In essence, my journey into education was fueled by a genuine passion ignited by my clinical experiences.

My appreciation for teaching was kindled during my time as a preceptor to new staff members, but it truly blossomed when I was entrusted with the role of clinical instructor during my previous teacher's sabbatical. Tasked with guiding students with their first glimpse into the world of respiratory care on the general adult wards, I empathized with their apprehension, as I recalled grappling with similar feelings during my early days as a respiratory therapist. Drawing from my own experiences, I was able to provide them with the support and guidance needed to navigate this important part of their journey. Although my experience as an instructor was brief, it was spectacular because it grew the passion within me to help students gain a deeper insight and understanding of everything I knew as it related to respiratory care. Another takeaway from this experience was understanding the significance of my educational background — underscoring the importance of expertise and qualification in the field. Essentially, my appointment as clinical instructor was not solely attributed to my status as an alum or being a good bedside clinician, it was also the possession of a qualifying degree.

Although I had the necessary skills to navigate the various intricacies of patient care, transitioning into academia demanded a broader skill set beyond my expertise in respiratory care. Alongside teaching, the educator role encompasses research, service, and mentoring, each presenting its own set of challenges. This transition demands consistent high performance, often pushing me beyond my comfort zone and exposing vulnerabilities. In the early stages, I leaned on colleagues for support, acknowledging that success required humility and a relentless pursuit of improvement. Over time, I learned to set higher goals, push beyond my comfort zone and embrace new challenges. Despite initial apprehensions, I discovered fulfillment in teaching, because I was persistent in my preparation and always willing to adapt to new changes.

In this new chapter of life, it's important to find a balance between academic responsibilities and personal well-being to prevent burnout. My colleagues played a pivotal role in this journey, offering guidance and encouragement. Through their support, I learned that my commitment to personal growth directly benefits my students, equipping them for success in their own healthcare journeys. As an educator, I find fulfillment in contributing to the development of future healthcare professionals, which brings me back to why I came to the world of respiratory care — my enduring passion for helping others. Each day as an educator, I get a chance to help my students understand that they are powerful, brilliant and have the capacity for greatness.