THE MICROSKILLS OF CLINICAL TEACHING

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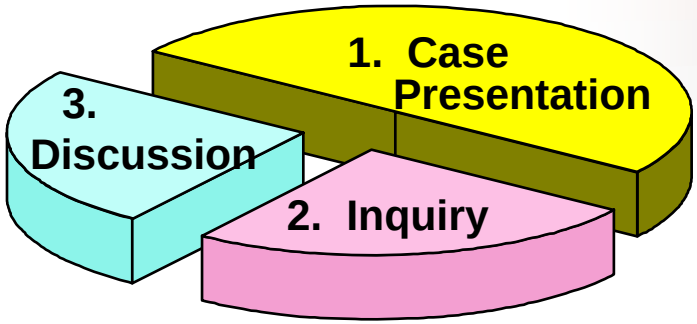
Session goals

- Describe a time efficient framework for clinical teaching
- Present the one minute preceptor model and the related microskills of clinical teaching
- Practice microskills teaching strategies

One Minute Preceptor model

Teach

3. Provide positive feedback
4. Teach general rules
5. Correct errors



Diagnose Patient

- Listen
- Clarify

Diagnose Learner

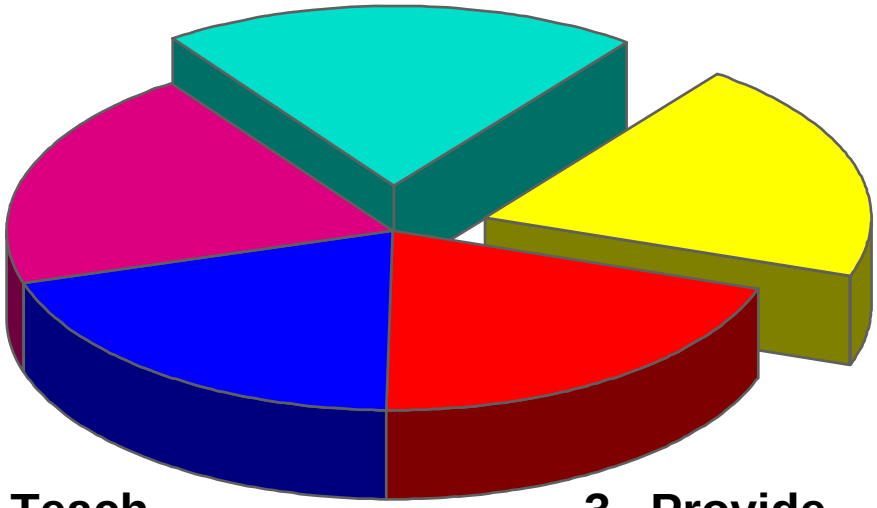
1. Ask for a commitment
2. Probe for underlying reasoning

Neher, 1992.

Five Precepting Microskills

Diagnose Learner

1. Get a Commitment



2. Probe for Underlying Reasoning

3. Provide Positive Feedback

4. Teach General Rules

5. Correct Errors

Teach

Tips on using the microskills

- Clarify your expectations and learners' expectations
- Allow, or even force, the learner, to present the patient without interruption.
- Make them commit to a diagnosis or plan and give the rationale for these decisions before critiquing the presentation.
- Teaching includes indicating resources as well as telling the answers.
- It's okay for either preceptor or learner to say "I don't know", as long as the next step is to actively address the problem (e.g. by seeking the missing knowledge, re-analyzing the situation) and actively learning from the situation.
- Provide both reinforcement of positive actions and constructive correction of mistakes or misconceptions.
- Coach and enjoy!

Get a Commitment

- Early into an encounter with a teacher, the learner should be encouraged to make a commitment to a diagnosis, work-up, or therapeutic plan.
- The learner feels responsible for patient care, and enjoys a more
- collaborative role in problem solving.
- Supportive environment of intellectual honesty required.
- **Cue:** When learner presents patient facts and then stops; resist urge to fill in the verbal blanks!
- Do not confuse this step with collecting further data.

Get a commitment

- Differential diagnosis
  What....? (do you think is going on or is most likely?)
- Diagnostic strategy
  What....? (investigations should be ordered?)
- Selection of therapy
  What....? (is your first choice of medication?)
- Prognosis
  What....? (do you think is probably going to happen?)
- Management issue
  Why....? (do you think this patient is non-compliant?)
  What....? (would you like to achieve this admission)

Probe for supporting evidence

- Help the learner reflect upon the mental processes used to arrive at a decision.
- Identify what the learner does and does not know.
- **Cue:** the learner commits to a stance and looks to the teacher for confirmation; suppress the desire to pass judgement!
- This is not a grilling session! "Thinking out loud" must be a low-risk adventure.

Probe for supporting evidence

- What are the major findings that lead to your conclusion?
- What else did you consider?
- What made you choose that particular treatment
- Why.....(do you suggest getting this test first?)
- Which.....(medications are available for this condition?)
- How.....(did this prognosis emerge as the most probable?)

Teach general rules

- The teacher can skip this step! It is not imperative that the teacher "teach something" every time.
- Keep it brief and focused on identified issues
- Avoid anecdotes and idiosyncratic preferences
- Keep it to 1-3 general rules at most.
- Example:
  - *"If the patient has cellulitis, incision and drainage are usually not possible. However, an abscess, which can be drained, is typically heralded by the development of fluctuance.“*
  - *"In older patients with headache, it is important to consider glaucoma and temporal arteritis as well as the primary headaches. We should consult ____ if symptoms include ___"*

Reinforce what was done well

- Competencies must be repeatedly rewarded and reinforced.
- Build upon the learner's professional self-esteem.
- Focus on specific behaviors.
- Example:
- *"You considered the patient's finances in your selection of therapy. Your sensitivity to this will certainly contribute to improving his compliance."*

Correct errors (gently)

- We frequently tend to put this step first.
- An appropriate time and place must be chosen.
- Ask learners to critique their own performance first.
- Focus on how to correct the problem or avoid it in the future.
- Example:
  - *"You could be right that this patients symptoms are due to myocardial ischemia; but without considering other possibilites, we could easily miss things like PE or pericarditis. So, try to keep the differential diagnoses broad."*

Identify next learning steps

- Fosters self-directed learning; facilitate the learner identifying his/her needs.
- Offer specific resources; the teacher can role model their own learning approaches.
- Agree upon an action plan.
- Examples:
  - *"What do you think you need to learn more about?"*
  - *"That's a good topic to look up. I tend to use _____ as a first step in looking up information. Let's agree to meet ____ to discuss what you've reviewed."*

References 1

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