

Teaching Tips



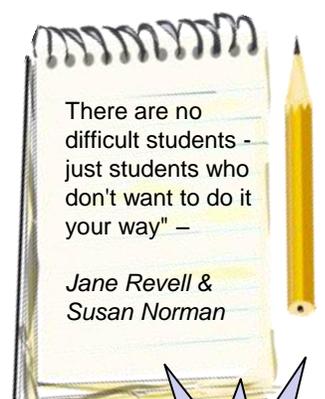
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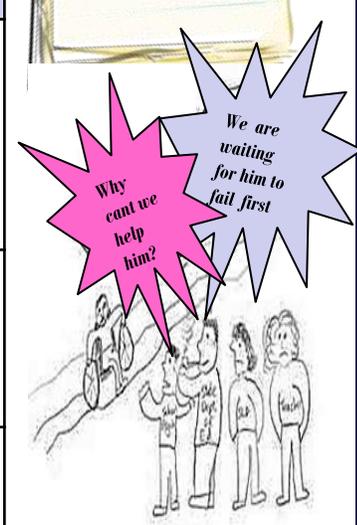


Dealing with Learners with Difficulties

Navigating through the different clerkships is very challenging for many medical students and some have significant difficulties. Faculty has to spend considerable time and effort to support and help these students. Yet, many preceptors are not comfortable with their ability to deal with such students in clinical situations. Suitable preparation and training to correctly identify the problem and provide structured response(s) can help preceptors tackle the problems and help students improve their understanding of clinical problems. Preceptors have to recognize that each student's difficulty is unique. Research suggests that pre-articulation of developmental learning objectives is very effective in helping slow or unskilled learners. Secondly, it is important to identify or diagnose the problem as different problems should be handled very differently.



Problems	Indicators	Remedies	When remedies fail...
Inability to establish rapport with patients	Inadequate understanding of patients' point of view Patients' complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss expectations • Role model behaviors • Observe the student • Review video • Offer constructive feedback on the process • Encourage learner self-reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer professional support • Involve patients to give specific feedback to student to help improve performance
Unskilled or slow learner	Clinical performance below expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on basic learning objectives initially • Move slowly to advanced objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide objective and nonjudgmental feedback • Move to more basic objectives • Testing for learning issues
Insecure learner	Acting out Hostile Complaining Overconfident Overworking Dependent Self-effacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide objective, nonjudgmental, and specific feedback from faculty and peers • Empathize with the learner • Reinforce strengths and teach new skills one at a time • Encourage learner's self-review of charts and video • Allow learner to shadow other providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek assistance from other supervisors
Impaired or unstable learner	Anger Confusion Denial Multiple, unexplained absences or physical ailments Substance use Mental health issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust your instincts • Identify and address concerning behaviors • Share your thoughts with others • Offer support • Document the process • Do not diagnose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escalate strategically, at the institutional level • Refer for professional help early on



References / Resources:

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