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