Tips for Clinical Instructors

ASHLEY EFAW, DSC, MOT, OTR/L (AOTA, 2020)



Graded Learning

- Initiate the experience with exposure to practice: Observation, Model practice to the student.
- Challenge the student: Reduce direction and ask probing questions in a supportive environment.
- Promote independence and allow trial and error



Teaching Modes

Move through the following modes during the experience:

Expert: You possess the knowledge and are introducing concepts and skills to the student.

Formal Authority: You provide structure and standards, with clear objectives and expectations.

Personal: Teach by example and encourage observation then have the student complete it.

Facilitator: Guide and direct, explore options and suggest alternatives so students can make informed choices.

Delegator: Promote autonomy and independence of the student



Student Centered Strategies

Organizational: A proactive plan for the FW experience. Make sure to have frequent feedback sessions, outline assignments, set weekly expectations, and have site-specific objectives.

Collaborative: Embrace the mutual responsibility of yourself and the student. Utilize flexible problem-solving, talk your clinical reasoning out loud, ask for student ideas, and collaborate.

Adaptive: Be flexible and adapt to the student's needs. Ask for the student's feedback on what you can do better. Set goals for yourself as the instructor during the experience.



Styles of Supervision to Reach Student Independence

Directing: Impart your knowledge to the student.

Coaching: Guide student knowledge and thinking.

Supporting: Offer guidance and collaborate with the student. Be nearby and available, but not directly with them.

Delegating: Mentor the student and advise students in the FW experience.



Feedback Tips

- Watch for assumptions: consider what reactions you are having to result in the feedback (cognitive or emotional).
- Consider the student's level of experience/education and their self-esteem.
- Tie feedback to learning goals/objectives.
- Provide feedback routinely and in a timely manner.
- Provide feedback in an objective and nonjudgmental way, avoiding inflammatory language.