THE FIVE MICROSKILLS
A strategy for efficient and effective teaching in the clinical setting

Objectives

• Identify common challenges and pitfalls that occur while teaching in the clinical setting
• List the components of the five-step “microskills” model of clinical teaching
• Practice using the microskills as a strategy for efficient and effective teaching in the clinical setting

Program Format

• LEGO video – One Minute Preceptor
• The Five-step “Microskills” model for effective clinical precepting
• Video Example
• Practice using the Microskills

Residents as Educators

• Residents make a major contribution to student education
• Teaching improves resident learning and acquisition of knowledge

“to teach is to learn twice”
Miriam Bar-on, MD

Effective Clinical Teachers & Learners

• Communicate expectations clearly
• Stimulate interest enthusiastically
• Interact skillfully with patients
• Involve the learner in the teaching process
• Role model desired behaviors
• Give feedback on performance

What are the challenges for teaching in the clinical setting?

• Time
• Time
• Time


Common Pitfalls of Teaching in the Clinical Setting

- Interrupting the learner
  Interferes with thought process
  Interferes with teacher assessment
- Giving the plan
  Sometimes you don’t even recognize you do it!
- Giving mini-lectures
- Making conversation but no real teaching

The Five-Step Microskills/One-Minute Preceptor

- Validated model for effective and efficient clinical teaching
- Developed for outpatient clinic but can be used with learners in any clinical setting
- Promotes the learner’s independence and active involvement in patient care
- Encourages the teacher to recognize “teachable moments”
- Allows for simultaneous care of patients and learners


Teaching in the Clinical Setting - The Five-step Microskills Model

- Patient Encounter
- Diagnose Learner
  1. Get commitment
  2. Probe for underlying reasoning
- Teach
  3. Teach general rules
  4. Provide positive feedback
  5. Correct errors

Get a Commitment

- Assess learner knowledge/comfort
- Demonstrates ability to process information
- Bolsters sense of ownership of the patient

Pitfalls

- Interrupting
- Collecting basic data

Get a Commitment - Potential Follow Up Questions

- “What other diagnoses would you consider in this setting?”
- “What do you think is the most likely diagnosis?”
- “How do you think we should treat this patient?”
- “Do you think this patient needs to be hospitalized?”
Probe for Supporting Evidence

- Demonstrates thought process and clinical reasoning
- Allows teacher to assess the learner’s ability to synthesize information

Pitfalls:
- Grilling or pimping
- Passing judgment - resist the urge to negate the original diagnosis
- Asking closed patient fact questions – “was there blood in the stool?”

Teach General Rules

- Just fill in the gaps
- Keep it simple (2-3 points only)
- Can teach on systems, processes, patient care considerations
- Need to be at the learner’s level
  - Not the teacher’s “script”
- Consider showing or giving a resource

Pitfall:
Giving a “mini-lecture”

Reinforce what was done Right

- Sounds like feedback to me!
- Be explicit
- Be specific

Pitfall:
Giving generic praise – “That was a good presentation”

Correct Mistakes

- Be specific
- Mistakes not corrected may happen again
- Give alternative strategies/suggestions
- Be cautious about who is also in the preceptor room or nearby

Pitfalls:
- General comments
- Avoidance

Correct Mistakes - Example

“In your differential you had the most common causes of abdominal pain in children. I encourage you to always think about at least one surgical or critical diagnosis to be certain you don’t overlook it.”
Microskills Practice

Summary

• Precepting is a skill that has to be learned, practiced, and reflected on
• Use the Five-Step Microskills (One Minute Preceptor) model for effective and efficient clinical teaching

Acknowledgements


• Columbia College of Physicians & Surgeons Residents as Teachers Website http://resteach.ccmh.columbia.edu/