

Tips for Being an Effective (surgical) Teacher

OTA Young Practitioners Forum

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Ask yourself – how important is teaching to you?

Ask yourself – how effective a teacher are you?

Ask yourself – do you have the tools to become the teacher you want to be?

This is not educational theory 101!

Goals for you as teacher:

Clinical outcomes – teaching can be compatible with the best of outcomes

Self-satisfaction – see Q above; this is a huge driver; gauge yourself

Educate (+ train) – don't just train monkeys; teach principles and how to deviate

Knowledge – you are the least important source of this

Skills – explain, demonstrate, discuss, have them explain, demo...

Judgment – by discussion and esp by example

Adaptability – how and when do you deviate from the basic?

Goals for learner:

Philosophical – above

Practical – has to be specifics driven (independent of NAS milestones)

Individual – learner must begin to self-identify

By category – level, rotation, type of surgery specific

Episodic – each case is a great episode to focus learning

→ Preop plan – discuss goals, learner formulates, teacher refines, confirm

Feedback / evaluation:

Formative – this is critical feedback; this evaluates, shapes and alters behavior

Immediate – identify things that require something now “let me show you how to...”

Episodic – what went well, what would you change, what was f'ed up

Summative – this is evaluation and helps gauge progress (but how helpful...)

Level & rotation appropriate

Knowledge

Don't spoon feed; they can read books/articles and watch videos!

Socratic – give them suspense, make them think and create connections

Value of stress – use judiciously; evidence for and against...

Value of suspense – use copiously!

(Skipping Skills)

Judgment

Never ignore a why Q

Teach efficiency not speed; eg, when to slow down, when to move with alacrity

Have specific OR plans with room for change so you can teach the why

Make it reason, experience, data based

A certain amount of brainwashing

→ always expect sabotage, have a plan c, you can always make it worse

A few things about transition (fellow to new attending to one with experience)

You have to see “blood on the ground”; if you don't do, you can't teach!

The learner has to respect you as a surgeon as well as teacher

At your best, what are your strengths? Be honest as to what and how much to teach.

Teach a teacher – the next challenge!

Learn, practice, evolve – repeat...

Don't be complacent – learn formally as well as informally

→ OTA, educational literature, AO, AAOS, local institutional programs